

## Dignity for All Students Act

The School Board of Northeastern Clinton Central School District committed to protecting its students from bullying, harassment or discrimination for any reason and of any type. The School Board believes that all students are entitled to a safe, equitable, and harassment-free school experience. Bullying, harassment, hazing and/or discrimination will not be tolerated and shall be just cause for disciplinary action.

- I. **Definitions-** “A person is bullied when he or she is exposed repeatedly and over time, to negative actions on the part of one or more other persons.”

### *Olweus Bullying Prevention Program*

- A. **“Bullying”** means systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees. It is further defined as: unwanted purposeful written, verbal, nonverbal, or physical behavior, including but not limited to any threatening, insulting, or dehumanizing gesture, by an adult or student, that has the potential to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment or cause long term damage; cause discomfort or humiliation; or unreasonably interfere with the individual’s school performance or participation, is carried out repeatedly and is often characterized by an imbalance of power. Bullying may involve, but is not limited to:
1. unwanted teasing
  2. threatening
  3. intimidating
  4. stalking
  5. cyberstalking
  6. physical violence
  7. theft
  8. sexual, religious, or racial harassment
  9. public humiliation
  10. destruction of school or personal property
  11. social exclusion, including incitement and/or coercion
  12. rumor or spreading of falsehoods
- B. **“Harassment”** Harassment has been defined in various ways in federal and state law and regulation. The Board recognizes that these definitions are important standards, but the Board’s goal is to prevent misbehavior from escalating in order to promote a positive school environment and to limit liability. The Dignity for All Students Act (§§10-18 of Education Law) defines harassment as the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse 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; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety. The harassing behavior may be based on any characteristic, including but not limited to a person’s actual or perceived:

1. race,
2. color,
3. weight,
4. national origin,
5. ethnic group,
6. religion,
7. religious practice,
8. disability,
9. sex,
10. sexual orientation, or
11. gender (including gender identity and expression).

- C. **“Cyberbullying”** is defined as the willful and repeated harassment and intimidation of a person through the use of digital technologies, including, but not limited to: email, blogs, texting, social websites (e.g., MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, etc.), chat rooms, “sexting”, instant messaging, or video voyeurism. \*Note: Per N.Y. Penal Law § 240.30, voyeurism, which may be utilized in cyberbullying, in and of itself, is a criminal offense.

**What are the procedures for reporting an incident?**

Employees are required to report incidents. Students, parents and visitors, however, are strongly encouraged to report suspected incidents to their principal/designee and/or appropriate area/district administrator either verbally or in writing.

**How do investigations occur?**

The principal/designee or the appropriate area/district administrator will take specific steps to investigate all complaints of harassment and/or bullying. The principal/designee or the appropriate area/district administrator will initiate an investigation of all reports of harassment and/or bullying within two (2) school days and every investigation will be completed within ten (10) school days after its initiation.

**What are the consequences?**

Consequences for confirmed harassment and/or bullying may include referrals to outside agencies, interventions, and/or disciplinary action as outlined by the Student Code of Conduct, school board policies and any collective bargaining agreements.

**What if I don't agree with the administrator's decision?**

You have a right to appeal. If the resolution is not satisfactory to you, the parent/guardian, student, or employee, you have the right to appeal within five (5) days of the completion of investigation (see Student Code of Conduct, other board policies and collective bargaining agreements for the exact appeals process).

Need to know more? See the Code of Student Conduct, Employee Handbook or our website, [www.nccscougar.org](http://www.nccscougar.org).