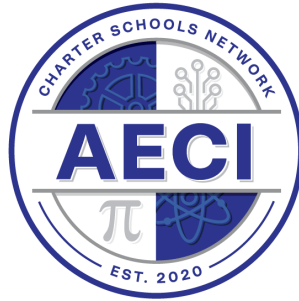


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## **Dignity for all Students Act (DASA) Policy**

AECI Network is committed to providing a safe and productive learning environment in which all students are treated with respect and dignity. In accordance with New York State's "Dignity for All Students Act" ("DASA"), AECI Network will promptly address incidents of harassment and/or discrimination of or by any student enrolled at either school. This includes bullying, taunting, or intimidation in all their myriad forms.

### Policy Definitions:

"*School property*" means in or within any building, structure, athletic playing field, playground, parking lot, or land contained within the real property boundary line of a public elementary or secondary school; or in or on a school bus, as defined in section 142 of the vehicle and traffic law.

"*School function*" means a school-sponsored extracurricular event or activity.

"*Harassment*" and "*Bullying*" shall mean the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by threats, intimidation or abuse, including cyberbullying, that (a) 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 (b) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; or (c) reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause physical injury or emotional harm to a student; or (d) occurs off school property and creates or would foreseeably create a risk of substantial disruption within the school environment, where it is foreseeable that the conduct, threats, intimidation or abuse might reach school property. Acts of harassment and bullying shall include, but not be limited to those acts based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex. For the purposes of this definition the term "threats, intimidation or abuse" shall include verbal and non-verbal actions.

"*Cyberbullying*" shall mean harassment or bullying as defined above, where such harassment or bullying occurs through any form of electronic communication.

Student Rights: No student shall be subjected to harassment or bullying, including cyberbullying, by employees or students on school property or at a school function. Additionally, no student shall be subjected to discrimination based on the student's actual or perceived race, color,

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weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender, or sex, by school employees or students on school property or at a school function.

AECI Network's Code of Conduct prohibits harassment and bullying, and students who engage in such behavior will be disciplined as set forth in the Code of Conduct. Further, each school reserves the right to discipline students, consistent with the Code of Conduct, who engage in harassment or bullying of students off school property under circumstances where such off-campus conduct:

1. affects the educative process;
2. endangers the health and safety of AECI Network students within the educational system; or
3. is reasonably believed to pose a danger to the health and safety of school students within the educational system.

This includes written and/or verbal harassment which materially and substantially disrupts the work and discipline of the school and/or which school officials reasonably forecast as being likely to materially and substantially disrupt the work and discipline of the school.

Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC): AECI Network has designated the Social Worker at each school to serve as the Dignity Act Coordinator (DAC) for that school. 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 names and contact information for the DACs are posted on each school's website ([aecicharterhs.org](http://aecicharterhs.org) / [aecicharterhs2.org](http://aecicharterhs2.org)) and are as follows:

AECI 1- Social Worker, Joseph Martonyi - [jmartonyi@aecicharterhs.org](mailto:jmartonyi@aecicharterhs.org)

AECI 2 - Guidance Counselor, Avril Guzman- [aguzman@aecicharterhs.org](mailto:aguzman@aecicharterhs.org)

The DAC will be accessible to students and other employees for consultation and advice.

AECI Network and DASA Education: AECI schools promote positive interpersonal relations and respect for diversity among students and between students and staff. Our schools aim to provide all students with a supportive and safe environment in which to grow and thrive academically and socially because we understand that the ability of students to learn and meet high academic standards and our community's ability to educate its students are compromised when students experience discrimination, or harassment, bullying, or intimidating behavior.

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Our schools aim to prevent bullying behavior by ensuring that everyone in our school community—teachers, administrators, support staff, safety agents, cafeteria, custodial staff, school counselors, student support staff, students, and parents—is provided with an understanding of what bullying is by: (1) clarifying schoolwide rules that prohibit bullying and discrimination; (2) promoting fundamental life skills that help students recognize and manage their own emotions, develop caring and concern for others, establish positive relationships, make responsible decisions, and handle challenging situations constructively and ethically; (3) offering resources for parents, students, and school staff that include guidance documents and tip sheets on understanding the difference between bullying and conflict, along with lessons, book lists, and other instructional materials for school staff; (4) infusing bullying prevention, including cyberbullying, and respect for diversity lessons and other activities into the instructional program; and (5) communicating and modeling the behavioral expectations at all times.

Reporting and Investigating: All AECI Network staff members are responsible for reporting harassment, bullying or discrimination of which they have been made aware to their immediate supervisor. Any student who believes that s/he is being subjected to harassment, bullying, or discrimination, as well as any other person who has knowledge of or witnesses any possible occurrence of harassment, bullying or discrimination, shall report the harassment, bullying or discrimination to any staff member, the DAC, or to the Principal. A staff member who witnesses harassment, bullying or discrimination or who receives an oral or written report of harassment, bullying or discrimination shall promptly orally notify the Principal not later than one (1) school day after witnessing, or receiving a report of, such acts and shall file a written report with the Principal not later than two (2) school days after making such oral report.

The Principal shall promptly investigate the complaint and take appropriate action, including as necessary, referral to the next level of supervisory authority (e.g., the Chief Executive Officer) and/or other official designated by the Board of Trustees to investigate allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination. When an investigation reveals any such verified harassment, bullying or discrimination, the school will take prompt actions that are reasonably calculated to: end the harassment, bullying or discrimination; eliminate any hostile environment; create a more positive school culture and climate; and prevent recurrence of the behavior. Any such actions shall be consistent with AECI Network's Code of Conduct, which follows a progressive discipline model, utilizing supports and interventions to respond to most behavioral infractions, including bullying and harassment, prior to imposing discipline. Follow-up inquiries and/or appropriate monitoring of the alleged harasser and victim shall be made to ensure that the harassment, bullying or discrimination has not resumed and that those involved in the investigation of allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination have not suffered retaliation.

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Material incidents of discrimination and harassment on school grounds or at a school function will be reported to the State Education Department as required by law.

The Principal shall promptly notify law enforcement authorities when the Principal believes that any harassment, bullying or discrimination constitutes criminal conduct.

No Retaliation: AECI Network prohibits any retaliatory behavior directed against complainants, victims, witnesses, and/or any other individuals who participate in the investigation of allegations of harassment, bullying or discrimination. All complainants and those who participate in the investigation of a complaint in conformity with state law and school policies, who have acted reasonably and in good faith, have the right to be free from retaliation of any kind.

Distribution of Policy: AECI Network shall distribute a written or electronic copy of this Policy to all employees, students, and parents/guardians at least once during every school year.