

# **THE DIGNITY FOR ALL STUDENTS ACT DISTRICT PLAN**

**GALWAY CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT**



The Board of Education of Galway Central School District is committed to providing a safe and orderly school environment where students may receive and District personnel may deliver quality educational services without disruption or interference. Responsible behavior by students, teachers, other district personnel, parents and other visitors is essential to achieving this goal. The District has a long-standing set of expectations for conduct on school property and at school functions. These expectations are based on the principles of civility, mutual respect, citizenship, character, tolerance, honesty and integrity. The board recognizes the need to clearly define these expectations for acceptable conduct on school property, to identify the possible consequences of unacceptable conduct, and to ensure that discipline when necessary is administered promptly and fairly. To this end, the Board adopted Code of Conduct Policy # 2200 Addendum 1 ("Code"). Unless otherwise indicated, this code applies to all students, school personnel, parents and other visitors when on school property or attending a school function.

### **Student Rights**

The District is committed to safeguarding the rights given to all students under state and federal law. In addition, to promote a safe, healthy, orderly and civil school environment, all District students have the right to:

1. Take part in all District activities on an equal basis regardless of race, color, creed, national origin, religion, gender or sexual orientation or disability.
2. Present their version of the relevant events to school personnel authorized to impose a disciplinary penalty in connection with the imposition of the penalty.
3. Access school rules and, when necessary, receive an explanation of those rules from school personnel.

### **Student Responsibilities**

All District students have the responsibility to:

1. Contribute to maintaining a safe and orderly school environment that is conducive to learning and to show respect to other persons and to property.
2. Be familiar with and abide by all District policies, rules and regulations dealing with student conduct.

3. Attend school every day unless they are legally excused and be in class, on time, and prepared to learn.
4. Work to the best of their ability in all academic and extra-curricular pursuits and strive toward their highest level of achievement possible.
5. React to direction given by teachers, administrators and other school personnel in a respectful, positive manner.
6. Work to develop mechanisms to control their anger.
7. Ask questions when they do not understand.
8. Seek help in solving problems that might lead to discipline.
9. Dress appropriately for school and school functions.
10. Accept responsibility for their actions.
11. Conduct themselves as representatives of the District when participating in or attending school sponsored extra-curricular events and to hold themselves to the highest standards of conduct, demeanor, or sportsmanship.

## Introduction – The Dignity For All Students Act

- The New York State Dignity For All Students Act (Dignity Act) was signed into law on September 13, 2010. This legislation amended State Education Law by creating a new Article 2 – *Dignity for All Students*.
- The Dignity Act states that NO student shall be subjected to harassment or discrimination by employees or students on school property or at a school function based on their actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex.

The goal of the Dignity Act is to create a safe and supportive school climate where students can learn and focus, rather than fear being discriminated against and/or verbally and/or physically harassed.

All public elementary and secondary school students have the right to attend school in a safe, welcoming, considerate, and caring environment. **BOE policy 2200 Addendum 2**

## **DISTRICT PLAN**

The Dignity Act prohibits discrimination and harassment of students on school property, including at school functions, by any student and/or employee. However, harassment may include, among other things, the use, both on and off school property, of information technology, including, but not limited to, e-mail, instant messaging, blogs, chat rooms, pagers, cell phones, gaming systems and social media websites, to deliberately harass or threaten others. This type of harassment is generally referred to as cyber bullying.

### **Essential Partners**

The Dignity Act emphasizes the importance of tolerance, acceptance and respect for others by students and staff alike. Therefore, all members of the school community have particularly important roles to play in its implementation.

### **Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC)**

The Dignity Act also requires that at least one staff member at every school be thoroughly 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 (Education Law §13[3]). Dignity Act Coordinator – PPS Director, Associate Principal. Joseph Henry Elementary School Team – Social Worker, Psychologist. Galway Jr/Sr High School Team – PPS Director, Associate Principal.

### **Dignity Act Building Level Committee**

This committee is made up of parents, administrators, teachers and community members. The committee will have responsibilities including but not limited to:

- Planning informational meetings
- Planning and scheduling of trainings with approval of the principal
- Organizing activities and events for the building that focus on respect, dignity and acceptance
- Organizing distribution of materials with age appropriate language including the Student Bill of Rights and Responsibilities and relevant policies
- Ensuring that policies and informational documents are visible throughout the building and distributed appropriately
- Reviewing data

### **Training**

All faculty and staff including instructional and non-instructional employees will receive annual training regarding the importance, relevance and components of the Dignity Act. Students will be trained during the fall through grade level assemblies and small groups. Dignity Act team members will attend local and regional workshops to maintain current on changes/additions regarding the Act.

### **Disciplinary and Remedial Consequences**

The Dignity Act emphasizes the creation and maintenance of a positive learning environment for all students. In addition, the Dignity Act requires the development of measured, balanced, and age appropriate responses to the discrimination and harassment of students by students and/or employees on school property, including school functions, with remedies and procedures focusing on intervention and education. When a referral is received, DAC team members will complete an investigation and determine consequences per the “Complaint Management Process” – Addendum 3.