

## **Dignity for All Students Act**

The New York State Dignity for All Students Act (The Dignity Act) was signed into law in September, 2010 and will become effective July 2, 2012. All children have the right to attend school in a safe, welcoming, and caring environment free from harassment and discrimination. The Dignity Act ensures this for all New York State public school students. Although religious and private schools are exempt from the Dignity law, much of what has been signed into the Dignity Act has been and continues to be practiced in our Diocesan schools.

Codes of conduct exist for students, staff and volunteers and policies are in place to create a safe environment in our schools free from harassment, discrimination or, any form of abuse. Awareness and prevention training is mandatory for all staff and volunteers in our schools, and all students are provided with age appropriate instruction that 1) defines abuse, 2) makes clear how to report abuse, and 3) provides training on personal safety skills.

The school curriculum and programs are built on strong Catholic principles that underscore the goal for our students to be more like Christ in their thoughts, words and deeds. Instruction in civility, citizenship and character education is standard curriculum in our schools, with a strong emphasis on principles of honesty, tolerance, personal responsibility, respect for others, observance of the laws and rules, courtesy, and dignity and respect for all.

Faculty, staff, and student behavior is expected to conform to values consistent with the Catholic faith.