



## Tips for parents and educators: Supporting children and young people.

Lockdowns are an important part of school safety and crisis preparedness. We want to thank schools and early learning services for keeping all children and young people safe on Friday. Now we need to help them recover well. An incident like this can confuse and frighten anyone who may feel unsafe or worried that their friends or loved-ones are at risk. They will look to others for information, guidance and support.

Parents and teachers can help children and young people feel safe by;

- providing reassurance and keeping to routines
- staying calm and promoting a calm environment
- doing enjoyable things together
- taking time to listen and talk

Be guided by their questions, be factual and age appropriate with your response. Children and young people do not always talk about their feelings readily – ask them if they are feeling worried.

- Keep your explanations developmentally appropriate.
  - Very young children need brief, simple information that should be balanced with reassurances that their ELS, school and homes are safe and that adults are there to protect them.
  - Older primary school aged children will be more vocal in asking questions about whether they truly are safe and what is being done at their school. They may need assistance separating reality from fantasy. Discuss efforts of school, emergency services and community leaders to provide safe schools.
  - Secondary school students will have strong and varying opinions about the causes of violence in schools and society. They will share concrete suggestions about how to make school and communities safer and how to prevent violence and tragedies in society. Have a way of recording the ideas and how you might build on the ideas expressed.
- Emphasize the role that students have in maintaining safe schools by following school safety guidelines (e.g. Signing out when they leave school, not providing building access to strangers, reporting strangers on campus, reporting threats to the school safety made by students or community members, etc.), communicating any personal safety concerns to teachers and accessing support for emotional needs through teachers and the pastoral care system.
- Observe children's emotional state. Changes in behaviour, appetite, and sleep patterns can also indicate a child's level of anxiety or discomfort. In most children, these symptoms will ease with reassurance and time. However, some children may be at risk for more intense reactions, particularly those who have experienced difficulties and change. Parents and teachers, seek support through your school pastoral care system or your GP.