



Norwood Park Elementary School

PROUD SCHOOL OF HAMILTON-WENTWORTH DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

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www.hwdsb.on.ca/norwoodpark

November 5, 2018

Dear Parents,

It is with deep sadness that we are sharing with you the news of the death of a grade eight student. The school extends our condolences to the family during this difficult time.

We believe it is important that you know about the deep loss that our school community is experiencing.

All students in grades 6 through 8 have been told of the student's death. Supporting your child(ren) will greatly assist them in their ability to deal with this situation.

We met with students this morning and social workers were available throughout the day to help our students and staff cope with this loss. Your child may be coming home with questions and worries, and therefore we have enclosed some suggestions to support you in this conversation with your child.

Please feel free to contact the school if you have any issues that you would like to discuss. We will continue to have support available to help our students in the coming days.

Sincerely,

Rhonda Moules
Principal

Cc: Paul Denomme, Superintendent of Education



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Talking with Children About Death

Having a conversation with your child about death and dying may be uncomfortable but is important to have because it allows children to talk and ask questions.

You don't have to have all the answers, it is important to help support the child find the answers to their questions and identify when there are no answers to their questions.

It is difficult to support your child while you are also grieving, ask friends and family to support you and your child through this process.

Things to remember:

- Remind yourself and your child that there is no right or wrong way to grieve
 - You are your child's role model and it is okay to show them you are sad
 - When we show our children our feelings they feel open to identifying their own feelings
- Reassure your child that they are safe and that their feelings are normal
 - Let the child know who will help to take care of them
 - Continue with your child's routine, it will help them feel safe and secure
- Use the word "dead" and be clear and truthful with your child in your explanation of the death
 - Children need age-appropriate discussions about death and this may need to be revisited over time
- Listen carefully to their conversation and allow them to ask questions
 - Children may ask the same questions over and over, so be patient
 - Address feelings of guilt and remind children that they cannot "cause" death
- Don't be surprised by changes in their behaviour or personality
 - Behaviours can change as children work through their grief
 - Young children can regress in their development; older children can start to take on more adult roles
- Help your child find safe and supportive ways to express their feelings
 - Sometimes art activities can help support your child with feelings (memory box for keepsakes, artwork, decorate picture frames for special pictures)