



Rockville Centre Union Free School District

New York State Dignity Act and Bullying Prevention Plan

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Rockville Centre Union Free School District

New York State Dignity for All Students Act
Bullying Prevention Plan

“Friends don’t let
Friend’s Bully!”

“Kids don’t care how
much you know until they
know how much you
care...”

“No school can be a great
school until it can be a
safe school first.”

**The Dignity Act was signed into law in September, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012.
The Act was amended, effective July 1, 2013 to include cyberbullying.**

This legislation amended State Education Law by creating a new Article 2 – Dignity for All Students. The Dignity Act also amended Section 801-a of New York State Education Law regarding instruction in civility, citizenship, and character education by expanding the concepts of tolerance, respect for others and dignity to include: an awareness and sensitivity in the relations of people, including but not limited to, actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex.

Code of Conduct

The Code of Conduct has been amended to reflect the prohibition of discrimination and harassment of students by students or staff and promulgated to all levels in *age appropriate plain language*.

- The District Code of Conduct Policy was reviewed by a committee of administrators, teachers, parents and students to review and update the code of conduct to align with DASA requirements New York State Education guidance.
- The revised language in the Code of Conduct will be included in any publications that contain these rules and regulations such as the high school agenda, middle school code of conduct, and elementary code of conducts.
- The Rockville Centre Board of Education has approved the revised Code of Conduct.
- The Code of Conduct is available on the District website.

DASA Incident Reporting Protocol

If an incident is considered to be an act of bullying, discrimination, and/or harassment, the Administrator in charge of discipline will consult Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). If the act is determined to be an act of bullying, discrimination and/or harassment, a formal incident report will be completed and appropriate disciplinary measures are taken.

- Administrator or Intervention Staff will review all incident reports and determine if it is a potential bullying / harassment issue.
- In the event that there is a concern regarding bullying/harassment, the building DAC will be consulted.
- The DAC will make recommendations to the Administrator regarding an intervention plan and a discipline plan will be determined.

- The DASA Bullying/Harassment Incident Report will be completed.
- The Administrator will enforce the discipline measures discussed.
- All DASA Incident Reports will be maintained and stored in a locked file in the Administrator's office.
- The building DASA or other support staff will meet with all parties involved to provide education, follow-up and support.

Policy Revision

The following policies were updated and approved by the Board of Education to ensure alignment with DASA regulations and language:

- Bullying/Cyberbullying: Peer Abuse 7370
- Anti-Harassment in the School District 3420
- Code of Conduct on School Property 3410
- Sexual Harassment of Students 7551
- Hazing of Students 7371
- Equal Educational Opportunities 8130 (Revised)
- Suicide 7540

When state guidance is received on each required policy central administration will be updated and put before the BOE for approval.

Dignity Act Coordinators

One person from each school building has been designated as the Dignity Act Coordinator. That person will be thoroughly trained to recognize and effectively respond to harassment and bullying and implement strategies to prevent it. The principal assigned to each building will serve as the backup Dignity Act Coordinator for that building.

- Principals must submit names of selected Dignity Act Coordinators annually and the Board of Education will approve their appointment as DACS at the reorganization meeting in July of each year.
- Dignity Act Coordinators will be the building expert in recognizing and responding to human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender and sex.
- The DAC will also help advise the creation and implementation of incident forms and collection of data regarding bullying incidents.
- The name and contact information of the DAC must be shared with all school personnel, students, and persons in parental relations. Buildings must print the name and contact information of the DAC their annual publications, such as the agenda or building code of conduct. DAC names and contact information will be posted, in plain sight, annually.

Dignity Act Coordinator Assignments

South Side High School	Ms. Nicole Knorr	255-5221
	Mr. Ben Moss	255-8825
South Side Middle School	Ms. Jivanna Okolica	255-8978
	Ms. Shelagh McGinn	255-8975
Covert Elementary School	Ms. Maureen Bedell	255-8916
	Mr. Darren Raymar	255-8916
Hewitt Elementary School	Ms. Lisa Panebianco	255-8913
	Ms. Elizabeth Pryke	255-8913
Riverside Elementary School	Ms. Lisa Panebianco	255-8902
	Mr. Chris Zappia	255-8902
Watson Elementary School	Ms. Sue Buckheit	255-8904
	Ms. Jen Pascarella	255-8904
Wilson Elementary School	Ms. Maureen Bedell	255-8910
	Mr. James Duffy	255-8910

Staff Training

Requirement: Commencing with the 2012-13 school year and continuing every year thereafter, school must implement school employee training programs 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 school functions.

Such training includes:

1. Superintendent's Day presentation and introduction of the Dignity Act: (Superintendent of Schools, Ingerman Smith, LLP, Assistant Superintendent for Pupil Personnel Services and Special Education, District Social Workers)
3. Faculty meeting presentations by building DACs
4. Professional development opportunities, conferences and workshops for psychologists, social workers and counselors to support the development of nondiscriminatory instructional and counseling methods.
5. Food Service Personnel, Security Guards, Custodians, Administrative Assistants and Teacher Aides will be trained during the school day by designated personnel.

All staff members including administrators, administrative assistants, teachers, teaching assistants, teacher aides, food service personnel, custodians, bus drivers, and custodians will receive training in order to raise awareness and sensitivity to potential acts of discrimination or harassment directed at students that are committed by students or school employees on school property or at school functions including but not limited to discrimination or harassment based on actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, and sex. Training must also enable employees to prevent and respond to incidents of harassment and discrimination.

Character Education

Requirement: The Dignity Act amends state law to require that schools incorporate curricula on diversity and sensitivity into lessons on civility and citizenship.

- Curriculum and Instruction has required that all new curriculum writing include lessons relevant to the Dignity Act.
- Requirements include the development of lessons on civility, character, citizenship, tolerance, respect for others, and dignity.
- Principals should require incorporation of such lessons into lesson plans in all relevant subject areas periodically and at all grade levels.

- Character Education programs should continue or be implemented on all levels. The intent is to create a change in the culture of schools to promote healthy respect and pro social behaviors.

Public Presentation

The components of the New York State Dignity Act and District implementation plan was presented at a public session of the Board of Education meeting in September of 2012.

Data Collection and State Reporting

All Districts must collect data on incidents of bullying, discrimination and harassment and report these incidents to New York State.

- Each building has created a bullying incident form. A map of the school is attached to the form and location of each bullying incident is indicated.
- A discipline rubric for handling of bullying incidents was created. Once again, the social workers are developing these rubrics for review with principals.
- A report of DASA incidents is submitted to NYSED annually.