

How to support your child

The Lockdown and Hold & Secure events of December 5 were stressful and upsetting. Fortunately, all students and staff are safe. Although events like this are rare, we recognize that individuals react to situations like this in different ways. We may feel helplessness, anxiety and anger. Whatever you feel is okay.

Our schools and Educational Services staff are working together to ensure students and staff receive the support they may need for as long as needed. You may be concerned about your child's response to this event. We encourage you to listen to their questions and concerns and seek help through your school if you have any concerns about your child. We are also able to help you to connect to community supports should you feel this would be of help.

Here are some tips to help you support your children at this time:

- Listen and create an environment that acknowledges all feelings.
- Recognize that children may become concerned that something bad will happen to themselves, family or friends. Explain that safety measures are in place and reassure them that you and other adults will take care of them.
- Choose what information is to be shared based on the child's age and an assessment of your child's need to know. If your child is not focused on the event, do not dwell on it.
- Create an atmosphere for open dialogue and discussion if your child wants to talk or ask questions. When children ask questions, use age-appropriate language and a calm and reassuring tone of voice.
- Let children know that they may experience a range of emotions and this is to be expected. Ensure they know that supports are available at home, in the community, and at school if they need to speak to someone.
- Identify children who will be most affected. For example, children who are depressed and anxious, traumatized children, and children who have been victims of violence. Provide support that is age appropriate and based on the level of need.
- Limit media exposure about this event for younger children. Let older children know that the media coverage may be too disturbing for them to watch or watch the media coverage with them and discuss it.
- Let older children know that discussing the event with younger children is not appropriate.
- A natural parental response after events like this is to feel overprotective of your child for a while and to feel a heightened sense of vulnerability, anger, fear, and sense of helplessness.
- Be aware of your own needs. Don't ignore your own feelings. Talking to friends, family members, faith leaders and mental health counsellors can help. Let your children know you might be upset, too. You will be better able to support them if you can express your own emotions in a productive manner.

As always, our top priority is the safety and well-being of each of our students. Please reach out for help if needed.



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Wellness First**



**We're Turning
Innovation into Action**



**We're Committed
to Collaboration**

