

Dear Family,

For the past several months, our school has been teaching the *Steps to Respect* program, a schoolwide bullying prevention program. The primary goal of the program is to help create a safe, respectful, caring learning environment that is bullying-free for all students.

As part of this program, our class is studying literature lessons that reinforce many of the concepts the children have learned in the program. We are reading the book *Blubber* by Judy Blume. The book is about a fifth-grade girl's experiences with bullying, including how children around her respond to it. The story includes several realistic bullying incidents and three profanities. *Blubber* is an important part of the *Steps to Respect* program because it gives students the opportunity to discuss respect, friendship, and bullying. Students also learn from the situations presented in the story. Because bullying is a sensitive issue, we want to inform you of the book's content and to assure you that lessons accompanying the reading specifically address positive ways of handling bullying situations.

The lessons in this unit teach children to take responsibility for creating a caring school by:

- Refusing to take part in bullying.
- Seeking help from an adult by reporting bullying.
- Empathizing with and reaching out to children who are bullied.
- Learning how to deal with bullying when it happens.

We know that all children worry about bullying even if they are not directly involved in it. This novel allows children to discuss this topic in a safe and productive way. When we directly address bullying, students are more likely to be able to handle bullying situations when they arise.

We encourage you to discuss the book and the lessons with your child.

Thank you,

Classroom Teacher