

Libertyville Elementary Schools



W. Guy Schumacher, Ed. D., Superintendent

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February 15, 2018

Dear Parents,

In light of, yet another, tragic school shooting, I share my most heartfelt sympathy to the students, parents, staff and entire community of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland, Florida. From Columbine, to Sandy Hook School and now to Parkland, we look to the day when school shootings stop and fears are alleviated. Until then, I hope for a day when such anxieties and stressors become memories filled with love for those who've suffered, and schools can continue to focus on the joys of teaching and learning.

I share that, as a district, we have proudly built a strong relationship with the Libertyville Police and Fire Departments; these impressive community leaders serve us both in mission and in training. We regularly speak to, and meet with, these leaders. We have added crisis and school safety teams to our school platform and practice drills annually. Safety training is ongoing through our local police department and will be an additional feature for all staff as we continue to learn from experiences that guide our procedures. We will continue to address all aspects of preparation, drill exercise and guidance with local law enforcement officials, and work with our administration, staff and supportive service personnel regarding social-emotional awareness as it relates to understanding and identifying characteristics of mental illness. To each of the school sites, we have added defense access features at entries and all vestibules, including security doors and cameras throughout, as well as immediate contact features for rapid support.

Please know that, in addition to students' education, their protection, welfare and overall wellbeing are very important to all of us. Your children are ours for a good portion of their day and we look to keep them all safe and secure.

Most sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Guy Schumacher'.

Guy Schumacher

Resources

As details of the recent shooting unfold, children often look to parents and educators for understanding and guidance. The following offers a compilation of strategies and important points to consider when discussing tragedy or crisis with children.

- Make time to talk. Let the children's questions be the guide as to how much information is provided.

- Reassure children that they are safe and schools are committed to providing a safe and secure environment for all children and staff.
- Some experts suggest to limit television viewing regarding details of the school shooting.
- Validate emotions. Explain that all feelings are understandable when a tragedy occurs. Let children talk about and express their feelings. Help put emotions into perspective and assist children in sharing their feelings appropriately.
- Early elementary school children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them.
- Upper elementary and early middle school children may be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their respective school. They may need assistance separating reality from imagination. Discuss efforts of school and community leaders who work to provide safe school environments. Safety drills and procedures are in place to maintain and protect wellbeing.
- Upper middle school and high school students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. Emphasize the role and support that students can offer in maintaining safe schools.
- As staff review safety procedures in schools, parents are encouraged to address procedures and safeguards at home, as well.
- It is suggested, given the best of all possibilities, that the maintenance of normal routines be followed.
- School support and counseling specialists will, as always, be made available for students and staff, as needed.

<https://www.edutopia.org/blog/tragedy-grief-resources-education>

<http://www.mentalhealthamerica.net/children-cope-with-tragedy>