

Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

Neighborhood Charter Schools (NCS) strives to create a safe and supportive environment for all community members through several measures, including abiding by the New York State Dignity for All Students Act (DASA). DASA seeks to “provide students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying (including cyber bullying) on school property, school buses and/or at school functions.” Discrimination and harassment are prohibited by employees or students based on a person’s perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, and sex.

Dignity for All Students Act Coordinator

The Executive Director, Lindsay Malanga, is the Dignity for All Students Act Coordinator (DAC) for NCS. 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.

Harassment and Discrimination

All students are entitled to a learning environment free from harassment and discrimination. No student or Employee shall be subjected to discrimination or harassment by other students, employees or visitors on the basis of physical, cultural or even social differences, including, without limitation based on his or her actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, sex, gender identity, or gender. “Harassment” includes any action (verbal or physical) which tends to create a hostile environment (including bullying and Cyberbullying) and has substantially interfered with a student’s educational opportunities or benefits or the terms and conditions of an employee’s employment, reasonably causes a student or employee to fear for his or her physical safety, or reasonably poses a risk to a student’s or employee’s physical or emotional well-being. Harassment that occurs off School Property may be prohibited when the effects of such conduct would reasonably be expected to impact the educational process or create risk of disruption within the School environment.

Harassment by students will result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. Harassment by employees will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Bullying

Bullying is strictly prohibited on school property and at any school function, as well as any other place or time when the effects of such conduct would reasonably be expected to impact the educational process or create a risk disruption within the school environment.

“Bullying” for the purpose of this policy is defined as harassment, aggressive behavior, or other intentional action, whether verbal or physical, which is intended, or could reasonably be expected, to cause emotional harm, distress, fear, ridicule, humiliation and/or intimidation. Bullying can be face-to-face, or carried out by phone, over the internet and other ways directed at another person through the "posting" of sensitive and/or private information, including Cyberbullying: “Cyberbullying” means bullying through any form of electronic communication, such as email, text, and social media (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, and Instagram). Bullying can take many forms, such as slurs, jokes, innuendos, demeaning comments, cartoons, pranks, gestures, and physical attacks. (“Intentional action” refers to the individual’s choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).)

This policy includes bullying of students (by other students, employees, volunteers, and visitors) and by students (of employees, volunteers, and visitors).

Bullying by students will result in discipline, up to and including expulsion. Bullying by employees will result in disciplinary action, up to and including termination of employment.

Reporting and Investigation of Complaints of Harassment/ Discrimination and Bullying

Any staff member who witnesses, receives an oral or written account of, or otherwise reasonably suspects the occurrence of, any act constituting harassment, discrimination or bullying must promptly notify school administration and/or the DAC, as soon as reasonably practicable, but no later than one school day of witnessing or receiving a report of harassment, discrimination, or bullying. The school administration and/or DAC shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action to include, a necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority and/or other official designation by NCS to investigate allegations of harassment, discrimination, or bullying. The DAC is trained to handle complaints in the areas of race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity and other protected characteristics. The DAC will be accessible to students and staff members for consultation and advice.

All students, parents, visitors, and others are strongly encouraged to report any such conduct.

If any such investigation results in a finding of a violation of our anti-harassment/discrimination/bullying policies, NCS will take prompt action, reasonably calculated to end the harassment/discrimination or bullying, eliminate any hostile environment, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety and educational opportunities of the student(s) or staff member(s) against whom such behavior was directed. We reserve the right to notify an appropriate law enforcement agency when we believe that any harassment/discrimination/bullying constitutes criminal conduct. Material incidents of discrimination and harassment will also be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

Zero Tolerance Retaliation Policy

The Board of Trustees and NCS 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 charter school policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.