

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) Guide for Parents/Guardians

The Dignity for All Students Act, or DASA, is a state law intended to create a learning environment free of discrimination and harassment for all students. The law states that no student shall be subjected to discrimination, harassment, or bullying (including cyberbullying) by employees or students on school property, or off school property at a school function, electronically, and when the act may create a risk of substantial disruption at school.

The Connetquot Central School District is committed to providing a safe and constructive learning environment that honors the dignity and worth of every individual. It is the responsibility of the district to address bullying and harassment issues that occur. District staff members are to create an orderly environment within the Connetquot Central School District through training, monitoring and intervening when bullying and harassment occur.

DASA defines harassment and bullying as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation, or abuse, including cyberbullying. This includes threats, intimidation, and abuse that occurs verbally, non-verbally, or on any form of electronic communication. A violation of the DASA law includes behaviors 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;
- reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety;
- reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student;
- occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property.

DASA protects all students. DASA explicitly mandates the reporting of all incidents of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination based on, but not limited to, a person's race, color, weight, nationality, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual

orientation, gender (which includes gender identity and/or expression), or sex. This includes any act(s) of harassment, bullying, cyberbullying, and/or discrimination of students by other students as well as school personnel.

Bullying and harassment will not be permitted or tolerated in our school district. Bullying and harassment may involve a range of misconduct which, based on the severity, will warrant a measured response of corrective action and/or discipline. Behaviors that do not rise to the level of bullying and harassment, as defined below, still may be subject to intervention and/or discipline under another section of the discipline plan or a discipline policy. A formal complaint may be made by completing CCSD Policy #0115-E.1 which can be found on the district website and should be submitted to the building principal.

Reporting

Staff:

Any written or oral complaint made to a school employee about discrimination, harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying is significant, and must be reported to the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) for investigation. Any observed incident of discrimination, harassment, bullying, or cyberbullying by an employee must be reported, regardless of whether a complaint is made. If a school employee witnesses an incident or is informed about an incident, they must report it verbally to the DAC within one school day and follow up in writing within two days after making the verbal report.

Following an investigation, the DAC will determine whether the complaint is verified as a material incident of harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination. A material incident under DASA is a single or series of verified incidents by a student and/or employee on school property, at a school function, or off school property where the act may create a risk of substantial disruption at school (this includes cyberbullying). This includes conduct of such a severe or pervasive nature that it has one or more of the following effects: When an incident is verified as material, the school shall take prompt action, consistent with the district's code of conduct, to end the harassment, bullying, and/or discrimination, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student. Material incidents are reported to the New York State Education Department (NYSED) on the annual School Safety and Educational Climate (SSEC) Summary Data Collection Form.

Steps for Staff:

- In accordance with the district's Code of Conduct and NYS DASA Law, staff members are required by law to report to their building DAC within one day of received complaint from a student. DACs must begin an investigation within two school days, completing the 0115-E.2 building use form.
- When bullying is found to have occurred, consequences will be imparted using the discipline rubric followed by the school in accordance with the Code of Conduct.
- The Connetquot Central School District requires school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who commits a verified act of bullying or harassment.
- If upon the investigation, the evidence materializes, a complaint will be determined as founded and in response the school staff will create a safety plan for the target and consequences to the alleged will be imparted.
- To the extent permitted under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, (FERPA), the Connetquot Central School District requires school staff to notify the parent or guardian of a student who is a target of bullying or harassment of the action taken to prevent any further acts of bullying or harassment.

For more information regarding DASA, please refer to District Board Policy #0115 Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying.

Chain of Command

If you believe your child is involved in bullying, contact the following school personnel, in the order indicated, to discuss the situation:

1. Staff member involved or main classroom teacher or advisor
2. Mental Health Professional (School Counselor, School Social Worker, School Psychologist)
3. Assistant Principal
4. Principal
5. Director of Student Services
6. Assistant Superintendent
7. Superintendent
8. School Board

Discuss the Facts and Details

To find out the details of a particular situation, ask the following questions:

- Specifically, what happened in this instance?
- Where did/does the bullying take place?
- At what time of day did/does the bullying take place?
- What staff members were/are involved?
- What students were/are involved?

If you think your child has been involved in more than one bullying incident, consider the following issues:

- How does your child usually behave at school?
- Is the bullying issue a common behavior or a change in behavior?
- Which staff members are, or should be, supervising when the bullying occurs?
- Where does the bullying usually take place?
- What time of day does the bullying usually take place?
- Are there bystanders nearby? How do they respond?

If your child is accused of, or has been confirmed of bullying, consider the following:

- What was your child's role?
- What skills do you think your child needs to learn to replace bullying behavior with acceptable behavior?
- What procedures do you think the staff needs to do differently to prevent the behavior from recurring?
- What reasonable procedures do you think need to be put in place to help your child behave within the school guidelines?

If your child has been the target of bullying consider the following:

- How does your child usually respond when being bullied?
- Are there skills he needs to learn to minimize being the target of bullying?
- In your opinion, what changes in staff response should be implemented?
- In your opinion, what reasonable procedures need to be put in place to keep your child safe?

This guide will help school personnel, parents and students work together to ensure all students are safe and to maintain a positive learning environment. If you are having an issue with bullying, please refer to the chain of command section in this guide for the steps you need to take to address the problem. All DASA Reports will be investigated by a trained Dignity Act Coordinator.

To file a complaint, please access document from Board Policy Harassment, Hazing, and Bullying #0115 E.1

<https://go.boarddocs.com/ny/ccsdl/Board.nsf/vpublic?open#>



0115-E.1 HHB
Editable Form 2022.1