

Menlo Park City School District
181 Encinal Avenue
Atherton, CA 94027
Phone (650) 321-7140
Fax (650) 321-7184
www.mpcsd.org



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Dear Parents,

Yesterday's tragic shooting in Florida reminded us all of how precious life is and how we live in such challenging times. Together with all Americans, we join in mourning the students and staff who lost their lives in yesterday's senseless shooting at Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida. As parents and as educators, we struggle to help our children and students understand how such tragedies can happen at a school, which should be a haven of safety.

Please know that we place the safety of our students and staff as our highest priority and the events in Florida have doubled our resolve to make sure our schools are safe. As a district, we follow the Big Five Emergency Protocols and conduct drills regularly. Please know we will revisit these steps and make sure that everyone in our schools knows what to do if and when an emergency occurs.

Our district staff has also participated in the county-wide Student Threat Assessment training as part of the Coalition for Safe Schools and Communities, so we can do our best to implement protocols for early intervention and support of students who may demonstrate threatening behavior. We are fully aware of the role that trauma plays in a child's health and development. As a district, we are exploring ways to integrate trauma-based curriculum into our schools and participate in our school-based Mental Health Collaborative.

Please know in these difficult times that it is important to be sensitive to the thoughts and feelings our children and staff may be experiencing. Different age groups require different approaches. Previously we have shared with each school principal information from the San Mateo County Office of Education providing tips and guidance about how to talk about these types of tragedies. I include below links to resources that I hope will be helpful as you work through supporting your students' response to this tragedy.

It will be with great sadness over the loss of so many precious young lives that we go through our day. Please don't hesitate to reach out to your school principal if you have any concerns.

Sincerely,
Erik Burmeister

<http://www.smcoe.org/parents-and-students/school-safety/>

<http://www.smcoe.org/assets/files/talkingviolence.pdf>

<https://www.safeandsoundschools.org/resources/resource-library/>

<https://www.nasponline.org/resources-and-publications/resources/school-safety-and-crisis/addressing-grief>

http://www.smchealth.org/sites/main/files/file-attachments/familyemergencyenglish_v1.pdf