Berlin
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

Dignity for All

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE DIGNITY ACT

Learning Objectives:

At the end of this presentation you should be able to:

Define dignity

Know the difference between bullying and bothering

Know the types of bullying

Define discrimination

Know how to be an upstander

Know where to get help

What is the Dignity Act?

The Dignity for All Students Act seeks to provide the state's public elementary and secondary school students with a **safe and supportive environment** by **prohibiting** acts of discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

Requires schools to revise their codes of conduct and adopt policies intended to create a school environment free from harassment and discrimination

Requires schools to provide instruction in civility, citizenship and character education currently required by Education Law 801

Covers all public schools in New York State
Went into effect July 1, 2012

But - what does dignity mean?

Dignity (noun): the inherent worth and value of every human

Dignity is something we are born with - we all matter the same amount regardless of who we are or how we identify.

Dignity is stopping to think about our feelings and actions and how they impact others.

Dignity is awareness - learning and knowing how to act in ways that honor everyone's dignity.

How is dignity different than respect?

Respect is admiration for someone's actions, traits, or accomplishments.

Respect is earned or lost through actions, choices, and behaviors.

Earning **respect** means doing something that goes above and beyond the baseline right to be treated well.

DENIAL OF DIGNITY= ROOT OF CONFLICT

Our instincts don't know the difference between a physical threat and a psychological threat.

Violations to our dignity feel like *a threat to our survival.*

When we feel hurt, our brains leap into self-preservation mode.

Types of “Conflict”

- Disagreements
- Exclusion
- Accidental Harm
- Social Dynamics
- Miscommunication
- Bullying
- Abuse
- Assault

Bothering	Conflict	Bullying
• Primary goal is not to harm • Can be done inadvertently and without intent • Causes others to become annoyed or irritated, but does not cause harm or fear • Bothersome behaviors are characterized by actions and words that might make others uncomfortable, but do not cause emotional or physical harm to the other person	• Primary goal is not to harm, but rather to win • Mutually competitive or opposing action or belief • Includes disagreements, arguments, and mutually engaged fights • Negative acts in both directions • Participants are more equal in power (balance of power) • Can often be resolved with conflict resolution	• The primary goal is to physically or emotionally hurt someone • Bullying, Harassment, Discrimination and Cyberbullying are one-sided • Often involves an imbalance of power • Often motivated by a distinguishing characteristic

Types of Bullying

Verbal

saying mean things: teasing, name-calling, mocking sounds & words people use, taunting, making threats

Social

excluding others, telling others to not be friends with someone, spreading rumors, doing something to embarrass someone

Physical

doing something to hurt someone, taking or breaking someone's things, inappropriate hand gestures

Cyber

sending, posting, or sharing negative, harmful, false, or mean content about someone else over text and/or online

Effects of Bullying

- EMOTIONAL

  Stress, anxiety, depression, anger, frustration, loneliness, poor self-esteem

- PHYSICAL

  Changes in sleeping & eating patterns, health complaints (stomachaches, headaches, etc.)

- BEHAVIORAL

  School avoidance, poor academic performance, self-injury, isolation, getting into fights

Victims of bullying are not the only ones who may feel these effects. Bystanders may feel guilty, unsafe at school, and are at higher risk of depression, anxiety, and being absent from school.

26.3%

*Middle School students experience bullying in the US**

19%

*High School students experience bullying in the US***

*During the 2021-2022 school year

** During the 2022-2023 School Year

Discrimination

The unjust or prejudicial* treatment of different categories of people with protected characteristics:

- age
- sex
- gender identity
- race
- ethnicity
- religion or beliefs
- sexual orientation
- body type/weight
- mental or physical disabilities

*Prejudice - a favoring or dislike of something without good reason

BMHS Code of Conduct: Discrimination

A first offense of Discrimination falls under the Category 2: Behaviors on our School's Code of Conduct. The second offense of Discrimination falls under Category 3: Behaviors on our School's Code of Conduct.

When it is determined that a student is discriminating against another student based on their protective characteristics, that student could receive one or more of the following consequences:

- Restorative Circle and/or Restorative Assignment
- In-school suspension (ISS)
- Out of school suspension (OSS)
- Mandatory meeting with an administrator & other staff members before re-entry to school
- Superintendent's hearing prior to returning to school
- Restitution (compensation for injury or loss)
- Referral to Police
- For 12th graders: Suspension of driving privileges

What to do if you are a victim of bullying

Tell the person bullying you to stop

Use an assertive voice and/or get help from a teacher

If the bullying continues,

File a dignity act report with your school counselor - an investigation will be done by a Dignity Act Coordinator

Be persistent

If you have not heard from someone regarding the issue, you can always ask the person you reported to or re-report

WHAT BYSTANDERS CAN DO

How **YOU** can be an Upstander

Interrupt the bully.

Point out unacceptable behavior.

Reach out and support the victim.

WHERE DO YOU FIT IN THE CYCLE?

Think of a time you were in a situation that involved bullying.

What did you do then?

What would you have done differently?

What if someone violates the Dignity Act in our school?

If you have been a victim of an incident or witnessed an incident covered under the Dignity Act, please do the following:

- Reach out to a trusted adult to let them know what is happening, preferably someone in the same room where it happened (ie. a teacher, coach, TA, substitute, monitor)
- Fill out our Dignity Act Reporting Form (you can do this by yourself or you can do it with the help of a friend, a trusted adult or a parent/guardian)
  - BES Students K-5
  - BMHS Students 6-12
- Speak to a counselor, building Principal, or one of the Dignity Act Coordinators directly

BCSD Dignity Act Coordinators

Mrs. Cataldo

BES Principal

Mrs. Reynolds

BMHS Assistant Principal & Berlin Athletic Director

Mr. Olsen

Director of Pupil Personnel Services

District Wide

REFERENCES

The National Child Traumatic Stress Network

New York State Education Department: DASA

StopBullying.gov

Creating a Culture of Dignity