

## ALH DASA POLICY

New York State's Dignity for All Students Act (DASA) seeks to provide the State's public elementary and secondary school students with a safe and supportive environment free from discrimination, intimidation, taunting, harassment, and bullying on school property, a school bus and/or at a school function.

Under DASA, all students are protected; regardless of actual or perceived race, sex, color, national origin, ethnicity, religion, disability, gender identity, weight, ethnic group, religious practice, and sexual orientation.

Albany Leadership Charter High School for Girls recognizes that a safe and supportive learning environment is essential for promoting student attendance and academic achievement. Albany Leadership prohibits discrimination, harassment and bullying of students, on or off school property, by school employees or other students.

Students are expected to be their "sister's keeper" and report incidents of discrimination, harassment and bullying to a teacher, principal or other staff member.

Parents/guardians have the responsibility to teach their children respect and dignity toward themselves and others. Parents have the responsibility to report incidents of discrimination, harassment, bullying, and cyberbullying that are witnessed or otherwise brought to their attention. Incidents should be reported in a timely manner to school officials.

The law requires that every school have a Dignity Act Coordinator who is trained to respond to reports of bullying, harassment and discrimination. If you are a student, or parent/guardian of a student, who is a victim of bullying, discrimination or harassment; or if you have witnessed bullying, discrimination or harassment, please contact one of the DASA Coordinators listed below.

Tara Smades, Social Worker  
694-5300 x226      tsmades@albanyleadershiphigh.org

Jennie Evans, Director of Student Support Services  
694-5300      jevans@albanyleadershiphigh.org



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Once an incident is reported, the following steps will be taken:

- Complaint filed with DASA Coordinator
- Investigation
  - ALH reserves the right to involve Law Enforcement at any time in the process of each individual investigation
- Families of both parties contacted per investigation results
- Meeting with alleged bully and Principal and/or Assistant Principal to discuss allegations
- Meeting with alleged bully and target for restorative session (if target is agreeable)
- Possible interventions for bully and target individually (if necessary)
- Follow-up meeting(s) with bully, target and Principal or Assistant Principal after 2 weeks.

Should further evidence show that the student charged with bullying is continuing to threaten, harass or retaliate, a long-term Out of School Suspension (OSS) may be the immediate course of action. A mandatory meeting will take place with the student, her family and the Principal and/or Assistant Principal before the student can return to classes. Should the student continue to harass the same student or others, the school will be forced to meet with the family to re-consider if ALH is a sound choice for the student and family.

### DEFINITIONS

**Bullying:** Any unwanted aggressive behavior(s) by another youth or group of youths who are not siblings or current dating partners that involves an observed or perceived power imbalance and is repeated multiple times or is highly likely to be repeated. Bullying may inflict harm or distress on the targeted youth including physical, psychological, social, or educational harm. (Center for Disease Control)

**Cyberbullying:** Cyberbullying is bullying that takes place using electronic technology. Electronic technology includes devices and equipment such as cell phones, computers, and tablets as well as communication tools including social media sites, text messages, chat, and websites. Examples of cyberbullying include mean text messages or emails, rumors sent by email or posted on social networking sites, and embarrassing pictures, videos, websites, or fake profiles.

([www.Stopbullying.gov](http://www.Stopbullying.gov))

**Harassment:** the creation of a hostile environment by conduct or by verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that 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 wellbeing; or conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse that reasonably causes or would reasonably be expected to cause a student to fear for his or her physical safety; such conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse includes but is not limited to conduct, verbal threats, intimidation or abuse based on a person's actual or perceived race, color, weight, national origin, ethnic group, religion, religious practice, disability, sexual orientation, gender or sex.

(Definition under the Dignity Act)

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**Sexual Harassment:** conduct that is sexual in nature, unwelcome, and denies or limits a student's ability to participate in or benefit from a school's education program.

Examples of sexual conduct include:

- making sexual propositions or pressuring students for sexual favors;
- touching of a sexual nature;
- writing graffiti of a sexual nature;
- displaying or distributing sexually explicit drawings, pictures, or written materials;
- performing sexual gestures or touching oneself sexually in front of others;
- telling sexual or dirty jokes;
- spreading sexual rumors or rating other students as to sexual activity or performance; or
- circulating or showing e-mails or web sites of a sexual nature.

(US Department of Education)

Albany Leadership's Student Code of Conduct outlines expected behaviors and the consequences for bullying, harassment and various forms of discrimination outlined in the Dignity for All Students Act.