

# The Dignity for All Students Act



Bulkeley Middle School  
2023-2024

# What is the DASA Law? (July 2012)

The Dignity Act (DASA) protects all students from **harassment** and/or **discrimination** based on a person's actual or perceived:

- Appearance - any physical characteristics: color, weight, hair, height, etc.
- Sexual Orientation
- Gender - including gender identity & expression
- Sex (declared at birth)
- Ethnic Group
- Race
- Religion
- Ability
- Socio-Economic Status (SES)



# Why create this law?

- 1 in 5 kids experience bullying (NCES, 2019)
- 5.4 million students skip school at some point each year due to bullying (NCES, 2019)
- 9 out of 10 LGBTQ+ students experience harassment in school (NCES, 2019)
- More than 1/3 of adolescents reporting bullying report bias-based school bullying (CDC, 2019)
- Students who experience bullying are at increased risk for depression, anxiety, sleep difficulties, lower academic achievement, and dropping out of school. (CDC, 2019)

# What is Harassment?

- Creating a **Hostile Environment**
  - Threats
  - Intimidation
  - Abuse
  - Gossip
  - Dirty looks
  - Excluding
- Any behavior that ***unreasonably and substantially interferes with a student's educational performance, opportunities, mental, emotional, or physical safety***



# What is Bullying?

## Definition:

Bullying is **unwanted, aggressive behaviors** towards someone that involves a real or perceived **power imbalance**. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

**BEING MEAN,  
ON PURPOSE,  
OVER TIME.**

# Types of Bullying

1. **Physical** - often easiest to see
  - a. *Kicking, hitting, tripping, stealing or damaging someone else's things*
2. **Verbal**
  - a. *Name calling, teasing (even after you told to stop), mean jokes, rumors, gossip, and saying things that are untrue about someone else*
3. **Relational** - subtle, often hard for others to see
  - a. *Leaving someone out on purpose, telling lies about someone, embarrassing someone in front of other people*
4. **Cyberbullying** - has become most common
  - a. *Hurtful messages, spreading rumors online, posting embarrassing photos/videos of someone else, making fake profiles/accounts of someone*



A promotional image for the Netflix series 'Stranger Things'. It features a close-up of a young woman with long brown hair and bangs, looking slightly to the right with a neutral expression. She is holding a small, orange-clad figurine of a character in her right hand. The background is a teal color with a red vertical stripe on the right side. The word 'NETFLIX' is written in red, bold, sans-serif capital letters in the upper left. Below it, the words 'STRANGER THINGS' are written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a red rectangular background. At the bottom, the words 'ELEVEN'S HERO' are written in white, bold, sans-serif capital letters on a black rectangular background.

**NETFLIX**

**STRANGER THINGS**

**ELEVEN'S HERO**



# Cyberbullying



Defined as *harassment or bullying* by any form of electronic communication (cell phones, social media, etc.), and include incidents occurring off school property that create or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment.

*What are some examples you can think of?*

- Sending hurtful, rude, threatening or mean text messages
- Spreading rumors or lies about others by email or on social networks
- Creating websites, videos or social media profiles that embarrass, humiliate, rank or make fun of others
- Impersonation, sexting, stalking
- Removing people from group chats



**Snapchat**

# Identifying a DASA Violation

Formal process when an incident is reported.

*How to Report an Incident:*

- Talk to a trusted adult in the school (teacher, counselor, principal, etc.)
- Anonymous Reporting on the website's homepage ([School Messenger QuickTip](#))

\*You can report something even if you did not personally witness it.

**Dignity Act Coordinator:** Mr. Kemnitzer

**Dignity Act Team:** Teachers, Counselors, & Administrators

***Incidents may not be found to be a violation of the Dignity Act, however they may be a Code of Conduct violation.***

## Rhinebeck Central School District

### Dignity for All Students Act – Complaint/Report Form

Report taken by: \_\_\_\_\_ Received: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Name of \_\_\_\_\_ Date Submitted: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Complainant/Reporter: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_ BMS \_\_\_\_\_  
 Home Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ Cell: \_\_\_\_\_ Work: \_\_\_\_\_  
*(please circle the preferred number)*

The complainant is: *(check all that apply)*  
 an employee, holding the position of \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (location)  
 a student, grade \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ (location)  
 a parent or community member  
 other (please specify your relationship with or association to the District)

Basis of this complaint/grievance <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	Where did the incident occur? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	What happened during the incident? <i>(Check all that apply)</i>	Incident Types
Race	School Bus/Stop	Taunting	Incident occurring on school property
Ethnic Group	To/From School	Threat	Incident occurring at school-sponsored function off school grounds
National Origin	Text/Phone/Internet/	Intimidation	Incident occurring off school grounds nexus to school
Color	Social Media	Stalking	Incident involving intimidation or abuse, but no verbal threat or physical contact
Religion	School sponsored activity	Theft	Incident involving verbal threat but no physical contact
Religious Practice	Event off school property	Verbal harassment	Incident involving physical contact but no verbal threat
Disability	School Grounds	Retaliation	Incident involving only student offenders
Gender	Gym	Humiliation	Incident involving only employee offenders
Sexual Orientation	Corridor	Exclusion	Incident involving both student and employee offenders
Sex	Classroom	Physical Contact	
Weight	Cafeteria	Cyber-bullying	
Other S.E.S.	Other	Other	
	When:		

- Name and/or description of accused person(s):
- Date and time of violation(s):
- Description of alleged harassment/bullying/discrimination/incident: *(please be specific)*
- Witnesses, if any, or others who should be contacted with knowledge important to this investigation, including contact information for each:

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Signature of Complainant/Reporter

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Date  
 9/18/2012

# DASA VIOLATION

- Individual Interview
- Parent Notification
  - Individual Refresher Course of DASA Law

*\*If violation is severe enough, possible immediate detention/suspension*

Problem Solved?  
*No further action.*

Problem Continues...

Parent Notification

Potential Outcomes:

- Counseling
- Detention
- Suspension
- Superintendent's Hearing

# How is this Discrimination?

You **ALL** have a right to feel **safe and supported** when coming to school every day.

When someone or something interferes with your ability to feel safe at school, it is a violation of your **constitutionally protected right** (within the DASA law) to:

- Equal treatment for all students
- Access programs and facilities
- Access to a free and safe educational environment





A top-down view of a group of people sitting on a green lawn. Their hands are placed in a circle on the grass, with some hands overlapping. The people are wearing casual summer clothing like shorts and t-shirts. Some have colorful bracelets on their wrists. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day outdoors.

***It's not about if you win or lose,  
it's how you play the game -  
and if you're invited back to play.***