

IS THIS BULLYING?

For a behavior to be deemed “bullying”, it needs to include ALL of the following elements (defined by Massachusetts General Law):

- Must be **repeated** action(s) by one or more students
- Must be a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof
- Must be directed at a target so that it causes one or more of the following:
 - Physical or emotional harm to the target;
 - Damage to the target’s property;
 - Places the target in reasonable fear of harm to himself/herself or of damage to his/her property;
 - Creates a hostile environment at school for the target;
 - Infringes on the rights of the target at school; OR
 - Materially and substantially disrupts the education process or the orderly operation of a school.
- ✓ One-time incidents may be deliberately mean or cruel, but they are not bullying. Still, one-time incidents are subject to school discipline as per the school’s policy.
- ✓ Incidents that happen off-campus (e.g. cyberbullying) may mean that the child who bullies cannot – by law – be subject to school discipline. However, other measures may be taken to help targets and to try to educate children involved in risky behaviors.