



February 15, 2018

Dear Poway Unified Staff and Families,

Our hearts are breaking over another school shooting, this time in Florida. This has truly shaken all of us to the core. While we are not aware of any specific threat to any of our schools or community, we wanted to take a moment to address some of your concerns.

On behalf of the Poway Unified School District, we want to assure you that student safety has always been a top priority, and our schools have specific protocols in place to secure campuses during the school day. Over the past three years, staff has completed a security needs assessment for all of our school sites. Our District is working to restrict access to single entry points during the school day.

Our District also maintains a close relationship with local law enforcement, which includes regular interaction and communication as well as planning and rapid response when needed.

Every school year, our schools conduct multiple safety drills for fire, earthquake, as well as lockdown situations. In addition, our District worked with the San Diego County Office of Education to inform our administrators of the recommended active shooter response protocols.

The tragedy also highlights the critical importance of maintaining a healthy school climate and ensuring that we are meeting the mental health needs of our students. Our teachers, staff, school counselors, administrators, and peer counselors are on the front lines of this work. But we also rely on our students and parents to report any unusual or concerning activity or behavior. Please continue to talk to your child/children, reminding them that they too, should immediately report anything concerning. "If you see something, say something." We want everyone on our campuses to be empowered to speak up.

Finally, if your students are struggling with processing these latest events, the National Association of School Psychologists notes there are effective ways to talk with students:

- Create a sense of safety by returning to normal, predictable routines as soon as possible
- Listen to their concerns and feelings
- Suggest they limit their use of media to lower their stress and to maintain balance and perspective
- Realize that sleep difficulties are common and can lead to fatigue and poor participation

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There are additional suggestions in the links below, with school safety resources for educators and parents.

Our deepest condolences go out to the affected victims.

Sincerely,

Marian Kim-Phelps, Ed.D.

- Addressing Grief: Tips for Teachers and Administrators
https://www.lacoe.edu/Portals/0/StudentServices/Addressing_Grief_Tips_for_Teachers_and_Administrators_FINAL.pdf
- Talking to Children About Violence <https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/talking-to-children-about-violence-tips-for-parents-and-teachers>
- Safe Schools Planning by the California Department of Education
<https://www.cde.ca.gov/ls/ss/vp/safeschlplanning.asp>
- National PTA School Safety resources <https://www.pta.org/home/family-resources/safety/School-Safety>