

Washington [RCW 28A.300.285](#) defines **harassment**, **intimidation** and **bullying** as any intentionally written message or image—including those that are electronically transmitted—verbal, or physical act, including but not limited to one shown to be motivated by race, color, religion, ancestry, national origin, gender, sexual orientation, including gender expression or identity, mental or physical disability or other distinguishing characteristics, when an act:

- Physically harms a student or damages the student’s property, or
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student’s education or
- Is so severe, persistent or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening educational environment or
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the school.

Although **harassment**, **intimidation** and **bullying** are closely related, they are not the same. This chart will help differentiate one from another.

CHARACTERISTICS	HARASSMENT	INTIMIDATION	BULLYING
Negative / Malicious	YES	YES	YES
Repeated	NOT NECESSARILY	NOT NECESSARILY	YES
Intentional	NOT NECESSARILY	YES	YES
Lack of empathy	NOT NECESSARILY	YES	YES
Power differential	NOT NECESSARILY	YES	YES
Threat of physical violence	NOT NECESSARILY	YES	NOT NECESSARILY
Harms physical or mental well-being	YES	YES	YES
Specific target(s)	NOT NECESSARILY	OFTEN	USUALLY
Targets protected class	OFTEN (Discriminatory or Malicious Harassment)	NOT NECESSARILY	MAY / MAY NOT
Sexually based	YES (Sexual Harassment)	NOT NECESSARILY	MAY / MAY NOT
“Reward” for submission	OFTEN	YES	MAY (Ex: HAZING)
Threatens education	MAY / MAY NOT	MAY / MAY NOT	MAY / MAY NOT
Disrupts school	MAY / MAY NOT	MAY / MAY NOT	MAY / MAY NOT
Cyber/Digital / Online Potential	YES	YES	YES
Legal implications	YES	MAY / MAY NOT	MAY / MAY NOT
RCW / Policy Requirement WAC	YES RCW28A.300.285/RCW28A.640.020 WAC495A - 121-011	YES RCW 28A.300.285 WAC495A - 121-011	YES RCW28A.300.285
Level of Enforcement/Contact	OSPI Equity Office	District HIB Compliance Officer	District HIB Compliance Officer