



Enlarged City School District

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 6 hours of training by a NYS Education Department approved trainer 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.



School Building Information

Contact information for Dignity Act Coordinator:

Assistant Superintendent, Judi Riley, 607-758-4100, jriley@cortlandschools.org
Director of Athl. & PE, Tim Wagoner, 607-758-4110, twagoner@cortlandschools.org
7-8 Principal, Kevin Cafararo, 607-758-4110, kcafararo@cortlandschools.org
9-10 Principal, Abe Brafman, 607-758-4110, abrafman@cortlandschools.org
11-12 Principal, John Zarcone, 607-758-4110, jzarcone@cortlandschools.org
Barry Principal, Doug Pasquerella, 607-758-4150, dpasquerella@cortlandschools.org
Parker Principal, Josh Bacigalupi, 607-758-4160, jbacigalupi@cortlandschools.org
Randall Principal, Cliff Kostuk, 607-758-4170, ckostuk@cortlandschools.org
Smith Principal, Angela Wanish, 607-758-4180, awanish@cortlandschools.org
Virgil Principal, Lisa Kaup, 607-758-4130, lkaup@cortlandschools.org

How to report for your school building:

1. Complete Harassment or Intimidation Form located on district website under parent resources: Forms Central
www.cortlandschools.org
2. Request a meeting with your child's teacher, principal or other school personnel.
3. Report through stop bullying on-line located at the district website:



Reporting an incident of bullying / harassment according to Dignity Law:

1. Students who have been bullied, parents whose children have been bullied or other students who observe bullying should make verbal/written complaint to teacher, coach, counselor, or building administrator.
2. As soon as possible, but no later than 3 working days following receipt of complaint, incident should be investigated in a confidential manner and resolved.
3. If investigation warrants, prompt corrective action should be taken in accordance with code of conduct.
4. Continue follow up with students involved to assure bullying has stopped.

Websites for additional information:

www.stopbullying.gov - Federal government website managed by Department of Health and Human Services includes up to date information on Bullying and cyberbullying, resources, games and videos for kids, and more.

www.pacer.org/bullying - National Bullying Prevention Center provides resources, classroom activities, videos, stories and news.

www.nobullying.com - Information for teens, parents, teachers including facts and statistics, stories, resources and information on cyber safety.

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.

Youth Development News

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