

POLICY

Students

SUBJECT: DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

The District is committed to providing an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity, and equality. The Board recognizes that acts of discrimination and harassment, including bullying, taunting, or intimidation, may be detrimental to student learning and achievement.

To this end, the Board condemns and prohibits all forms of discrimination and harassment by students or employees against students, including bullying, taunting or intimidation, which occurs on school property. School property includes (among other things): school buildings, school grounds, school buses, and locations where school-sponsored extra-curricular events or activities are held.

Dignity Act Coordinator

At least one (1) employee at every school shall be designated as the Dignity Act Coordinator(s). The Dignity Act Coordinator(s) will be thoroughly trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression) and sex. The Board of Education shall appoint the Dignity Act Coordinator(s) and share the name(s) and contact information with all school personnel, students, and parents/persons in parental relation, which shall include, but not be limited to, providing the name, designated school and contact information by:

- a) Listing such information in the Code of Conduct and updates posted on the Internet website, if available;
- b) Including such information in the plain language summary of the Code of Conduct provided to all persons in parental relation to students before the beginning of each school year;
- c) Providing such information to parents and persons of parental relation in at least one district or school mailing or other method of distribution including, but not limited to, sending such information home with each student and, if such information changes, in at least one subsequent district or school mailing or other such method of distribution as soon as practicable thereafter;
- d) Posting such information in highly visible areas of school buildings;
- e) Making such information available at the district and school-level administrative offices.

If a Dignity Act Coordinator vacates his/her position, another school employee shall immediately be designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending approval from the Board of Education, within thirty (30) days of the date the position was vacated. In the event a Coordinator is unable to perform the duties of the position for an extended period of time, another school employee shall immediately be designated for an interim appointment as Coordinator, pending return of the previous Coordinator to the position.

Training and Awareness

The Board hereby approves the following guidelines for school employee training to implement the Dignity for all Students Act, to promote a positive school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment, and to discourage and respond to incidents of discrimination and/or harassment on school property or at a school function. Training will be provided each school year for all District employees in conjunction with existing professional development training to raise staff awareness and sensitivity of discrimination and/or harassment directed at students that are committed by students or school employees on school property or at a school function. Training will include ways to promote a supportive school environment that discourages discrimination and/or harassment, emphasize positive relationships, and demonstrate prevention and intervention techniques to assist employees in recognizing and responding to discrimination and/or harassment.

Instruction in grades Kindergarten through 12 shall include 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. For the purposes of this policy, "tolerance," "respect for others" and "dignity" shall include awareness and sensitivity to discrimination and/or harassment and civility in the relations of people of different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, genders and sexes.

Rules against discrimination and/or harassment will be included in the Code of Conduct, publicized District-wide and disseminated to all staff and parents. An age-appropriate summary shall be distributed to all students at a school assembly at the beginning of each school year.

Reports and Investigations of Discrimination and/or Harassment

Complaints will be investigated in accordance with applicable policies and regulations. If, after an appropriate investigation, the District finds that this policy has been violated, corrective action will be taken in accordance with District policies and regulations, the Code of Conduct, and all appropriate federal or state laws.

The District will annually report material incidents of discrimination and/or harassment which occurred during the school year to the State Education Department in accordance with regulations of the Commissioner.

Prohibition of Retaliatory Behavior

Any person having reasonable cause to suspect a student has been subjected to discrimination and/or harassment by a student or an employee, on school grounds or at a school function, who acting reasonably and in good faith, either reports such information to school officials, to the Commissioner, or to law enforcement authorities or otherwise initiates, testifies, participates or assists in any formal or informal proceedings associated with enforcement of the Dignity for All Students Act, shall have immunity from any civil liability that may arise from the making of such report or from initiating, testifying, participating or assisting in such formal or informal proceedings. Neither the District nor any District employee shall take, request or cause a retaliatory action against any such person who, acting

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reasonably and in good faith, either makes such a report or initiates, testifies, participates or assists in such a formal or informal proceeding.

Interpretation of Policy

This Policy is intended to implement the provisions of the Dignity for all Students Act and its regulations. It is not intended to create any obligations or rights in excess of those set forth in statute and regulation. Furthermore, nothing in this Policy shall be construed to prohibit a denial of admission into, or exclusion from, a course of instruction based on a person's gender that would be permissible under Education Law sections 3201-a or 2854(2)(a) and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (20 U.S.C. section 1681, et seq.), or to prohibit actions that would be permissible under section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

Education Law Sections 10-18 and 801-a

8 New York Code of Rules and Regulations (NYCRR) Section 100.2(jj), 100.2(kk), and 100.2(1)(2)

NOTE: Refer also to Policies #1330 -- Appointments and Designations by the Board of Education
#3410 -- Code of Conduct on School Property
#3420 -- Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School District
#7551 -- Sexual Harassment of Students
#7552 -- Bullying in the Schools
#7553 -- Hazing of Students
#8242 -- Civility, Citizenship and Character Education/ Interpersonal Violence Prevention Education

Adoption Date