

Preventing Bullying



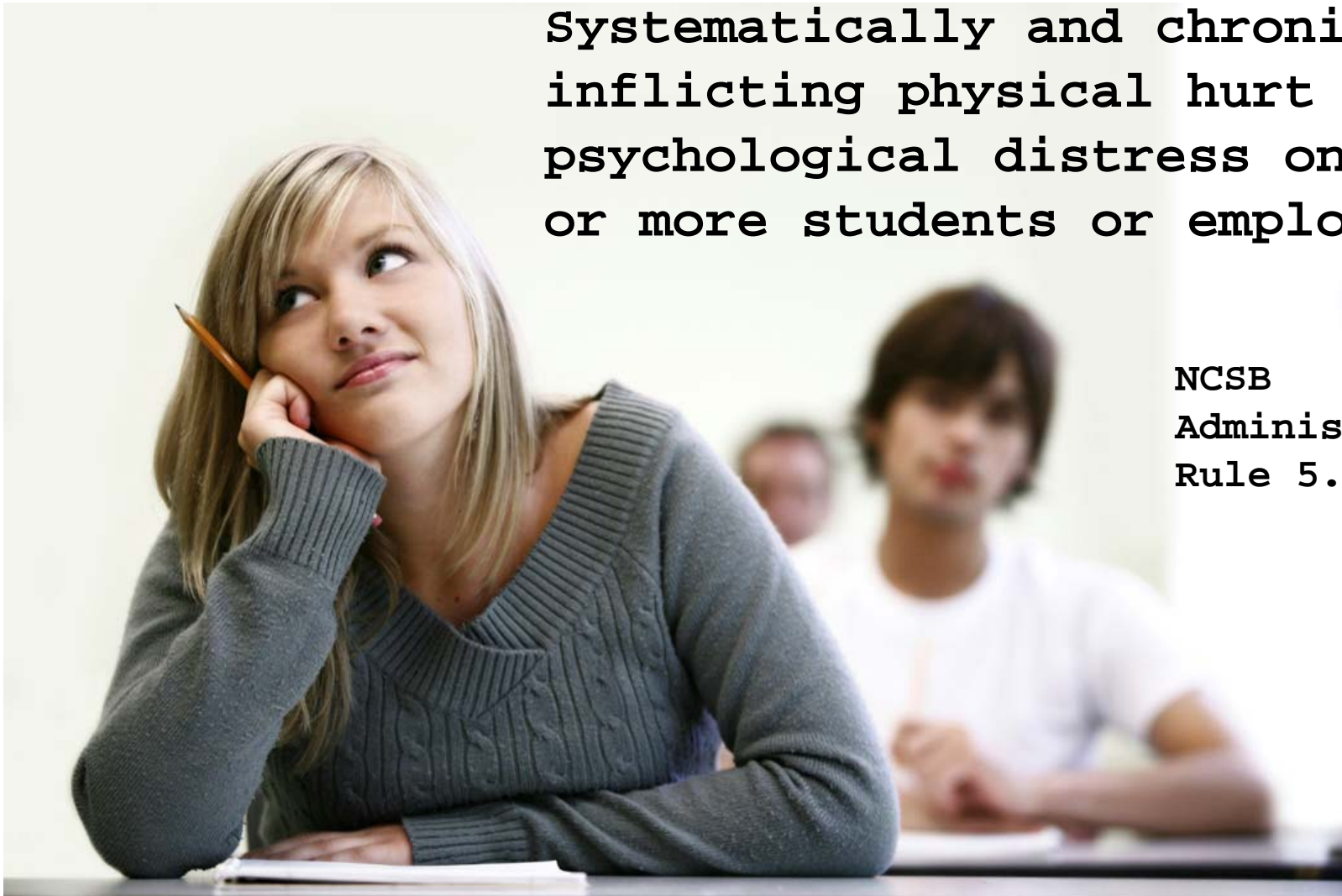
*What
Every
Parent
Needs
to Know*



What Is Bullying?

Systematically and chronically inflicting physical hurt or psychological distress on one or more students or employees.

NCSB
Administrative
Rule 5.49



How Do We Know It's Bullying?



- The bully intends to hurt the victim and enjoys doing it.
- It's severe enough or pervasive enough to create an intimidating, hostile, or offensive educational environment.
- The behavior is repeated.
- It unreasonably interferes with the victim's school performance or participation.
- It occurs in a relationship where one individual has perceived power over another.

What Are Some Examples?

- Unwanted teasing or taunting
- Social exclusion
- Threat
- Intimidation
- Stalking
- Physical violence
- Theft
- Sexual, religious, or racial harassment
- Public humiliation
- Destruction of property
- Cyberstalking



What Is Harassment?



- Any threatening, insulting or dehumanizing gesture, use of data or computer software, or written, verbal or physical conduct directed against a student or school employee. . .

That...



- Places a student or school employee in reasonable fear of harm to his/her person or damage to his/her property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with a student's educational performance
- Substantially disrupts the orderly operation of a school

Misconceptions About Bullying

#1: Our school doesn't have a problem with bullies.

Results of climate surveys in Nassau County Schools show that some students don't feel safe at school and many students don't think other students show respect for themselves and others. An even higher percent of teachers say students don't respect themselves and others.

On the 2014 Florida Youth Substance Abuse Survey, 46.4% of middle school students were worried about bullying, and 40% reported being teased or taunted in the previous 30 days.



Another Misconception



#2: There are other safety issues that worry parents and students more than bullying.

Research shows that students put bullying ahead of many other safety issues. 21% of parents enrolling students in home education cite the school environment, including bullying, as a reason for removing their children from public schools (US Department of Education).

Other Mistaken Beliefs



#3: Teachers are able to see bullying whenever it happens and intervene.

Teachers and other school staff often overestimate their effectiveness in identifying bullying and intervening. They frequently "miss" seeing incidents of bullying because many episodes occur where supervision is low and the behavior is mistaken for ordinary interaction.

#4: Bullies are social misfits and have low self-esteem.

Some bullies are actually popular with both peers and teachers. They may be very self-confident and use bullying to maintain their social position.

And still more myths...

#5: Bullies are boys - girls don't bully.

Although they may use different means, girls do bully and their bullying can be very destructive.

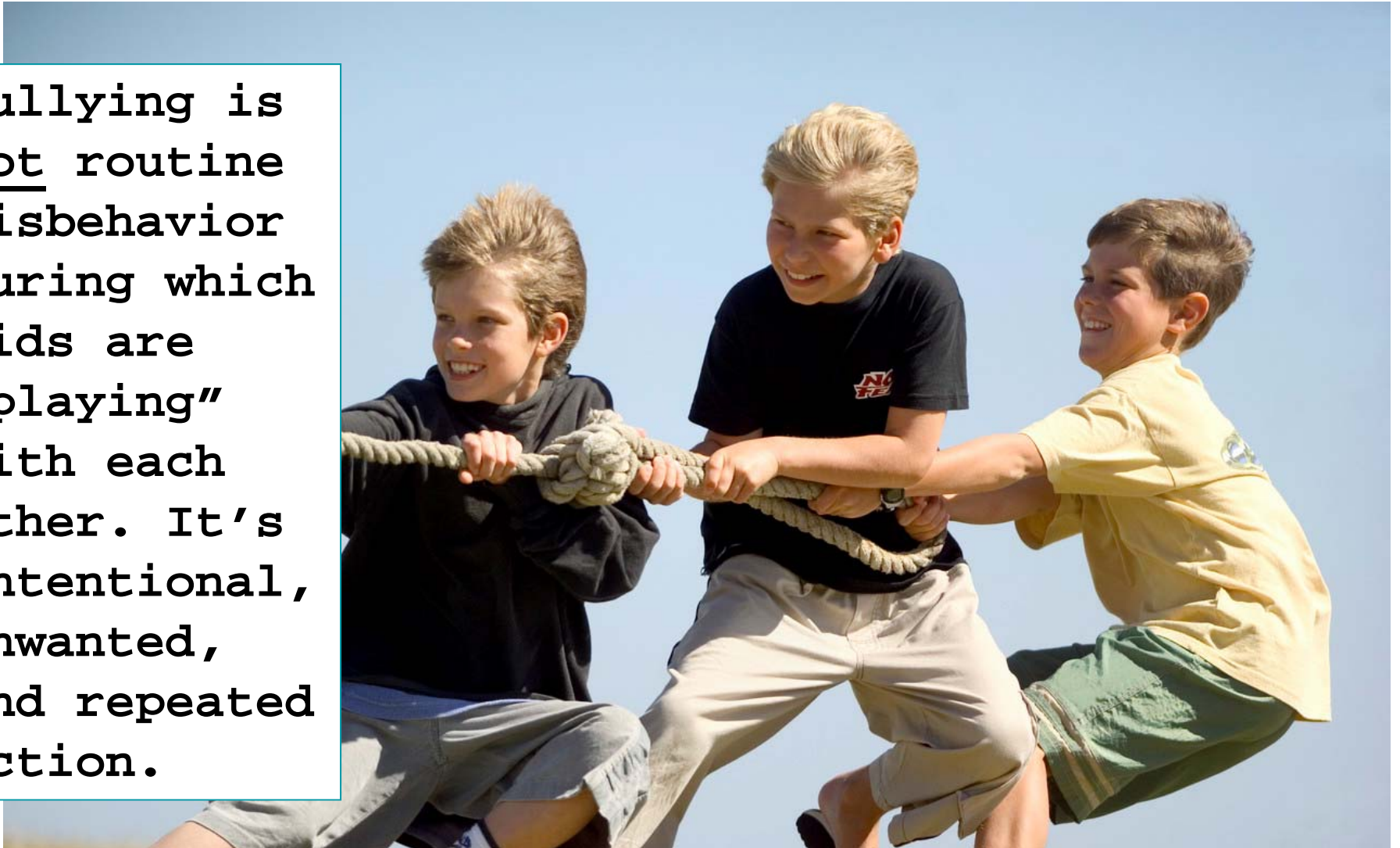
#6: If you just ignore him/her, a bully will eventually stop.

Bullying behavior seldom just goes away. Even if it isn't full-fledged bullying, reporting unwanted behavior allows school staff to intervene and stop it before it reaches the "bullying" level. Ignoring it results in frustration and building anger.



Horseplay or Bullying?

Bullying is not routine misbehavior during which kids are "playing" with each other. It's intentional, unwanted, and repeated action.

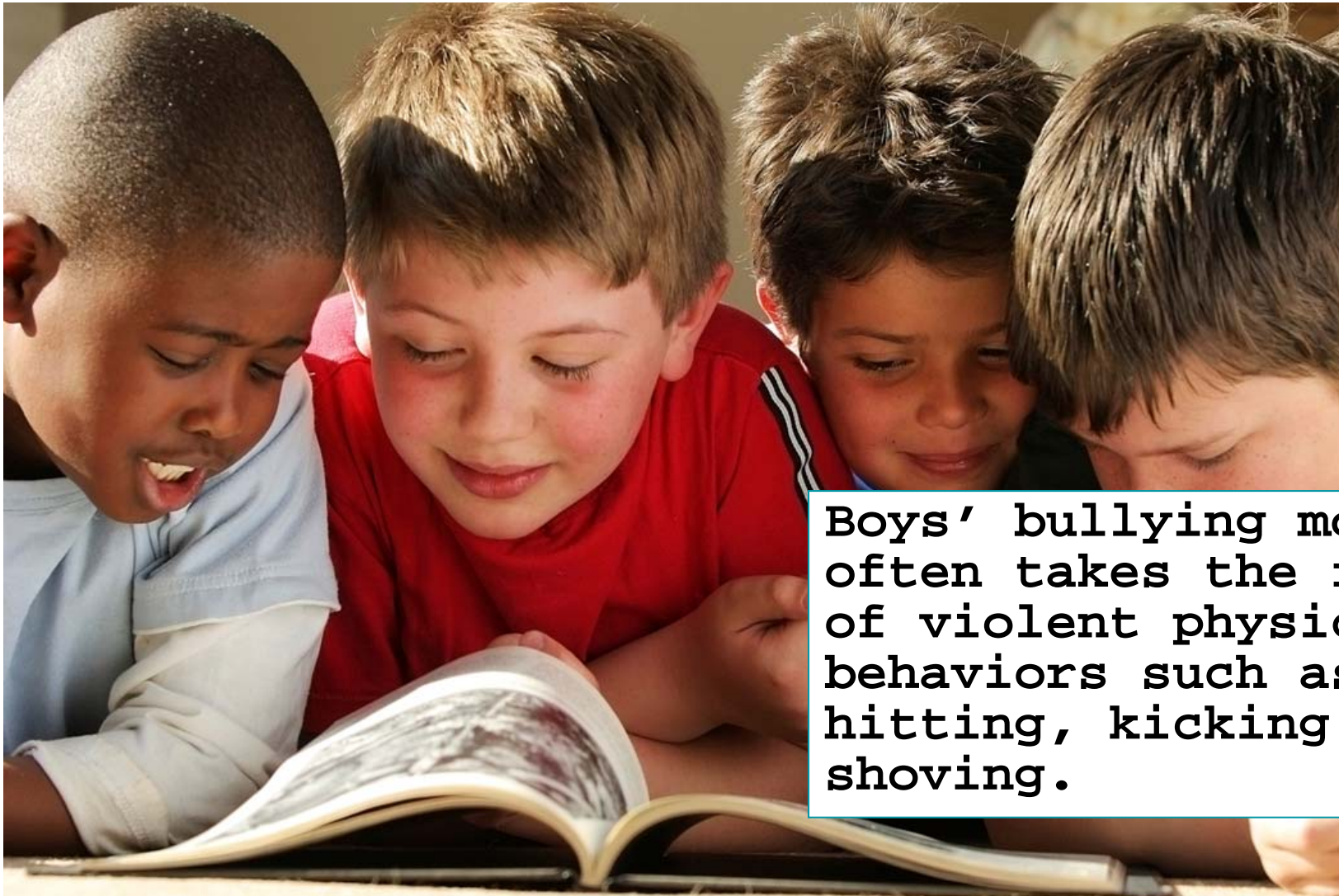


Mean Girls



Girls who bully tend to use meanness in the form of exclusion, isolation, and rumor spreading.

And What About the Boys?



Boys' bullying more often takes the form of violent physical behaviors such as hitting, kicking, and shoving.

Bullying with Technology



Technology makes it easy for students to bully others anonymously and with a wider audience. Social network sites such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, instant messaging, three-way calling, and cell-phone texting all provide avenues.

Many times, this activity takes place outside school, but results in conflict at school.

It's very important to enforce the "cell phones must be turned off in school" rule.

Blaming the Victim



Uninformed students and teachers may try to place the blame for being bullied on the victim. They may believe being bullied is a result of the victim's own behavior or that the victim is weak - an easy target.

How Does Bullying Hurt?

Being a victim of bullying may have a variety of consequences, such as...

Increased illness and absence due to illness

Physical injury

Attempted suicide

Compulsion to take drastic actions such as weapon-carrying or fighting back

Feelings of isolation, exclusion, or alienation

Fear and anxiety

Difficulty forming friendships

Depression

Feelings of incompetence or powerlessness

Truancy

Grades may drop

Difficulty concentrating on schoolwork



And It's Not Just the Victims...

Bystanders and peers of the victim:

- ✓ May be afraid to associate with the victim for fear of lowering their own status or becoming a victim themselves
- ✓ Fear reporting because they don't want to be called a "snitch" or "tattler"
- ✓ Experience guilt or helplessness for not standing up on behalf of the victim
- ✓ May be drawn into bullying behavior due to group pressure
- ✓ Feel unsafe, unable to take action, or feel a loss of control



Bullies Are Also at Risk

A close-up photograph of a person's mouth and hand holding a lit cigarette. The person is wearing a white shirt. The cigarette is held between the fingers, and a small flame is visible at the tip. The background is blurred.

Students who bully are more likely than others to:

- get into frequent fights
- be injured in a fight
- steal
- vandalize property
- drink alcohol
- smoke
- be truant and drop out of school
- have poor academic achievement
- perceive a negative climate at school
- carry a weapon

Signs a Child is Being Bullied

Personal belongings are missing, damaged or scattered

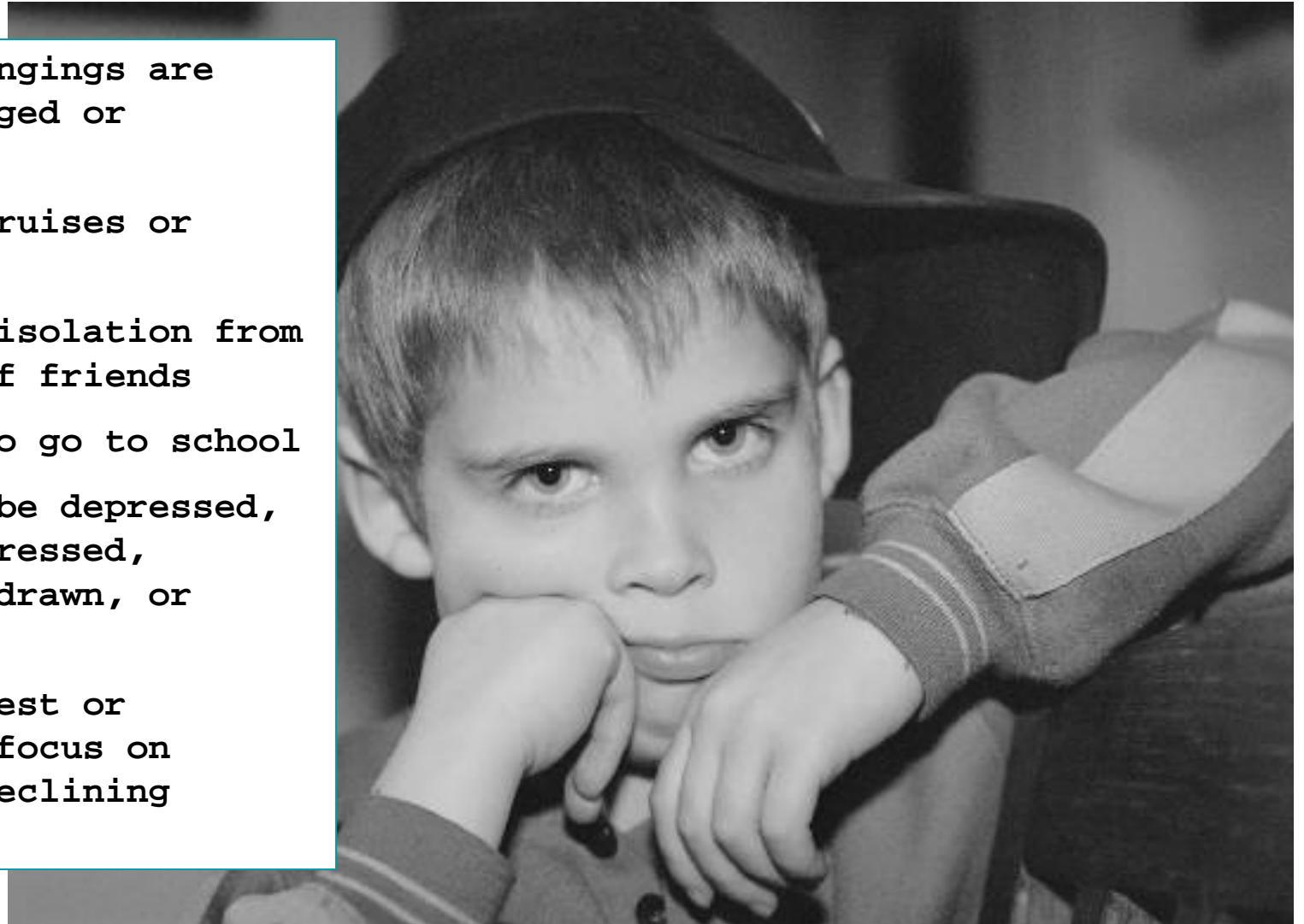
Unexplained bruises or wounds

Exclusion or isolation from peers; lack of friends

Not wanting to go to school

Appearing to be depressed, unhappy, distressed, anxious, withdrawn, or insecure

Loss of interest or inability to focus on schoolwork; declining grades



The Code of Silence

There is an unspoken "rule" among children, especially teens, when it comes to telling on other children. They're reluctant to "tattle" on their friends or peers.

A witness may remain silent for fear of being next, out of guilt for not helping the victim, or out of fear of losing status among peers.

Many adults reinforce this code unknowingly by brushing off incidents, telling students to "work things out among themselves" or to "stop tattling." To break the code of silence, adults must show that reports will be taken seriously, reporters will not be unnecessarily exposed, and there will be consequences for bullying.



How Can We Stop Bullying?



The Nassau County School Board's program to implement its anti-bullying and harassment policy (Administrative Rule 5.49) and procedures focuses on changing the social environment of the schools to make bullying "uncool."

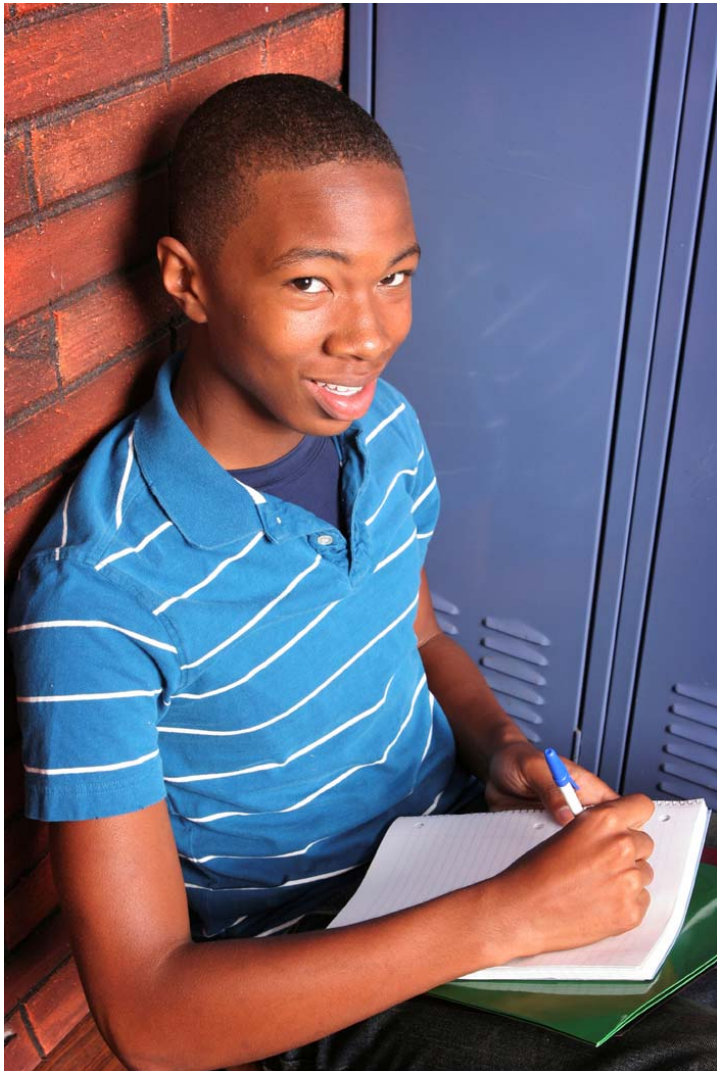
We desire the norm to be that teachers and other staff serve as role models for positive social interaction, that teachers and other staff recognize and intervene in bullying situations, and that students help others.

Our Program Will Use “Best Practices”

- All school staff will be trained in bullying prevention and PBS (Positive Behavior Supports).
- We will use an anonymous survey to assess the nature and extent of bullying at each school.
- School rules and policies will be established and guidance will be given regarding enforcement. School rules will be posted and discussed with students and parents.
- Schools will increase supervision of areas where bullying tends to thrive, such as hallways, PE classes, playgrounds, etc.



In Addition,



- School staff will be trained to recognize and intervene in bullying or suspected bullying.
- Time will be set aside on a regular basis to discuss bullying and improving peer relationships.
- Each school will use appropriate bullying prevention curriculum/ resources to reduce violence and increase prosocial behavior.
- The activities of our program will be done continuously. There is no "end" to the program.

Our 2015-16 Focus:



Catch Students Doing It Right!

We understand the value of
teaching about and demonstrating
respectful behavior and
recognizing students when they
are behaving respectfully to
others.

We know that...



A safe, secure, orderly,
inviting school climate
facilitates student
learning.

We seek to create/maintain
school environments that do
not tolerate bullying or
harassment.

Strategies for Students



Students need a variety of appropriate actions to take if they experience or observe bullying:

Seek immediate help from an adult.

Speak up or offer support to the victim.

Privately support or offer words of kindness to those being hurt.

Express disapproval of bullying by not joining in on the laughter, teasing, or spreading of rumors or gossip.

Attempt to defuse problem situations by taking the bully aside and asking him/her to "cool it."

The Role of the Bystander



Bystanders play various roles in a bullying situation. Some may be pulled into the bullying, some may remain quiet but feel guilt for not intervening, some may laugh and encourage the behavior. Yet others may serve as defenders. *One of the single most effective ways to stop an incident of bullying is for a bystander to simply say "stop!"*

What Can Parents Do?

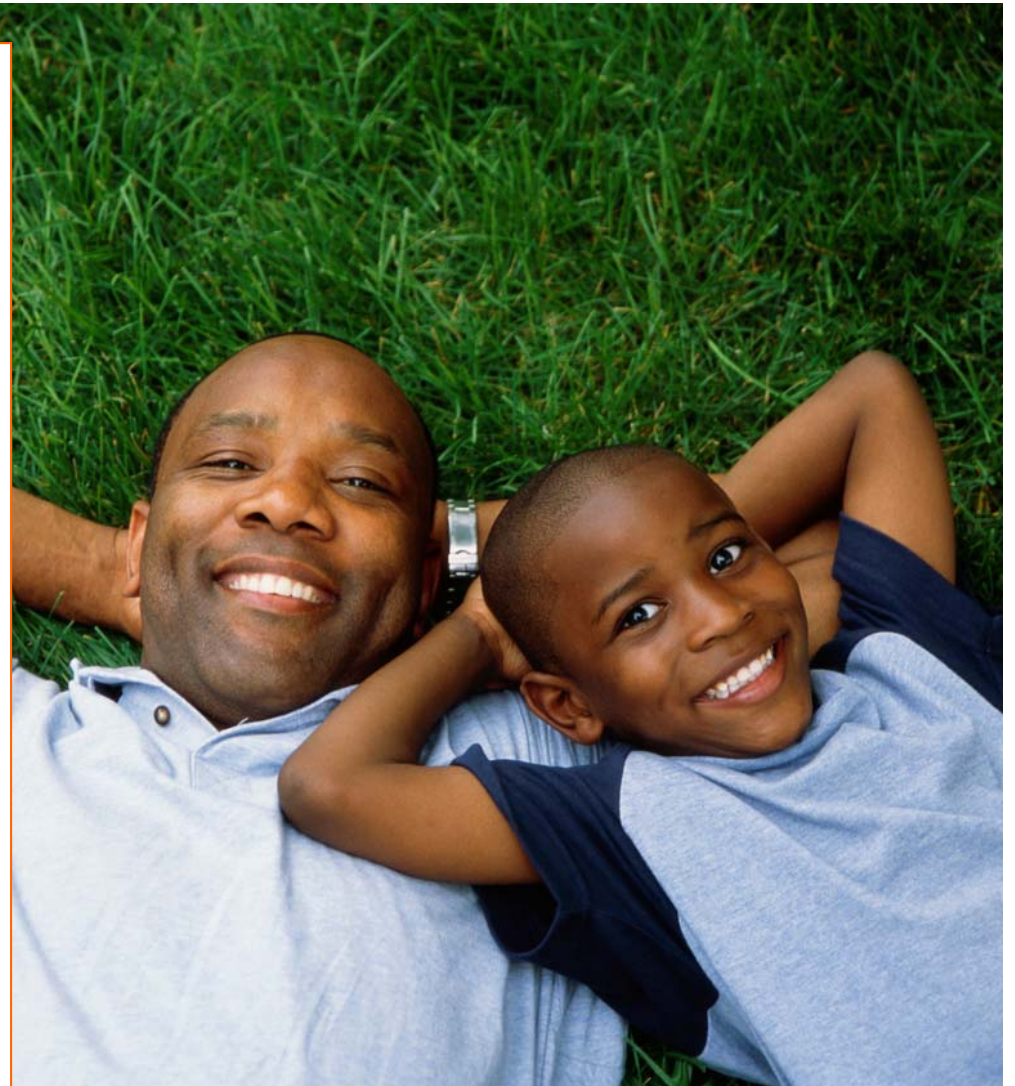
If you think your child is being bullied:

Be careful not to make a child feel that something is wrong with him/her or that he/she "deserves" abuse from peers.

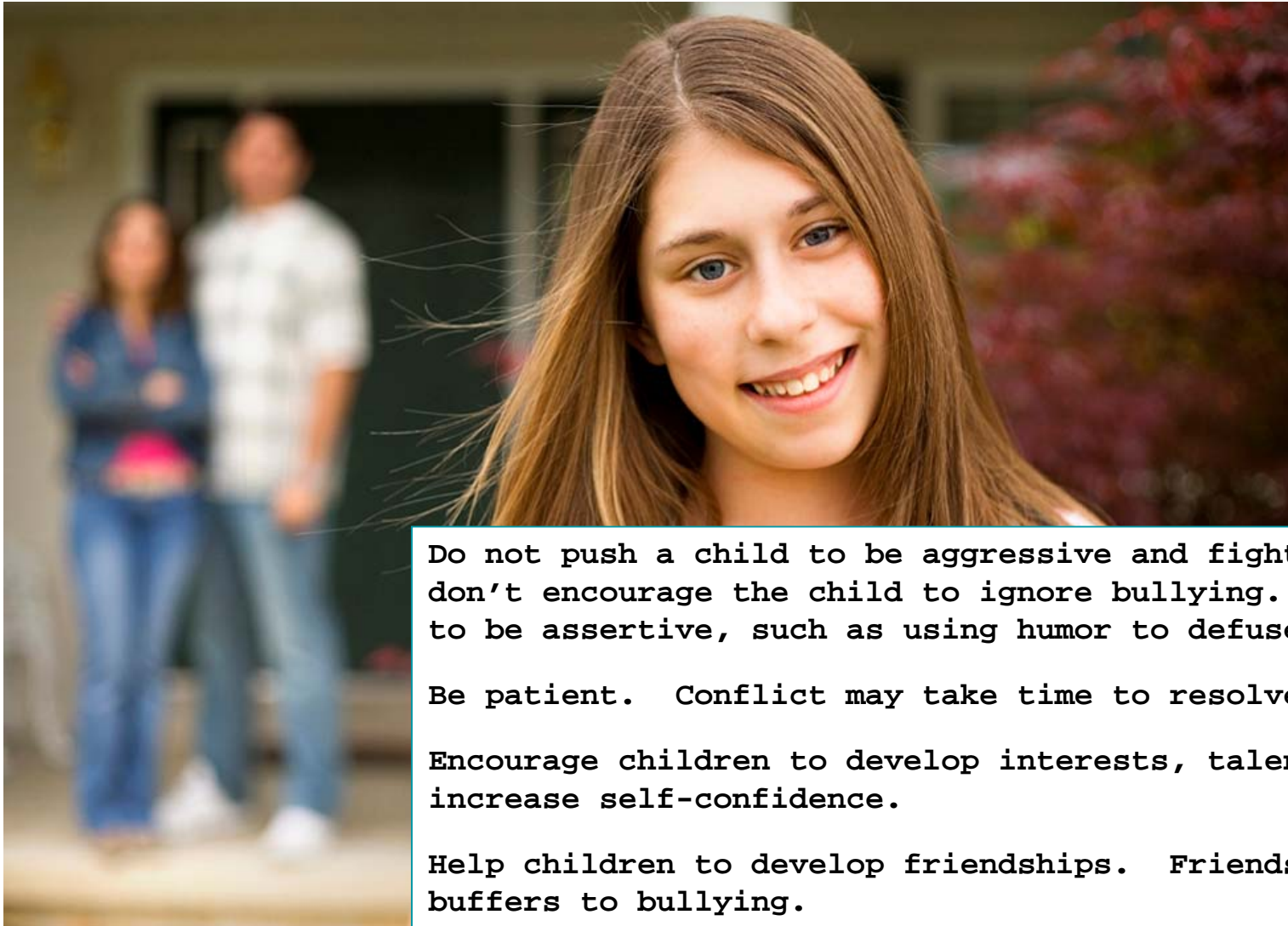
Call the school and work with the school to address the problem. Keep records of incidents so that the specific details will be remembered.

Allow school personnel to coordinate the intervention. It may be difficult to get good results from speaking directly to a bully or the bully's parent.

Offer support but encourage the child to take independent actions.



More Tips for Parents



Do not push a child to be aggressive and fight back, but also don't encourage the child to ignore bullying. Assist a child to be assertive, such as using humor to defuse situations.

Be patient. Conflict may take time to resolve.

Encourage children to develop interests, talents, or skills to increase self-confidence.

Help children to develop friendships. Friends can serve as buffers to bullying.

If Your Child is the Bully

It's hard for parents to believe their child could be a bully, but sometimes it happens. Parents are the best resources to help their children stop bullying and have better relationships with their classmates.



Signs a child may be a bully:

Lacks empathy and doesn't sympathize with others

Values aggression

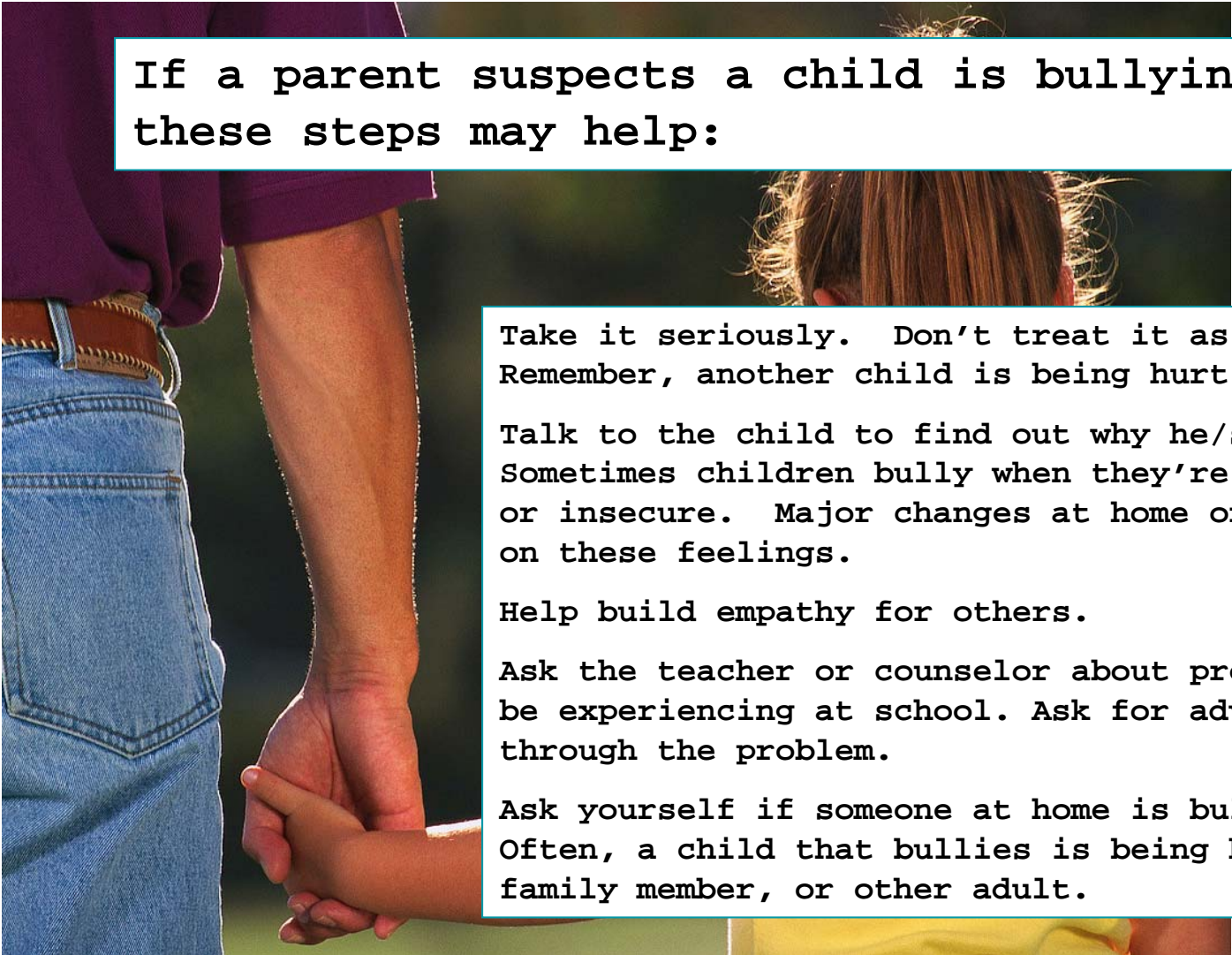
Likes to be in charge

Is an arrogant winner and a sore loser

Often fights with brothers and sisters

Is impulsive

What Can Be Done?



If a parent suspects a child is bullying others, these steps may help:

Take it seriously. Don't treat it as a passing phase. Remember, another child is being hurt.


Talk to the child to find out why he/she is bullying. Sometimes children bully when they're sad, angry, lonely, or insecure. Major changes at home or school may bring on these feelings.

Help build empathy for others.

Ask the teacher or counselor about problems the child may be experiencing at school. Ask for advice on how to work through the problem.

Ask yourself if someone at home is bullying your child. Often, a child that bullies is being bullied by a parent, family member, or other adult.

Legal Aspects



To reduce harm to students and to protect the school district and its employees from liability, we will follow our district policy:

We will provide regular training and education to employees, students, parents, and volunteers.

We will explain, reinforce, and uphold the standards of behavior we expect of students and adults.

We will take all reports seriously and investigate all complaints promptly and thoroughly according to a standard procedure.

Legal Aspects, Continued

We will ensure confidentiality.

We will provide interventions appropriate for the level of seriousness of infractions.

We will protect witnesses and victims from retaliation.

We will implement appropriate consequences if allegations are substantiated.

We will promptly report suspected child abuse, sexual assault, or other criminal acts.

We will publicize our policy and our bullying prevention program.



Resources



For further information, please see the Nassau County School District Bullying and Harassment Prevention Procedure Manual.

Other resources consulted or used in the compilation of this presentation include:

www.stopbullyingnow.hrsa.gov

Preventing Bullying: A Manual for Schools and Communities, United States Department of Education. Available online at www.edpubs.org.

National Crime Prevention Council - www.ncpc.org/topics/bullying

McGrath Training Systems - www.mcgrathinc.com