The Dignity for All Students Act

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

This brochure presents an overview of the basic requirements under the Dignity Act. It is by no means a comprehensive resource. Further information about the Dignity Act and associated Regulations of the Commissioner of Education are available at:

http://www.p12.nysed.gov/dignityact

New York's Dignity for All Students Act

Amendments effective July 1, 2013



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New York State Education Department

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New York's Dignity for All Students Act

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 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.

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.



Amendment to the Dignity Act, cont.

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.

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.

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.