

The Dignity for All Students Act Policy

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 was signed into law on September 13, 2010 and took effect on July 1, 2012. Amendments to the act are effective as of July 1, 2013 and are noted below under *****DIGNITY ACT NEWS*****.

The original legislation amended State Education Law by creating a new Article 2 – Dignity for All Students. The Dignity Act also amended Section 801-a of New York State Education 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 School and its Board of Trustees ("Board") are committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment within the charter School. In accordance with New York State's "Dignity for All Students Act" (DASA) the School is committed to promptly addressing incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of students that impede students' ability to learn. This includes bullying, taunting or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

Students' Rights

No student shall be subjected to harassment by employees or students on School property or at a School function. Nor shall any student be subjected to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by School employees or students on School property or at a School function. In addition, the School reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with our Code of Conduct, who engage in harassment of students off School property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct 1) affects the educative process; 2) actually endangers the health and safety of School students within the educational system; or 3) is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of our students. This includes written and/or verbal harassment which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the School and/or which School officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the School.

Dignity Act Coordinator

The School designates the Dean of Students as the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC). The DAC is 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. The DAC will be accessible to students and other employees for consultation and advice.

Reporting and Investigating

Personnel at all levels are responsible for reporting harassment of which they have been made aware to their immediate supervisor. Any student who believes that s/he is being subjected to harassment, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, shall report the harassment to any staff member or to the Dean of Students. A staff member who witnesses harassment or who receives a report of harassment shall inform the Dean of Students. The Dean of Students shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action to include, as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority and/or other official designated by the School to investigate allegations of harassment. Follow-up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that harassment has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of allegations of harassment have not suffered retaliation. Material incidents of discrimination and harassment on School grounds or at a School function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

No Retaliation

Great Oaks and its Board prohibit any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and School policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

DASA prohibits bullying, harassment, discrimination, or cyberbullying against students in school based on:

- Race
- Color
- Weight
- National origin
- Ethnic group
- Religion
- Religious practice

- Disability
- Sexual orientation
- Gender (including gender identity and expression)
- Sex
- Other (describe)

Definitions

Harassment is defined as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or verbal threats, intimidation, or abuse that has or would have the following effect:

- Reasonably and substantially interfering with a student's educational performance, opportunities or benefits; or
- Would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety.

Discrimination is the act of denying rights, benefits, justice, equitable treatment or access to facilities available to all others, to an individual or group of people because of the group, class or category to which that person belongs.

Bullying is described as an unwanted, aggressive behavior that involves a real or perceived power imbalance. The behavior is repeated, or has the potential to be repeated, over time.

Bullying can occur before and after school hours, in a school building, on a playground, on a school bus while a student is traveling to or from school, or on the Internet.

Cyberbullying occurs when harassment or bullying happens through any form of electronic communication. Students who are bullied and those who bully others may have serious and lasting problems

Each building and department has a designated Dignity Act Coordinator. This person has been trained to handle human relations in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (identity or expression), and sex.

If you want to file a DASA complaint, contact your child's home school DASA representative and ask for a DASA form. Fill out that form and submit it to the building DASA representative.

DASA COORDINATOR: Sherise Wigfall (swigfall@greatoakscharter.org)

[DASA Incident Report Form](#)