



Hillsboro Community  
Unit School District #3

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**David E. Powell, Superintendent**

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Hillsboro CUSD3 Students, Parents, and Community Members,

As our hearts go out to the families and communities recently victimized by yet another school shooting, we are left wondering why these things happen and what we can do to prevent them.

While there is no plan that can totally prevent a random act of violence, our district has plans and procedures in place at each of our schools to handle emergency situations. We review our plans with local law enforcement and fire departments and conduct practice exercises with staff and students. We are constantly on the lookout for students in crisis, and we provide interventions and support where we find need. At all of our schools, administration along with faculty and staff will continue to discuss and review emergency response procedures.

As part of the recently created District Strategic Plan, our school facilities will be undergoing significant security enhancements this summer. These will include electronically controlled locked entrances, facility renovations that will contain and control visitor access to students, and greatly enhanced video surveillance. We will continually look for ways to make improvements in our security and response procedures.

I also want to share with you some tips from the National Association of School Psychologists for helping your children cope with news of tragic events.

**What Parents Can Do:**

1. Focus on your children over the week following the tragedy. Tell them you love them and everything will be okay. Try to help them understand what has happened, keeping in mind their developmental level.
2. Make time to talk with your children. Remember that if you do not talk to your children about this incident someone else will. Take some time and determine what you wish to say.
3. Stay close to your children. Your physical presence will reassure them and give you the opportunity to monitor their reaction. Many children will want actual physical contact. Give plenty of hugs. Let them sit close to you, and make sure to take extra time at bedtime to cuddle and to reassure them that they are loved and safe.
4. Limit your child's television viewing of these events. If they must watch, watch with them for a brief time; then turn the set off. Don't sit mesmerized re-watching the same events over and over again.

5. Maintain a “normal” routine. To the extent possible stick to your family’s normal routine for dinner, homework, chores, bedtime, etc., but don’t be inflexible. Children may have a hard time concentrating on schoolwork or falling asleep at night.
6. Spend extra time reading or playing quiet games with your children before bed. These activities are calming, foster a sense of closeness and security, and reinforce a sense of normalcy. Spend more time tucking them in. Let them sleep with a light on if they ask for it.
7. Safeguard your children’s physical health. Stress can take a physical toll on children as well as adults. Make sure your children get appropriate sleep, exercise, and nutrition.
8. Consider praying or thinking hopeful thoughts for the victims and their families. It may be a good time to take your children to your place of worship, write a poem, or draw a picture to help your child express his/her feelings and feel that s/he are somehow supporting the victims and their families.
9. Find out what resources your school has in place to help children cope. Most schools are likely to be open and often are a good place for children to regain a sense of normalcy. Being with their friends and teachers can help. Schools should also have a plan for making counseling available to children and adults who need it.

Our students’ safety and security is our top priority. If you have questions or concerns, feel free to contact your building principals or my office.

Respectfully,

David E. Powell  
Superintendent of Schools