

Massachusetts Anti-bullying Law

- requires teachers and staff to report all bullying incidents to school administration;
- mandates annual teacher and staff prevention and intervention training;
- calls for anti-bullying lessons in school curricula.

The law applies to all school districts statewide, including

- public and non-public schools
- charter schools
- approved private schools, day or residential
- collaborative schools.

Bullying is an arrestable offense, with a charge of criminal harassment.

The official definition of bullying is:

the repeated use by one or more students of a written, verbal or electronic expression or a physical act or gesture or any combination thereof, directed at a victim that causes physical or emotional harm to the victim or damage to the victim's property; places the victim in reasonable fear of harm to her/himself or damage to her/his property; creates a hostile environment at the school for the victim; infringes on the rights of the victim at school; or materially and substantially disrupts the education process or orderly operation of a school.

NO NAME CALLING DAY

The 4th Wednesday in January



Support your school's program for No Name Calling Day!

In 2010, the Massachusetts legislature passed **An Act Relative to Bullying in Schools.**

Inspired by lobbying from students of **Quashnet Elementary School** in Mashpee, this act requires the governor to set apart the fourth Wednesday in January as **No Name Calling Day** to

- increase public awareness of the devastating effects of verbal bullying,
- to encourage students to use positive dialogue and pledge not to use hurtful names,
- to promote tolerance and respect for differences
- to reaffirm the commitment of the citizens of the Commonwealth to basic human rights and dignity.

Bullying

It's
against
the law!

Here's what
you need to know:

- what is bullying?
- how to recognize bullying
- what you can do
- who can help

Information for
parents and kids...

**BARNSTABLE COUNTY
HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION**

508-375-6912

email: hrc@barnstablecounty.org

more info: www.barnstablecounty.org/human-rights-commission/

Warning signs of bullying

As a parent, you know your child best. Be wary if your child:

- comes home with torn, damaged or missing pieces of clothing, books or other belongings.
- has cuts, bruises or scratches he/she can't explain.
- seems to have few, if any, friends with whom she/he spends time.
- seems afraid of going to school, walking to and from school, riding the school bus, or taking part in clubs or sports.
- may be taking a long, illogical route to school or home.
- has lost interest and suddenly begins to do poorly in school.
- complains frequently of headaches, stomachaches, or other physical ailments or has trouble sleeping or frequent bad dreams.
- appears sad or moody, cries easily, or seems depressed when he/she comes home.
- suddenly "isn't hungry" or seems anxious, suffering from low self-esteem.

What if you're being bullied?

If you're being bullied at school or on the bus or playground or on-line, TELL AN ADULT YOU TRUST. That may be a teacher or a coach or your parents. Maybe you have an older sibling you can talk to about what's happening. The most important thing is to TELL SOMEONE.

If the person you tell doesn't help you, tell another person. Keep repeating your story to an adult until you get some support. Remember, **bullying and cyberbullying are both against the law**. Your school has the responsibility of helping you and reporting the bullying. They may call in the police if the bullying continues.

You don't have to suffer bullying in silence. People around you care about you and want to help. Please tell an adult you trust about your experience and keep telling until you get results.

What should parents do?

First, tell your child you are concerned and want to help.

Ask direct questions: "Are there any kids at school who may be picking on you or bullying you? Are there kids at school who tease you in a mean way? Are there any kids at school who leave you out or exclude you on purpose?"

Or you can ask more subtle questions: "Who are your special friends at school this year? Who do you hang out with? Who do you sit with at lunch or on the bus? Are there any kids at school you don't really like? Why don't you like them? Do they ever pick on you or leave you out of things?"

Check, too, on your child's on-line relations. Ask whether he/she is having problems with mean or harassing texts or posts on social media. **Cyberbullying is also against the law.**

Make an appointment with your child's teacher or guidance counselor.

Share your concerns and ask questions: "How does my child get along with other students in his or her class? Have you noticed or suspected that my child is bullied by other students?" Meet together with your child and the guidance counselor.

Bullying is abuse and it is against the law.

Kids need to know that saying something to a parent or trusted adult can stop bullying. It may take time – they need to keep on telling a trusted adult until someone takes action. **They do not have to suffer in silence.**