



February 11, 2026

SUBJECT: Letter for families / caregivers and community members regarding managing traumatic aftermath

Dear Parents, Caregivers and Community Members,

Many families may be aware of the tragic mass shooting that recently occurred in Tumbler Ridge in northern BC. News of events like this can be upsetting and may raise questions or concerns for students and families. It is often hard to know how to reassure our children when we ourselves are striving to process and make sense of this violent incident and all those impacted by this tragedy.

We want to assure you that all students and staff in our schools are safe. Student and staff safety remains our highest priority, and we continue to take every precaution to maintain safe, caring and supportive learning environments.

Events like this can be difficult for children and youth to understand. A wide range of reactions is normal. Some students may experience anxiety, sadness, confusion or changes in behaviour as they process what they are hearing or seeing in the news and online. Children may experience a wide range of emotions in response to what they hear or see and they will look to the adults in their lives to help them feel safe and understand the world around them. Over the coming days or weeks, we encourage families to remain attentive to any changes in their child's behaviours that may indicate a need for additional support.

As school district staff, we recognize that students may require additional support. We will continue to prioritize the mental health and well-being of our students. Be mindful of any changes in your child's typical behaviours. If you feel your child needs additional support, please reach out to your school and/or access the community supports identified in the resources shared at the end of this letter.

If your family has experienced a recent loss or similar event, news of this tragedy may bring forward difficult emotions. Please let your child's teacher or the district counsellor know if there is information the school should be aware of. This helps us support your child with care and sensitivity.



We encourage families to talk with their children, answer questions calmly, and reassure them that they are safe. We are sharing below some strategies and resources to help guide conversations with children, with the understanding that responses will vary depending on age, development, and connection to this tragedy.

Limit exposure to news stories on traditional and social media channels

Consider how you access news and how that may impact children nearby. Young children may not know how to make sense of the news they are seeing and can quickly become overwhelmed. Encourage older children to rely on reputable news sources, and where possible limit their consumption and exposure to upsetting coverage.

It is important to have conversations, and model with your own behaviours, the additional traumatic impact for victims and families when upsetting images are re-circulated. We are respectfully suggesting that individuals do not watch, repost or share videos of the tragedy.

Acknowledge feelings

Our children and youth will look to us for cues on how to process this upsetting information. Acknowledging our own feelings gives children a model for how to express and process their strong emotions. It is normal to experience a range of emotions in response to such unsettling news.

Listen more than you speak

Listen to your child's concerns before offering any explanations. Give them an opportunity to voice their fears and ask age-appropriate open-ended questions. These conversations will help you understand if your child is coming from a place of curiosity, concern or fear, and will help you gain a sense of what your child may need from adults to feel safe and supported.



Provide facts

Tell the truth but do it gently. Give your child facts as long as it is consistent with their stage of development - keep conversations age appropriate. Children need to know their concerns and questions are being taken seriously by the adults around them and that they can trust their adults to be truthful with them. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't be afraid to say so.

Importance of Routine

Maintaining daily routines can provide a sense of stability and security for children and adults. It can also be important to give children permission to continue to find hope in their daily world.

Encourage empathy and compassion

Remind your child there may be others in their daily lives who may be impacted by this tragedy. Talk with your child about how we need to treat others with extra compassion and empathy during times like these. Tragedies and times of sadness and grief can serve as meaningful moments to teach compassion, which can help children feel empowered as they find additional ways to be kind and caring.

Resources

- Nisga'a Valley Health Authority – Mental Health Department
 - Gitwinksihlkw Health Center at 250-633-2611; ask for Marlana Gosnell
 - Or email marlena.gosnell@nisgaahealth.bc.ca
- Nisga'a Crisis Response - Phone: 250-975-0991
- [KUU-US Crisis Line Society](#) – Indigenous-specific crisis line available 24/7
 - General: 1(800) 588-8717
 - Child/Youth: 250-723-2040
- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [ERASE](#) – (information about mental health and substance use, school and online safety, and diversity and inclusion)
- [erase Report It Tool](#)
- [Healthlinkbc: Helping Children with Grief](#)
- [Kelty Mental Health](#)



Nisga'a School District – Office of the Superintendent

- [Learning through Loss](#)
- [Foundry Virtual BC - Foundry BC App](#) (supports for young people aged 12-24)
- [Help Starts Here](#) – crisis response, victim supports, and mental health resources available 24/7
- [Responding to Children & Youth After Unforseen Frightening Events](#)
- [Youth In BC Chat](#) - a part of the Crisis Intervention and Suicide Prevention Centre of BC
 - Text or call 988 - 24 hour Suicide Crisis Helpline (988.ca)
 - crisis-centre.ca - Crisis Prevention, Intervention & Information Centre for Northern BC
 - 24 Hour Crisis Line 1-888-562-1214 - A confidential and non-judgmental crisis line to discuss anything troubling you. If it is a crisis to you, it is a crisis to us.
 - 310-6789 (no area code) Mental Health Support - For emotional support, information and resources specific to mental health.
 - 1 800 784 2433 (1 800SUCIDE) - If you are considering suicide or are concerned about someone who may be.
 - Youth Support Line - A confidential peer support service operated by trained youth answering calls from other youth.
 - Call: 1888 564 8336 24/7
 - Text: 250 564 8336 (4pm-10pm PST)
 - Online Chat: crisis-centre.ca (4pm-10pm PST)

As always, please contact the school if you have any concerns or questions.

Together, we will continue to care for one another and foster a community grounded in compassion, understanding, and safety.

Sincerely,

Robert Clifton

Superintendent of Schools