DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT POLICY & School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC Reporting)

The School District is committed to providing a positive, safe and supportive learning environment where students are free from bullying, harassment and discrimination.

"Harassment" and "Bullying" are the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) has or would have the effect of unreasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits, or mental, emotional or physical well-being; or (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for their physical safety; or (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to, those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race (including traits historically associated with race, including but not limited to, hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

"Cyberbullying" shall mean harassment or bullying as defined above, where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication.

The School District aims to foster an educational setting wherein all students are treated with respect and dignity.

The School District acknowledges that bullying and other forms of harassment or discrimination are disruptive and harmful to our students. Because bullying and other forms of harassment or discrimination are detrimental to our learning environment, our sense of community, and an individual's well-being, the School District does not and will not condone bullying, harassment or discrimination of any kind. The School District strictly prohibits all forms of bullying, harassment and discrimination by district employees or students on school property or at school functions, regardless of whether they are conducted on the premises of the School District. The School District also prohibits all forms of off-campus bullying, harassment or discrimination including, but not limited to, "cyber-bullying," which may include the use of instant messaging, e-mail, websites, chat rooms and text messaging, or other acts in violation of this policy when such acts occur off school property and create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

The Principal or their designee where the incident occurred is the school employee charged with receiving reports of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

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Any student who believes that they are being bullied, harassed or discriminated against, or who has knowledge of bullying, harassing or discriminating behavior should report it. Students may make oral or written reports of bullying, harassment or discrimination to any staff member.

All School District personnel are responsible for taking action if they become aware of any bullying, harassment or discrimination against a student. Staff members must make an oral report promptly of all complaints of bullying, harassment, and discrimination that they receive from students or others, whether oral or written, as well as any instances of bullying, harassment or discrimination that they are aware of, to the Principal or their designee where the incident occurred not later than one (1) school day after receipt of a report or witnessing an incident and must file a written report with the Principal or their designee where the incident occurred not later than two (2) school days after making the oral report.

Bullying, harassment or discrimination of a sexual nature, as defined by the School District's sexual harassment policy, must be reported to the School District's Title IX officer. Bullying, harassment or discrimination which involves criminal activity, or where there is reasonable belief that criminal activity may occur, must be immediately reported to the Principal or their designee where the incident occurred. If the Principal or their designee where the incident occurred believes that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct, they shall promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency. To the extent possible, allegations of bullying, harassment or discrimination will be kept confidential; however, the School District reserves the right to disclose the identity of the parties and witnesses in appropriate circumstances to individuals with a need to know.

The Building Level DASA Coordinator or their designee where the incident occurred will lead the investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying and discrimination and will ensure each investigation is completed promptly after receipt of any written report All reports of bullying, harassment or discrimination will be thoroughly investigated and prompt action will be taken by the school where the incident occurred to address the verified allegations, including the imposition of appropriate disciplinary measures in accordance with applicable collective bargaining agreement, applicable law, the School District's Code of Conduct and School District policies. Actions will be reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of behavior, and ensure the safety of the student(s) against whom the bullying, harassment or discrimination was directed. Actions shall be consistent with the guidelines created by the School District, in accordance with law and this policy, for measured, balanced and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

All Building Level DASA Coordinator, in conjunction with the Principal, shall make regular reports to the Superintendent on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and discrimination in their schools.

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The School District expressly prohibits any retaliation against complainants, victims, witnesses and/or any individuals who initiate, testify, participate or assist in the investigation of any allegation or report of bullying, harassment or discrimination. The School District's administrators will monitor participants in investigations and victims of bullying, harassment or discrimination to ensure that the behavior has ceased, no retaliation has occurred and support or counseling has been afforded to the involved individuals, as needed.

The School District will create guidelines for training and will provide training to staff, in accordance with the requirement of state law and the Regulations of the Commissioner of Education, which will include, but not be limited to: raising awareness and sensitivity to potential bullying, harassment or discrimination and the effects of bullying, harassment or discrimination, including cyberbullying, on students; enabling staff to prevent and respond to incidents of bullying, harassment or discrimination; addressing social patterns of harassment, bullying and/or discrimination, the identification and mitigation of such acts, and strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias and aggression in educational settings; ensuring effective implementation of school policy on conduct and discipline; and including safe and supportive school climate concepts in curriculum and classroom management.

The School District shall ensure that the course of instruction in grades kindergarten through twelve includes a component on civility, citizenship and character education. Such component shall instruct students on the principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of laws and rules, courtesy, dignity and other traits which will enhance the quality of their experiences in, and contributions to, the community. The component shall support the development of a school environment free of harassment, bullying and discrimination and shall also include instruction on the safe, responsible use of the internet and electronic communications. For purposes of this policy, "tolerance," "respect for others" and "dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to bullying, discrimination or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different races, colors weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders and sexes.

In accordance with state law, the Superintendent of Schools shall ensure that at least one staff member at every school be designated as a Building Level DASA Coordinator who is approved by the Board and who will be instructed in the provisions of the Dignity for All Students Act; thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex; and provided training: (1) which addresses the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination, including but not limited to those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex; (2) in the identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and discrimination; and (3) in strategies for effectively addressing problems of exclusion, bias, and aggression in educational settings. Each Coordinator shall be employed by the District and be licensed and/or certified by the Commissioner as a classroom teacher, school counselor, school

psychologist, school nurse, school social worker, school administrator or supervisor, or Superintendent of Schools. The name and contact information of the Building Level DASA Coordinator shall be disseminated in accordance with state law and the Commissioner's Regulations.

The Superintendent of Schools or their designee shall develop and implement a school strategy to prevent harassment, bullying and discrimination as well as procedures and guidelines, as needed, to fulfill the purpose of this policy in the School District, including intervention and non-discriminatory instructional and counseling methods and guidelines relating to the development of measured, balanced and age-appropriate responses to instances of harassment, bullying or discrimination by students, with remedies and procedures following a progressive model that make appropriate use of intervention, discipline and education, vary in method according to the nature of the behavior, the developmental age of the student and the student's history of problem behaviors, and are consistent with the School District's Code of Conduct.

The School District will maintain current versions of this policy on its website and require that at least once during each school year, each school provide its employees, students and parents with a written or electronic copy of this policy, or a plain-language summary thereof, including the notification process by which students, parents and school employees may report harassment, bullying and discrimination.

The School District will report annually material incidents of discrimination, bullying and harassment of students, as part of the New York State Education Department's School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC) Summary Data Collection.
Building Principals are required to provide a regular report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to the Superintendent at least once during each school year.

Ref: Education Law, Article 2
Education Law § 801-a

Cross References: Policy 5300, Code of Conduct
Policy 0111, Sexual Harassment of Students
Policy 0100, Equal Opportunity

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