

Dignity for All Students Act

The Dignity for All Students Act (“Dignity Act”) is a New York State law that seeks to provide all public-school students with a safe, respectful, and welcoming school environment by **prohibiting bullying, harassment, and discrimination**. Frewsburg CSD is committed to upholding the Dignity Act not only because it’s the law, but because we know our students can only achieve their full potential when they feel safe, respected, and supported.

Every member of our community has an important role to play in creating a positive learning environment for our students. **Show empathy and respect** for people of all backgrounds and identities. **Stand up and speak out** when you see bullying or disrespectful behavior. **Immediately report** bullying, harassment, or discrimination you experience or witness.

There are several ways you can report bullying, harassment, and discrimination:

- ❖ Through our online [Dignity Act Incident Report Form](https://shorturl.at/rpvDA) (<https://shorturl.at/rpvDA>)
- ❖ By emailing, calling, or meeting with one of our **Dignity Act Coordinators**

For the Robert H. Jackson Elementary School: Principal Sarah Olson
Phone: (716) 569-7031, Email: solson@frewsburgcsd.org

For the Middle School or High School: Principal Jennifer Armella
Phone: (716) 569-7055, Email: jarmella@frewsburgcsd.org

- ❖ By reporting the incident to **any teacher or other District employee**

Anyone in our community, including parents and caregivers, can make a Dignity Act report. In addition, all District employees are Dignity Act **mandated reporters**. This means that they are legally required to report any incident of bullying, harassment, or discrimination they witness or learn about to their school’s Dignity Act Coordinator within one school day.

How does the Dignity Act protect students?

The Dignity Act protects students by prohibiting bullying and harassment by students and District employees. The law also prohibits bullying, harassment, and discrimination because of a student’s actual or perceived:

- Race of skin color
- Ethnicity
- Nationality or country of birth
- Religion or religious practices
- Physical or intellectual disability
- Weight or body type
- Sexual orientation
- Sex or gender identity

Where does the Dignity Act protect students?

The Dignity Act protects students from bullying, harassment, and discrimination **in school, anywhere on District property, on school buses, and at school-sponsored activities and events**, including field trips, athletic events, and extracurricular activities.

The Dignity Act also prohibits **cyberbullying** that causes physical or emotional harm to a student, makes a student feel unsafe at school, or makes it hard for a student to learn or participate in school activities. Similarly, it prohibits bullying and harassment **off school property** if those behaviors could be expected to create a substantial disruption at school.

In other words, our responsibility to help keep students safe does not end when the school day does.

What are bullying, harassment, and discrimination?

Bullying and harassment refer to comments or actions that create a hostile environment at school, including threats, intimidation, abuse, and offensive or derogatory language.

Discrimination refers to unfair or unequal treatment of a person or group of people because of their actual or perceived race, skin color, weight, nationality, country of birth, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

Cyberbullying refers to bullying or harassment that happens on social media or through any other form of electronic communication, such as text messages, emails, and internet posts.

Some examples of bullying, harassment, and discrimination include the following behaviors, if they create a hostile environment at school for another student:

- Hitting, unwanted touching, and other harmful or offensive physical contact
- Threats, stalking, and intimidation
- Damaging or stealing a student's belongings to harass the student
- Teasing, insulting, taunting, or name calling
- Using slurs and other derogatory terms that refer to race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex
- Comments, jokes, pranks, songs, costumes, and other behaviors that mock, demean, or stereotype others because of their background, identity, or appearance
- Spreading hurtful rumors or intimate pictures of another student
- Shunning or excluding a student

What happens after you report a Dignity Act incident?

One of our Dignity Act Coordinators will promptly and thoroughly investigate all reports of bullying, harassment, and discrimination. The investigation will include interviews with the individuals involved in the incident and any witnesses. It may also include a review of any other relevant evidence, such as video footage, social media posts, or documents.

If the investigation confirms that a violation of the Dignity Act occurred, we will take prompt action to:

- Immediately end the bullying, harassment, or discrimination and ensure that it does not happen again
- Protect the safety of any students harmed by the behavior
- Create a more positive school culture and climate

Students who are responsible for bullying, harassment, or discrimination will receive appropriate discipline and other interventions to help them learn and grow from their mistakes.

Students impacted by bullying, harassment, or discrimination will be provided appropriate resources, supports, and accommodations, such as school-based counseling services or a safety plan.

The Dignity Act strictly **prohibits retaliation** against anyone who makes a good faith report of bullying, harassment, or discrimination, or who assists us in investigating a report. If you believe you have experienced retaliation, report the incident through the [Dignity Act Incident Report Form](#) or by telling a Dignity Act Coordinator or any other District employee.

You can learn more about the Dignity Act on the [New York State Education Department's website](#)¹ and in our Board of Education Policy # 7550.

¹ <https://www.nysed.gov/student-support-services/dignity-all-students-act>