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September 6, 2022

Dear Prairie Spirit families:

It was with great sadness that we learned of the shocking deaths in the province over the weekend. A tragedy like this touches many lives and has a significant impact throughout the province and beyond. With our strong sense of community both in Prairie Spirit and in our province, I know we will support each other through this difficult time.

As we return to school after this traumatic weekend, our schools will be focusing on strong safety practices and supporting our students. Our counselling team has been mobilized to support students and staff.

Events like this cause us to reflect on the safety of our own children and staff. Prairie Spirit School Division's teachers and support staff are committed to providing a safe and secure school environment for our students. Our schools will be carefully monitoring school entrances and grounds. All perimeter doors are locked during the school day, which is our regular practice.

Each school has an emergency response plan which includes procedures for fire drills, lockdowns, evacuations and other emergencies. Schools regularly practice these emergency procedures during the school year.

Staff members in each school have received formal training in planning and coordinating emergency responses. We appreciate the support of our community partners, such as the RCMP and other emergency services.

It is common for children to ask questions or express anxiety about tragic events. I want to reassure you that these responses will be handled sensitively by our staff. Please see the next page for some suggested guidance for parents in discussions with their children.

We are committed to providing ongoing communication with our families. Prairie Spirit will continue to monitor the situation and consult with local authorities.

Sincerely,

Darryl Bazylak, Director of Education

Supports for parents

The following advice may be helpful as you have conversations with your child:

Listen to your child

It's important to listen to your child's concerns. Create an environment that allows your child to express feelings and ask questions.

Reassure your child

Reinforce the caring and supportive relationships we share with one another. Remind your child that there are protocols in place to help us all be safe at school (e.g., fire drills, etc.) and many people who help keep us safe (e.g., teachers, police, firefighters, doctors, etc.). Some children may feel comforted by a regular routine and may not wish to discuss the events.

Allow your child to express emotions

Children may wish to talk about the incident and/or draw, write cards or express their emotions.

Respond to media reports

Consider limiting exposure to media reports, particularly for young children. With older children, take the opportunity to watch some media reports together, discuss what you see and hear and answer any questions your child might have.

Seek support

If you feel that your child would benefit from more support, please contact your school's principal and arrangements will be made for your child to meet with one of our counselors.

Online support

- Cassandra D'Amore, Prairie Spirit's Flex Outreach Counsellor, provides online support for Prairie Spirit parents and students throughout the school day. She can be reached at: 306-371-4214.
- Anxiety Canada is a registered charity that offers access to free online self-help and evidence-based tools to help manage anxiety in children, youth, and adults. [Home - Anxiety Canada](#)
- Hope for Wellness is available 24/7 to all Indigenous people across Canada. [Home - Hope for Wellness Helpline](#)