

St. Mary's Elementary School

IS THIS BULLYING?

A GUIDE FOR PARENTS

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

- Must be **repeated** (three or more) actions by one or more Aggressors
 - 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 him/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 may be subject to school discipline as per the school's policy.

**St. Mary's Elementary School
Parental Bullying Information Sheet
When Should You Contact The School?**

You should contact the school to inform them of a situation when:

The Situation	Your Role	What the School Can Do	What the School Cannot Do
Your child is afraid to see another child at school, or generally afraid to go to school because of any incident	Get as many specific details as possible about why this is occurring	They can create a Safety Plan for your child.	They cannot discuss with you any discussions or actions taken with other children, including the child your child is afraid of.
Your child reports to you an incident that occurred at school.	Be sure to get very specific information from your child about the incident.	They can take steps to ensure the safety of the children involved.	They cannot discuss with you the steps they take that involve any other child.
Your child reports to you that they've heard a rumor about a future incident that may occur at school.	Get as many specific details as possible.	Investigate the plausibility of the future incident and take appropriate actions	They cannot discuss with you their discussions with other children.
Your child reports to you that another child is being bullied at school.	Get as many specific details as possible.	Investigate the situation	Report back to you any outcome of the investigation.
You hear about a school bullying incident from any other credible source (e.g., from other children, or reading about it on your child's Facebook page, etc.)	Get as many specific details as possible.	Investigate the situation	Report back to you any outcome of the investigation, except for your child's part, if any.
If you have a serious disagreement about a disciplinary action taken by the school	If this is the case, begin by pursuing a private conversation with the school administration. Challenging the school's authority publicly to make such decisions will only, in the long run, lead to more disciplinary problems among children who will perceive that the adult community does not respect the school administration.		Educators are bound by policy. They may not be able to change an action if doing so violates the policy set by the Diocese.

If you wish to review the law, it may be accessed through:

*Law Enforcement Dimensions – www.ledimensions.com This is the clearest and easiest to read.

*www.mass.gov The actual bill is listed as Senate #2313

*Additional information concerning bullying and cyberbullying can be obtained through:

Massachusetts Aggression Reduction Center at Bridgewater State College "MARC"

www.bridgew.edu/marc