

THE DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school 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.

The Dignity Act is an amendment to section 801-a of the New York State Educational 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, different races, weights, national origins, ethnic groups, religions, religious practices, mental or physical abilities, sexual orientations, gender identity, and sexes. The Dignity Act further amended Section 2801 of the Education Law by requiring Boards of Education to include language addressing The Dignity Act in their codes of conduct.

The Dean, or any other person(s) designated by the principal shall and will be responsible for collecting and reporting data regarding material incidents of discrimination and harassment.

The Dignity Act emphasizes the creation and maintenance of a positive learning environment for all students. In addition, the amended Dignity Act requires the development of measured, balanced, progressive, and age-appropriate responses to discrimination, harassment, and bullying of students by students and/or employees. Remedial responses should be included in the Code of Conduct and place the focus of discipline on discerning and correcting the reasons why discrimination, harassment, and bullying occurred. The remedial responses should also be designed to correct the problem behavior, prevent another occurrence of the behavior, and protect the target of the act. Appropriate remedial measures may include, but are not limited to:

- peer support groups;
- assignment of an adult mentor at school that the student checks in with at the beginning and end of each school day;
- corrective instruction that reemphasizes behavioral expectations or other relevant learning or service experience;
- engagement of student in a reflective activity, such as writing an essay about the misbehavior and its impact on others and how the student might handle the situation differently in the future and/or make amends to those who have been harmed;
- supportive intervention and/or mediation where constructive conflict resolution is modeled;
- behavioral assessment or evaluation;
- behavioral management plans or behavior contracts, with benchmarks that are closely monitored;
- student counseling and parent conferences that focus on involving persons in parental relation in discipline issues.

Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment in the School

Policy: RCS follows the DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (DASA) The New York State Dignity for All Students Act took effect July 1, 2012 and was established to provide a school environment free of discrimination and harassment. The Dignity Act states that no students shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students, nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on their actual or perceived race, color, weights, and national origin, ethnic group, religion practices, disability, sexual orientation, gender identity or sex. The law applies to school property and any school-sponsored function of activity. The NYS Dignity for all Students Act was amended effective July 1, 2013 to include bullying and cyber bullying occurring either on or off school property where such acts create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school.

Procedure: All staff will report any action is in violation of DASA to the Dean of Students and Executive Director for appropriate action.