



April 7, 2018

Dear Families,

Most of you will have heard of the tragic bus collision in Saskatchewan that took the lives of many young hockey players. Sadly, this tragedy hits close to home, as there were young men who died were from St. Albert and surrounding communities. Some of these boys attended schools in our community and have siblings who are still attending our schools.

The connections in a city the size of St. Albert are tightly knit; the connections within the hockey community are even closer. Many of your children will know these boys and their families, either through school or through hockey. As parents, we all grieve for the unimaginable loss these families are now facing. Our community, and our children, will also be grieving, whether they knew these young men firsthand or not. It is important to help our children through this grieving process.

We will have counsellors on hand on Monday at our high schools that these young men attended and their siblings currently attend. Our staff at all schools will be watching for signs of distress in students in the coming days and weeks. If you feel your child would benefit from having someone to talk to about this or you would like an additional resource package regarding grief and loss, including community supports available in St. Albert, please let your school principal know.

Children may react in a variety of ways. They may:

- Appear not to be affected
- Ask a lot of questions
- Be agitated and angry
- Try extra hard to be good
- Be thinking about it privately
- Be frightened
- Be sad and withdrawn

As parents, you know your children the best and can help them during this difficult time. When with your children, please keep the following in mind:

- Give honest, simple, brief answers to your child's questions.
- Use words or phrases that won't confuse your child or make the world more frightening. For example, using the word "sleep" for "death" can cause your child to be afraid of going to bed.
- Create opportunities for your child to talk with you about what happened. Be especially loving and supportive. More than anyone else, your child needs you at this time.
- Listen to your child and let him or her know that his or her feelings are normal and acceptable.

This is an extremely difficult time for our community. Our thoughts are with all of those who have been touched by this tragedy. The loss of so many young, promising lives is incomprehensible. Our city has shown its strength in the past, and we will do so again now by supporting those who need our help. If you or your child requires any such support, please let us know.