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Dear Parents and Guardians:

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau could not have described the situation at La Loche more accurately. He responded to the news with "it is the greatest fear of parents come true." It is also the greatest fear of our staff, who are entrusted with the care of your child during the day. We are saddened by the events that occurred in La Loche on Friday afternoon and extend our deepest condolences to the students, staff, parents and the entire community as they begin to rebuild their community and schools.

Prairie Spirit School Division has partnered with many agencies and school divisions in our *Community Threat Assessment Support Protocol* that work collaboratively and proactively to reduce and address potential risk factors in our vulnerable children and youth. One of our partners, Saskatoon Public School Division, has provided the following information for parents to consider as they respond to questions from their children. We are aware that many of our school communities may be personally impacted by the events in La Loche.

The safety of our students is our first priority. Our dedicated staff members work every day to ensure our students are learning in a safe and caring environment.

We have a number of procedures (i.e., fire drills, lockdown) that we practice with our students on a regular basis. In addition, through our *Community Threat Assessment and Support Protocol*, we have built strong partnerships with police, fire and other agencies so we can work together towards safe communities.

For several years, our Division has received instruction and guidance from Kevin Cameron, Executive Director of the Canadian Centre for Threat Assessment and Trauma Response. Through this work, our Division staff members are prepared to work with students and provide supports in the coming days.

Not all questions and concerns will be raised at school and we want to ensure we are also providing families with assistance. The following guidelines may help parents and guardians support children during this difficult time:

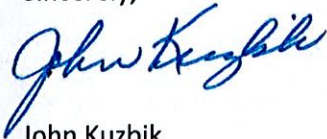
- Listen and create an environment that acknowledges all feelings. When children ask questions, use age-appropriate language and a calm and reassuring tone of voice. Choose what information is to be shared based on the child's age and an assessment of your child's need to know.
- Limit media exposure for younger children.

- For older children, let them know that the media may be too upsetting for them to watch and discuss how social media and news reports may desensitize us all to violence.
- Spend extra time with your children to help them feel safe and secure.
- Contact your family doctor or school administration if you are worried about your child and would like professional support to assist with your child's reaction. Every school has an assigned counsellor who is available.
- Parents should be aware that being overly protective of their children is a normal response. Adult emotions may include: sense of helplessness, fear, anger and a heightened sense of vulnerability.
- Reassure children that with time their feelings of vulnerability will subside, but, if the feelings persist, to let you know and you will get them help.

On the Prairie Spirit website, you will find more information about our [Safe and Caring Schools core strategy](#) and our [Community Threat Assessment and Support Protocol](#).

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact your school principal.

Sincerely,



John Kuzbik  
Director of Education

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