

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT

Signed into law in Sept. 2010, the Dignity for All Students Act – or DASA – was established to promote a safe and supportive learning environment in all public schools, free from harassment and discrimination from other students and adults.

DASA establishes a number of standards for schools, including district policies and procedures and identifying and reporting incidents of bullying, harassment and discrimination in school.

“No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying 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, or sex.” (State Education Laws of 2010, Effective: July 1, 2012)

HOW DO I KNOW IF IT’S BULLYING OR HARASSMENT?

What is harassment?

Harassment is the creation of a hostile environment that 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.

What is bullying?

Bullying is an unwanted, aggressive intentional form of harassment that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time. Bullying includes such actions as making threats, spreading rumors, attacking someone physically or verbally and excluding someone from a group on purpose.

What is cyberbullying?

Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or e-mails, rumors sent by e-mail or posted on social networking sites and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites or fake profiles.

What is discrimination?

Discrimination, as defined by the New York State Education Department (NYSED), is the “denial of equal treatment, admission and/or access to programs, facilities and services based on the person’s actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity), or sex.”

Examples of bullying include, but are not limited to:

- Verbal: Name-calling, teasing, inappropriate sexual comments, taunting and threatening to cause harm.
- Social: Spreading rumors about someone, excluding others on purpose, telling other children not to be friends with someone and embarrassing someone in public.
- Physical: Hitting, punching, shoving, kicking, pinching, spitting, tripping, pushing, taking or breaking someone’s property and making mean or rude hand gestures. (Source: U.S. Department of Education).

What do I do if I witness bullying or an incident is reported to me?

- School employees who witness harassment, bullying or discrimination or receive an oral or written report of the aforementioned behavior must ORALLY report the suspected incident NO LATER than ONE school day after witnessing or receiving report.
- A WRITTEN report must be submitted no later than TWO school days after making an oral report.

- The principal, superintendent or their designee is responsible to lead or supervise a thorough investigation of all reports of harassment, bullying or discrimination and to ensure that such investigations are completed promptly after receipt of any written report.
- The principal is required to make a regular annual report on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and discrimination to the superintendent.
- The principal, superintendent or their designee is required to promptly notify the appropriate local law enforcement agency when such individual believes that harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

What will be included in a report?

- **WHAT:** The type(s) of bias involved – including, but not limited to, the 11 protected areas (race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex);
- **WHO:** Whether incident resulted from student and/or employee conduct;
- **HOW:** Whether incident involved physical conduct and/or threats, intimidation or abuse;
- **WHERE:** Location where incident occurred (on school property and/or at school function or off school property, if applicable).

Does the behavior or situation...

- ...substantially interfere with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits or mental, emotional or physical well-being?
- ...reasonably cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety?
- ...cause or would be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm?
- ...occur off of school property and create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment?

...IF YES, IT IS BULLYING OR HARASSMENT AND MUST BE REPORTED.

REMEMBER: BULLYING ALMOST ALWAYS REQUIRES ADULT INTERVENTION.

Follow the FIVE "Rs" after being alerted to or witnessing a bullying incident:

- **Respond** – stop the bullying or if it occurred prior to your knowledge let the students know you will address it
- **Research** – Don't ask students questions in groups, speak with students individually
- **Record & Report** – Tell your DASA coordinator or principal, fill out the form!
- **Revisit** – Check in with your students, be sure the bullying has stopped and that all students are ok. If you have any concerns, refer to your school's counseling staff.

What doesn't work...

- Telling the targeted student to ignore the bullying.
- Telling the targeted student to work it out.
- Trying to sort out the facts on the spot.
- Forcing bystanders to say publicly what they saw.
- Questioning those involved in front of others.
- Bringing the targeted and bullying kids together.
- Asking for an apology.

For more information about DASA in your school, contact your school's dignity act coordinator.

RESOURCES CITED:

- [NYSED: Dignity Act Resource Guide – A Resource and Promising Practices Guide for School Administrators & Faculty](#)

WARRENSBURG CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT
Harassment, Intimidation, or Bullying Complaint Form

A student, parent or guardian, or staff member may file a complaint of harassment, intimidation, or bullying pursuant to DASA regulations and school policy. This report must be completed to file a complaint relating to an incident of alleged bullying (which encompasses bullying, intimidation, harassment, and/or discrimination) and turned in to the school Principal.

_____ Written report – Created by: _____

_____ Oral report - Received/Written by: _____

Date Filed: _____

Complainant's Name: _____

Indicate the appropriate response to the following with a check mark(s):

You are a: _____ student _____ parent _____ employee
 _____ other: _____

Summarize the incident(s) or occurrence(s) as accurately as possible. Attach additional sheets if necessary. Attach any evidence of harassment or bullying (i.e. letters, photos, provide cell phone texts, Facebook messaging/wall print outs, etc.):

Location and time of the incident:

Name(s) of witnesses: _____

Have you reported this to anyone else? _____ No _____ Yes

If so, who: _____

Date Received: _____ _____ Unsubstantiated Report (No Action Taken) _____ Substantiated Report (Action Taken)

Is this the first time this has happened? _____ Yes _____ No

If No, how many times has this happened before: _____

Please add any other information about previous incidents or threats:

I agree that all of the information on this form is accurate and true to the best of my knowledge.

Signature of Complainant

Date _____

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Date of investigation: _____

Investigating administrator: _____

Action: _____ Informal resolution (student-student)
_____ Formal resolution
_____ Other: _____

Outcome:

Date Received: _____ Unsubstantiated Report (No Action Taken) _____ Substantiated Report (Action Taken)

Follow-up/other related information:

District Dignity Act Coordinator

Stephanie Gibson, Director of Pupil Personnel Services
Warrensburg Elementary School
1 James Street
Warrensburg, New York 12885
(518) 623-9747, x143

Building Dignity Act Coordinators

Warrensburg Jr/Sr High School
Douglas Duell, Principal
103 Schroon River Road
Warrensburg, New York 12885
(518) 623-2861, x222

Warrensburg Elementary School
Amy Langworthy, Principal
1 James Street
Warrensburg, New York 12885
(518) 623-9747, x191