

DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT (Dignity Act) VOLUNTARY IMPLEMENTATION SELF-ASSESSMENT TOOL

State Education Law §§10-18 and 801-a – Effective July 1, 2012





New York State public school students should have an environment free of discrimination and harassment.

This tool was developed as a **voluntary self-assessment** checklist designed to assist school districts (districts), boards of cooperative educational services (BOCES) and charter schools in evaluating their own Dignity Act compliance status. Please note that this checklist is **not** required to be submitted to the New York State Education Department (NYSED).

This tool includes the following sections:

- **Policy Development** – Requirements and Recommendations
- **Policy Implementation** – Requirements and Recommendations
- **Policy Follow-Up and Response** - Requirements and Recommendations



All required items are noted by the use of one or more of the following symbols:

- NYS Dignity Act: State Education Law §§10-18 and 801-a¹ 
- NYS Safe Schools Against Violence in Education Act (SAVE): State Education Law §§2801 and 2802 
- NYS Commissioner of Education Regulation: 8 NYCRR §100.2 
- US Department of Education Office for Civil Rights (OCR): (1) Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 – prohibits discrimination on the basis of race, color, or national origin; (2) Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 – prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex; and (3) Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 – prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability. The implementing regulations for these statutes are in 34 C.F.R. parts 100, 104 and 106. When this symbol is used, it means one or more of the aforementioned civil rights laws are implicated. 

Items that do not include one or more of the above-referenced symbols are recommended best practices and not required.

¹ It should be noted that, while the provisions of Education Law §§10-18 apply to charter schools, the provisions of Education Law §801-a do not.

DIGNITY ACT – POLICY DEVELOPMENT: REQUIREMENTS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
The board of education and the trustees or sole trustee has developed policies and guidelines intended to create a school environment that is free from discrimination and harassment.	
The Dignity Act policy includes guidelines to be used in school training programs to discourage the development of discrimination or harassment and raise the awareness and sensitivity of employees to potential discrimination or harassment.	
The Dignity Act policy includes guidelines to be used in school training programs to enable employees to prevent and respond to discrimination or harassment.	
The Dignity Act policy includes guidelines relating to the development of non-discriminatory instructional and counseling methods.	

DIGNITY ACT – POLICY DEVELOPMENT: REQUIREMENTS

Policy Component to Review

Completed

In accordance with the Dignity Act policy, at least one employee at every school, must be designated as the Dignity Act Coordinator. The Dignity Act Coordinator must be thoroughly 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.



An age-appropriate version of the Dignity Act policy, written in plain language, is included in the district's or BOCES' code of conduct (COC) and the charter school's disciplinary rules and procedures, or, if applicable, its COC.





Provide copies of a summary of the COC to all students at a school assembly held at the beginning of the school year.



DIGNITY ACT – POLICY DEVELOPMENT: RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
<p>All administrative staff understand the intent, purpose and requirements of the Dignity Act, including what their schools need to do to be in compliance with it.</p> <p>All administrative staff meet, at least annually, with staff and students to provide an overview of the Dignity Act policy.</p>	
<p>Constituent groups, including, but not, limited to, administration, staff, parents, students, and community members have an opportunity to provide their input on the Dignity Act policy.</p>	






DIGNITY ACT – POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: REQUIREMENTS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
All students are informed annually of the behavioral expectations in the COC. 	
Training is developed or selected and STAFF trained to raise their awareness and sensitivity to potential discrimination or harassment and prevent and respond to discrimination or harassment. 	

DIGNITY ACT – POLICY IMPLEMENTATION: RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
All staff, volunteers and students are informed of the Dignity Act policy and its implementation process.	
School-wide support systems are identified to support students who have experienced discrimination and/or harassment, including, but not limited to, school-wide prevention and intervention programs and school and classroom activities.	
School-wide support systems are identified to teach students alternatives to discriminatory and/or harassing attitudes and/or behaviors, including, but not limited to, school-wide prevention and intervention programs and school and classroom activities.	
Training is developed or selected and STUDENTS are trained on how to raise the awareness and sensitivity to potential discrimination and harassment.	
Training is developed or selected and STUDENTS are trained on how to prevent acts of discrimination and harassment. .	
Training is developed or selected and STUDENTS are trained on how to respond to acts of discrimination and/or harassment.	

DIGNITY ACT – POLICY FOLLOW UP AND RESPONSE: REQUIREMENTS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
<p>Staff are aware that, under federal civil rights laws and regulations, students are protected from harassment by school employees, other students and third parties. Staff further understand that some student misconduct that falls under the district's Dignity Act and/or anti-bullying policy also may implicate responsibilities under one or more of the federal civil rights laws enforced by OCR.</p>	
<p>Staff who know or reasonably should know of possible harassment, must take immediate and appropriate action to investigate or otherwise determine what occurred.</p>	
<p>When harassment has occurred, staff must take prompt and effective steps reasonably calculated to end it, eliminate any hostile environment and prevent it from reoccurring. Staff must further understand that these steps must be taken (1) regardless of whether the student, who is the object of the harassment, makes a complaint, asks the staff and/or school to take action or identifies the harassment as a form of discrimination and; (2) even if the misconduct is also covered by the district's Dignity Act and/or anti-bullying policy.</p>	
<p>Disciplinary measures and/or administrative action are taken as appropriate to address incidents of discrimination and/or harassment.</p>	
<p>Staff follow-up with identified responses intended to create a school environment that is free from discrimination and/or harassment and to support a safe and supportive school environment.</p>	

DIGNITY ACT – POLICY FOLLOW UP AND RESPONSE: RECOMMENDATIONS

Policy Component to Review	Completed
Students who have witnessed acts of discrimination and/or harassment report such incidents to the Dignity Act Coordinator or other school staff.	
School-wide prevention, intervention, and classroom programs are used to teach students alternatives to discriminatory and/or harassing attitudes and/or behaviors.	
School-wide prevention, intervention, and/or classroom activities are used to support students who have experienced discrimination and/or harassment.	
Opportunities are provided for staff to evaluate and implement the Dignity Act policy.	
Opportunities are provided for parents/guardians to comment and/or evaluate the Dignity Act policy.	
Opportunities are provided for students to comment and/or evaluate the Dignity Act policy.	
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