



# GETTING HELP WITH A PROBLEM

## Bullying, Cyberbullying, Harassment, Intimidation, Hazing, & Bias Behavior

Bullying and cyberbullying, harassment and intimidation, hazing, and bias behaviors are unsafe and do not reflect respect for others as defined by the *Code of Conduct, Character and Support*. If you or someone you know is a target of one of these behaviors, you can report it using the *Bullying, Harassment, or Intimidation Reporting Form*, available on the school website or in the main office or the counseling office of your school. You can also tell a staff member, who will respond quickly and provide a practical, private, and safe place to report.

If an administrator determines that one of these behaviors has occurred, the students involved will receive support from a school counselor, school psychologist, school social worker, pupil personnel worker, or school health staff person to be sure everyone involved feels safe and supported and understands how to avoid these situations in the future.

### If You are Being Bullied...

- Tell someone — a parent, a teacher, a counselor
- Calmly tell the student to stop...or say nothing and walk away
- Call (315) 435-6327
- Submit a DASA form found at [syracusecityschools.com/support](http://syracusecityschools.com/support)
- Find a list of each school's DASA coordinators at: [syracusecityschools.com/dasa](http://syracusecityschools.com/dasa)

### If You Know Someone who is Being Bullied...

- If you feel safe, be an “Upstander” and
  - Tell the bully to stop by saying, “We don’t do that at this school.” Or “That’s not right to treat someone like that.”
  - Say words of support to the student being bullied—Be a friend!
  - Don’t encourage the bully by laughing or joining in
  - Tell other **bystanders** how to help stop bullying
- If it doesn’t feel safe...
  - Tell an adult
  - Encourage the bullied student to talk to someone

## Dignity for All Students Act (DASA)

### Reporting requirements Specific to Discrimination, Harassment, Bullying, Cyberbullying and Retaliation

1. The District will act to promptly investigate all complaints, verbal or written, formal or informal, of allegations of discrimination, harassment, bullying and retaliation, and will promptly take appropriate action to protect individuals from further discrimination, harassment, bullying
2. It is essential that any student who believes that he/she has been subjected to discrimination, harassment, bullying or retaliatory conduct, as well as any individual who is aware of and/or who has knowledge of, or witnesses any possible occurrence, immediately report the same to any staff member or administrator. The staff member/administrator to whom the report is made (or the staff member/administrator who witnesses or suspects discrimination, harassment, bullying or retaliatory conduct) shall document and take appropriate action to address the situation immediately and shall promptly report in accordance with the following paragraphs.
  - a. The appropriate building Principal is the employee charged with receiving all reports of harassment, bullying, discrimination or retaliation; however, students and parents may make an oral or written complaint of harassment, bullying or discrimination to any teacher, administrator or school employee. In the event that the Principal was the alleged offender, the report shall be directed to the Superintendent.
  - b. All complaints of alleged discriminatory, harassing, bullying or retaliatory conduct shall be:
    - Promptly investigated in accordance with the terms of this *Code of Conduct, Character and Support*;
    - Forwarded to the building Dignity Act Coordinator for monitoring; and
    - Treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints.
3. Upon receipt of a complaint (even an anonymous complaint), or if a District employee otherwise learns of any occurrence of possible conduct prohibited by this Code, the District employee shall promptly and orally notify the appropriate building Principal no later than one school day after such employee witnesses or receives the complaint or learns of such conduct. Such employee shall also file a written report with the appropriate building Dignity Act Coordinator no later than two school days after making such oral report.
4. After receipt of such complaint, the appropriate building Principal, or his/her designee, shall lead or supervise a thorough investigation of the alleged discriminatory, harassing, bullying, or retaliatory conduct. The appropriate building Principal or that person’s designee shall ensure that such investigation is completed promptly and in accordance with the terms of this Code. All complaints shall be treated as confidential and private to the extent possible within legal constraints.

5. Based upon the results of the investigation, if the District determines that a District official, employee, volunteer, vendor, visitor and/or student has violated this Code, or a material incident of harassment, bullying, discrimination and/or retaliatory conduct has occurred, immediate corrective action will be taken as warranted. The District will take prompt action reasonably calculated to end the violation, eliminate any hostile environment, create a more positive school culture and climate, prevent recurrence of the behavior, and ensure the safety of the student or students against whom such violation was directed.
6. The building principals shall provide a regular report, at least once during each school year, on data and trends related to harassment, bullying and/or discrimination to the Superintendent of Schools.

### Procedures for Enacting Assigned Consequences

In all cases, regardless of the *consequence assigned*, the school personnel authorized to assign the consequence must inform the student of the alleged misconduct and must investigate the facts surrounding the alleged misconduct. All students will have an opportunity to present their version of events prior to the assigning of a) time in the Student Support Center, b) in-school suspension, c) out-of-school suspension, d) Pre-K-2 District consultation, or e) Superintendent's hearing.

### Referrals to External Agencies and Institutions Counseling and Human Services Agencies:

SCSD staff may be a resource to students, parents and families for referrals of students to counseling and human services agencies.

### ACCESS Team:

Each of our schools has been assigned a School Liaison from the ACCESS Team. If you need help for your child/teen with emotional or behavioral challenges, call the ACCESS Team at 463-1100 24 hours a day, seven days a week or speak with your school social worker. A trained staff person will link you to community supports and services that best fit your child's and family's needs. The staff team includes parents who have raised or are raising a child requiring mental health, child welfare or juvenile justice services. The ACCESS Team is also the first step to begin the PINS process for a child under the age of 18 who is habitually truant from school and/or uncontrollable at home, school, or in the community. Common behaviors might include runaway behavior, patterns of disobedience, physical/verbal abuse of parents and truancy. Onondaga County's ACCESS Team, which is a multi-disciplinary team, that includes Social Services, Probation, Parent Support Partners and practitioners, is the lead agency when it comes to assisting parents and schools with issues relating to their child. We encourage parents to contact the ACCESS Team directly to begin seeking services.







## Staff Supporting Students in Every School Building

**Administrators:** The principal and administrators serve as champions of all discipline and student support activities and supervise the work of the teams essential to an integrated system of schoolwide discipline and student support.

A building administrator will chair the Discipline/School Climate Team and shall work with the Chief Ombuds Officer to ensure compliance at his or her school with the District’s policies. The administrator shall be available to work with the staff at his or her school to help determine appropriate discipline in specific cases and shall also work in coordination with and seek guidance from the Chief Ombuds Officer.

**Lead Social Worker:** A designated social worker who coordinates all support staff, both internal and external, and leads the work of ensuring that all students have equitable access to services and

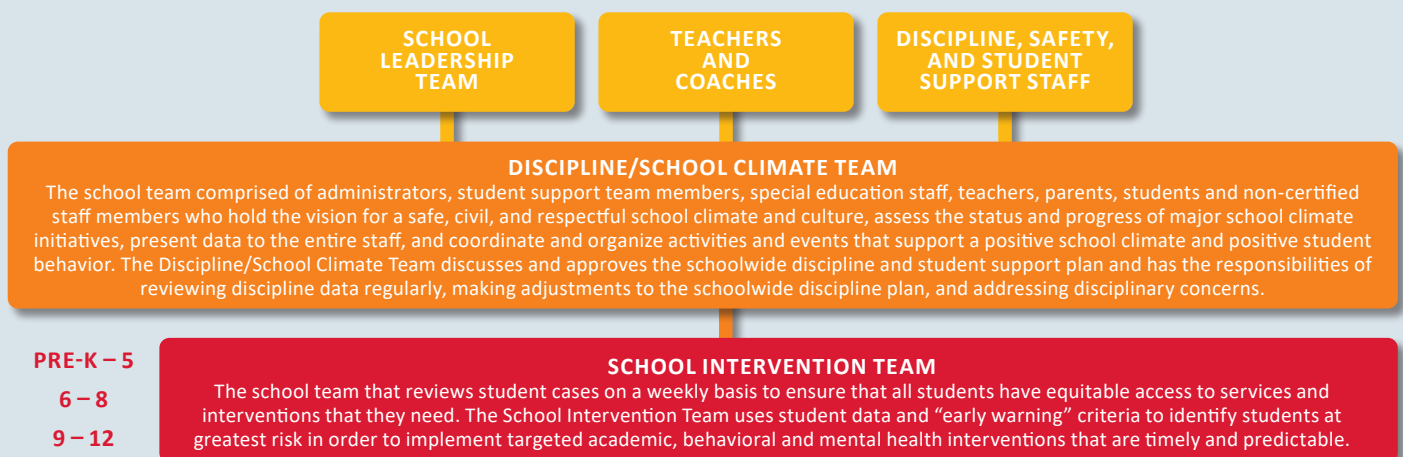
interventions that they need. The Lead Social Worker will also facilitate the intervention team in this work.

**Student Support Coach:** A student support team member (counselor, social worker, psychologist, student behavior specialist, youth advocate, youth development specialist, case manager, or special education collaborative teacher) or teacher volunteer who provides coaching, skill instruction, and support to specific students who need an on-going intervention and close progress monitoring or to students returning from a short-term or long-term suspension, alternative program, juvenile facility, or incarceration.

**Dignity Act Coordinator:** A school administrator and staff member serve as the DAC (Dignity Act) Coordinator to investigate and process all reported bullying and harassment incidents and ensures that all DASA prevention activities and DASA student interventions are delivered in a timely manner.

### Key Roles of School Teams and Individuals

To support a restorative and accountable orientation and the effective implementation of the Syracuse Code of Conduct, Character and Support, each school will establish the following teams.



## Confidentiality in Counseling

When a student indicates that he or she is thinking about hurting himself or herself or other students, school personnel are required to take action to ensure the safety of the student or other students. This action will include sharing of information with the school principal and parents, and may include other outside agencies. No statement, oral or written, made by a student seeking counseling for any form of drug abuse may be used as admissible evidence against him/her in any proceedings.

## School Problems

If students have a problem related to discipline, security, personal safety or welfare, or vandalism, the student should:

1. Tell the nearest teacher or adult staff member. Tell him/her exactly what has happened to the student or what the student has observed happening to someone else. Problems of discipline, security, and personal safety are considered very serious.
2. Talk to the principal or assistant principal right away.
3. Express feelings. It is natural to feel worried and upset. Talk to someone who will listen and understand — perhaps a peer mediator, peer helper, teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, social worker, or an adult mentor. It is important to talk to a trusted adult.
4. Ask to talk to a school counselor, school psychologist, or social worker who can help students learn ways to deal with problems so that they may feel safer and more comfortable when faced with similar problems in the future.
5. In addition to alerting school personnel, a student should tell his/her parents about the problem. They will want to know.

It is important for students to know that when a report is made to the school about an incident of this nature, every effort will be made to keep the information and identity confidential.

## Personal Problems

For help with personal problems which may affect a student's school life or activities:

1. If possible, discuss the problem with parents/guardians.
2. If a student and his/her parents/guardians cannot solve the problem, there are a number of people in the school who may be able to offer additional help. The student may speak to a teacher with whom he/she feels comfortable.
3. School counselors, psychologists, and social workers at the school are trained to offer help with personal problems. They can also lead the student to other resources he/she may not be aware of.
4. The vice principal and the principal will also be able to discuss the problem with the student and attempt to work on a solution. If they are unable to do so, they will seek assistance.

## Academic Problems

For help with an academic problem, the student should:

1. See the teacher who teaches the subject. Students may seek out the teachers on a personal basis. Teachers routinely work with individual students who are having academic problems. The teacher may recommend help sessions or mentoring, or may make a referral for additional assistance. The teacher may ask for a conference with the student and his/her parents/guardians.
2. If the teacher is unable to help the student resolve the problem to the student's satisfaction, the student should go next to an administrator.
3. Further help can be obtained through the school counselor.
4. **For problems that are still not resolved after the student has talked with the school counselor, the student should discuss the matter with his/her parents/guardians and with the principal or vice principal. Parents/guardians may wish to join the student in discussions with the principal.**
5. Solving an academic problem requires the student's help, along with the help from teachers and sometimes parents/guardians, the school counselor, and other school professionals.
6. Your school may have a Homework Hotline to assist you.

## Extracurricular Activities

For help with problems involving extracurricular activities, the student should:

1. See the advisor assigned to the activity at a time when he/she can give you his/her undivided attention. Try not to discuss the problem during the activity period itself.
2. If the activity involves athletics, see the athletic director of your school.
3. If the student does not know who is assigned as advisor to the activity, the student should see an administrator.
4. If the student is unable to get help in solving the problem by doing the above, discuss the matter with parents/guardians and with the principal. Parents/guardians may wish to join the student in discussions with the principal.

## Group Problems

For help with a group problem related to discipline, security, personal safety, or welfare: If a group of students feels it shares a common problem, the best way to seek assistance is for the group to send two or three representatives to the teacher or administrator involved and present the group's point of view on the matter. Communication between one or two people and a large group is extremely difficult and is an ineffective approach to problem solving. The most effective approach is one that involves communication between representatives of the groups involved.



## Appeals Process

If, after a Superintendent's Hearing, a student has been found guilty of violating the school's *Code of Conduct, Character and Support*, a person who has a parental relationship to the student can appeal that decision as well as the imposed penalty.

To appeal the Superintendent's Hearing Decision to the Board of Education, the following steps apply:

- The parent/guardian has 10 days after receipt of the written decision from the Superintendent to appeal to the Board of Education.
- The appeal must be in writing (a letter is acceptable).
- The letter must be submitted to the Syracuse City School District Clerk.

If the appeal to the Board of Education is denied, the petitioner may appeal that decision to the New York State Commissioner of Education. To do so, the following steps must be followed:

- The petitioner has 30 days from the time the decision is received.
- The petitioner must file and serve a Notice of Petition, a Petition, and any supporting affidavit(s).

If that petition is denied, decisions of the New York State Commissioner of Education can be reviewed by a New York State Court.

## Complaint Procedures

Students and parents have the right to file a complaint if they believe that there has been a violation or misapplication of a written provision of school policy or their due process rights have been violated.

### Process for Making a Complaint

A student or parent with a concern about a discipline-related decision or action should first discuss the concern with the person who made the decision.

If the student or parent is not satisfied with the handling of the matter, the student or parent should file a verbal or written complaint with the school principal.

If the student or parent is still not satisfied, they may contact the Chief Ombuds Officer by email at [ombuds@scsd.us](mailto:ombuds@scsd.us) or by calling (315) 435-6472. Students and parents may also contact a Student Advocate at (315) 435-6472.

It is important to note that students and parents have the right to file a verbal or written complaint and that neither the Board, nor any member of the administration or faculty, will make reprisals affecting anyone because he or she made a complaint.



### Let's Talk!

Provide your feedback by using the district's "Let's Talk" communication system accessible on the district's website.

To access "Let's Talk" please visit [www.syracusecityschools.com](http://www.syracusecityschools.com).