

# Harassment: A Guide for Our STUDENTS

NISKAYUNA

The Niskayuna Board of Education and administration care about you and are committed to providing students and staff with an educational environment that promotes respect, dignity, and equality. This flyer provides a brief overview of the Board's policies on harassment, designed to promote such an environment. These policies prohibit all forms of harassment on school grounds or at school-sponsored events, programs, or activities, including those that take place at locations off school premises.

One such policy is the Dignity for All Students Act (DASA), which says that it is wrong for students to be treated differently because of their actual or perceived race (including traits associated with race such as hair texture and protective hairstyles), color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender identity or expression), or sex. School principals are the Dignity for All Students Act Coordinators for their schools and in charge of working with everyone at school to create a safe and supportive environment. Also, the district has identified staff members in each building who can serve as a resource. They are listed on the back of this flyer.

Board policies prohibiting harassment are No. 3420 - Non-discrimination and Anti-harassment in the School District; No. 7550 - Dignity for All Students; and No. 7551 Sexual Harassment of Students. If you would like a copy of the district policies on student harassment or to file a report, contact Niskayuna's Civil Rights Compliance Officer/Title IX Officer Latisha J. Barnett at (518) 377-4666, ext. 50741. You can also complete the discrimination and harassment reporting form link on our website at this address: <https://www.niskayunaschools.org/about-us/policies-forms/>.

**No one should make you feel unsafe or threatened at school.**

## What is Harassment?

Harassment is behavior that creates a hostile environment, through threats, intimidation, or abuse that interfere with a student's education or well-being or cause a student to fear for his or her safety. It is against school rules for anyone to make students feel unsafe or threatened at school.

Harassment can consist of verbal, physical, or written conduct. It can include such things as derogatory remarks, jokes, demeaning comments or behavior, slurs, name-calling, innuendo, gestures, physical contact or threats, etc. It includes actions based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender (including gender

identity or expression), sex, or any other legally protected status.

**Harassment comes in a variety of forms, each of which is prohibited by district policy and by law:**

**Bullying** is a pattern of behavior that creates a hostile environment through threatening or intimidating acts, including treating others cruelly, terrorizing, coercing, habitual putdowns, and/or badgering of others that causes harm or induces fear and the threat of further aggression.

**Cyberbullying** is harassment that takes place over the Internet, text messages, or other types of electronic communication, including social media.

**Discrimination** is the act of denying rights or fair treatment to an individual or group of people because of the group, class, or category to which that person belongs.

**Hazing** involves acts directed against another for the induction or initiation in any school activity, including teams and clubs, that produce public humiliation, physical or emotional discomfort or injury, and/or public ridicule.

**Retaliation** is when a person mistreats another because they reported or provide information about the alleged harassment.

## Sexual Harassment

Sexual harassment includes quid pro quo sexual harassment, which is the conditioning of educational services on sexual conduct. Sexual harassment also occurs when a person or student is subjected to unwelcome sexual comments that create a hostile environment that is objectively offensive and effectively denies a person's equal access to their educational program.

It includes sexual advances, requests for sexual favors, and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature, when:

- A school-related decision or an individual's ability to participate in or benefit from a school program is implicitly or explicitly conditioned on or connected to the individual's submission to such conduct;
- Such conduct creates an intimidating, hostile, or demeaning environment that interferes with or limits the individual's ability to participate in or benefit from school programs and activities.

Sexual harassment also includes sexual violence, which refers to sexual acts that are against a person's will or where a person is incapable of giving consent.

Sexual harassment can take many forms, including...

- Unwanted sexual, abusive, or lewd language or suggestive jokes, including sex-oriented comments on one's appearance;
- Direct or indirect threats or bribes for unwanted sexual activity, including insinuating that refusal may affect a student's grades, references, or participation in any other school activity;
- Asking or commenting about a person's sexual activity;
- Displaying or distributing pornographic or any other sexual material;
- Unwelcome physical contact of a sexual nature, including assault, impeding movement, and/or touching (such as brushing, pinching, patting, etc.);
- Leering, suggestive or insulting sounds or gestures;
- The use of profanity or other obscenities that are sexually suggestive or degrading; and
- Behavior that perpetuates sex-based stereotypes.

## What can you do if you are being harassed?

It is important to address instances of harassment as quickly as possible. Do not pretend the problem will go away on its own. Remember, you can always talk to a teacher, counselor, or administrator in the event you have been the victim of harassment or bullying.

**The important thing is to tell someone as soon as possible to prevent a situation from getting worse. A trusted adult at school will help you contact the appropriate person to stop the behavior.**

The district has identified specific staff members in every school, including your school principal, who can serve as a resource for you on the topic of harassment.

These individuals are listed on the right hand side of this flyer. You should feel comfortable talking to them if you need to.

It is a violation of district policy for any person to retaliate, intimidate, harass or interfere with an employee or student who has filed a complaint regarding harassment or any individual who has assisted with an investigation. The law and school policy require all reports of harassment and bullying to be investigated promptly. All reports of harassment will be confidential to the extent possible.

It is also a violation of district policy to intentionally file a false complaint regarding harassment. Appropriate action will be taken against any person filing a false complaint.

## Student Harassment RESOURCES

### Birchwood Elementary School

Rebecca Grabicki, *Principal*  
Melissa Nardolillo, *School Nurse*  
Bailey Pangman, *Social Worker*  
Samantha Lee, *Psychologist*

### Craig Elementary School

Bill Anders, *Principal*  
Madelyn Symons, *School Nurse*  
Deborah Shepard, *Social Worker/Counselor*  
Elizabeth Sabourin, *Psychologist*

### Glenciff Elementary School

David Zadoorian, *Principal*  
Holly Britton, *School Nurse*  
Jessica Reiff, *Social Worker*  
Jessica Mucilli, *Psychologist*

### Hillside Elementary School

Shireen Fasciglione, *Principal*  
Katrina Cutting, *School Nurse*  
Sarah Mae Sinisi, *Social Worker*  
Maggie Williams, *Psychologist*

### Rosendale Elementary School

Luke Rakoczy, *Principal*  
Heather Bulger, *School Nurse*  
Jessica Brennan, *Social Worker*  
Janell Timmany, *Psychologist*

### Iroquois Middle School

Thomas Fyvie, *Principal*  
Christopher Adamek, *Asst. Principal*  
Christine Gravelle, *School Nurse*  
Kate Carroll, *School Counselor*  
Brian McAllister, *School Counselor*  
Mary Cloutier, *Psychologist*

### Van Antwerp Middle School

John Moskov, *Principal*  
Stacey Muscato, *Asst. Principal*  
Alyce Malone, *Social Worker*  
Meghan McCarthy, *School Counselor*  
Kevin McFerran, *School Counselor*  
Brandon Sinisi, *Psychologist*  
Carol Perrino, *School Nurse*

### Niskayuna High School

John Rickert, *Principal*  
Anthony Malizia, *Asst. Principal*  
Joseph Coleman, *Asst. Principal*  
Nancy Bushee, *School Counselor*  
Patrice Adams, *School Nurse*  
Sascha Cade, *School Nurse*  
Meghan Farquharson, *Social Worker*  
Allison Nunez, *Social Worker*  
Jennifer Reittinger, *Psychologist*  
Justine Coman, *Psychologist*

### Athletics

Lawrence Gillooley, *Director of Physical Education & Athletics*

### Special Education

Julie Bouyea, *Director of Elementary Special Education*  
Andrea Marques-Clark, *Director of Secondary Special Education*

### Chief Equity Officer

Latisha J. Barnett, *Title IX & Chief Equity Officer*

