

Gillette Road Middle School 6150 South Bay Road Cicero, NY 13039

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Dignity for All Students Act

What is the Intent of The Dignity Act?

The goal of The Dignity Act is to create a safe and supportive school climate where students can learn and focus, rather than fear being discriminated against and/or verbally and/or physically harassed.

What does The Dignity Act say?

No student shall be subjected to harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property or at a school function; nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex.

The Dignity for All Students Act Effective July 1, 2012 (Chapter 482 Laws of 2010)

Curriculum: Curriculum must include instruction that supports the development of a school environment free of discrimination and harassment

Code of Conduct: The Code of Conduct must be amended to include provisions prohibiting discrimination and harassment against any student by employees or students, and provisions for responding to such acts.

Reporting: Material incidents of discrimination and/or harassment on school grounds or at a school function must be reported to NYSED annually.

Dignity Act Coordinator: At least one staff member **at every school** must be designated and 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.

Employee Training: Employees must receive annual training to raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination and/or harassment and to enable employees to prevent and respond to incidents of discrimination and harassment.



Amendment to the Dignity Act, Effective July 1, 2013

(Chapter 102 Laws of 2012)

The following provisions are in addition to the original Dignity Act.

Cyberbullying: Cyberbullying will be defined as harassment or bullying by any form of electronic communication, and include incidents occurring off school property that create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment.

Includes electronic communication which:

- 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.
- Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety.
- Reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student
- 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.

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Amendment to the Dignity Act cont.

Reports of Harassment, Bullying and Discrimination: The principal, superintendent, or designee must be charged with receiving reports.

Investigation of Reports: The principal, superintendent, or designee must lead or supervise the prompt and thorough investigation of reports.

Response to Verified Reports: The school must take prompt actions reasonably calculated to end the harassment, bullying or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, and ensure the safety of the student(s) toward whom harassment, bullying or discrimination was directed.

Employee Reporting: School employees who witness or receive a report of harassment, bullying, or discrimination must **notify** the principal, superintendent or designee **within one school day** after witnessing the incident or receiving the report and must file a **written report within two school days** thereafter.

Notification of Law Enforcement: The Principal, Superintendent or designee will be required to notify appropriate local law enforcement when they believe that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

Curriculum: Curriculum must include instruction in safe and responsible use of the Internet and electronic communications and emphasize discouraging acts of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

Guidance and Educational Materials: The State Education Department will provide guidance and educational materials, including best practices in addressing cyberbullying, and best practices in helping families and communities to work cooperatively with schools in addressing cyberbullying.

Amendment taking effect January 1, 2014:

Professional Certification: Professionals applying for certificate or license, including but not limited to classroom teachers, school counselors, school psychologists, school social workers, school administrators or supervisors, and superintendents of schools, must complete training on the social patterns of harassment, bullying and discrimination, identification and mitigation of harassment, bullying and discrimination, and strategies for effectively addressing exclusion, bias and aggression in educational settings.

Adapted from New York's Dignity for All Students Act updated brochure, June 2013.



Resources

Web Resources for Curriculum:

- Activities Guide: Making It Work for Your School & Community.
http://stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov/PDFs/SBN_Activities_Guide.pdf
- A World of Difference Institute.
www.adl.org
- Educators for Social Responsibility.
www.esrnational.org
- Fit for Gender Mainstreaming: GENDER TOOLBOX.
www.gendertoolbox.org
- Gay, Lesbian, Straight Education Network.
www.glsen.org
- Guides for teaching about Internet usage.
www.edudemic.com
- National Youth Violence Prevention Resource Center.
www.safeyouth.org
- The Social Studies Help Center.
www.socialstudieshelp.com
- Teaching Tolerance.
www.teachingtolerance.org
- Teens Against Bullying
www.pacerteensagainstbullying.org
- Understanding Prejudice.
www.UnderstandingPrejudice.org

Bibliography of Curriculum Resources:

- Mullin, Nancy L.
Olweus Bullying Prevention Program Companion Bibliography for Grades K-12.
Highmark Foundation (2010)
As a free download at the Bullying Prevention Institute:
<http://www.bullyingpreventioninstitute.org/Resources/ResearchandReports.aspx>

Resources for Cyber Education:

- Willard, Nancy E.
Cyber-Safe Kids, Cyber-Savvy Teens: Helping Young People Learn To Use the Internet Safely and Responsibly
Jossey-Bass (2007).
- Limber, Susan P., Kowalski, Robin M. & Agatston, Patricia W.
Cyber Bullying: A Prevention Curriculum for Grades 6-12
Hazeldon (2009)

For more information on the Dignity for All Students Act, contact Penny Williams or Kathy Miller in Youth Development, OCM BOCES at (315) 433-2609.