



# **School District 84**

**Vancouver Island West**

Box 100, #2 Highway 28, Gold River, BC V0P 1G0

Office: 250-283-2241 Fax: 250-283-7352

[www.sd84.bc.ca](http://www.sd84.bc.ca)

February 11, 2026

Dear families,

Yesterday's tragic and traumatic events in Tumbler Ridge are understandably upsetting for adults and children alike. It can be hard to know how to reassure our children when we ourselves are striving to make sense of the events. 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.

The safety of our students and staff is always our top priority. Incidents like this are rare, and we review our safety and emergency procedures on a regular basis. We will continue to do everything we can to keep our schools safe. As school district staff, we recognize that our students may require additional support. 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. Due to the additional traumatic impact for victims and families when upsetting images are re-circulated on social media, we respectfully suggest that individuals do not watch, repost, or share videos of the tragedy.

## **Acknowledge feelings**

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.

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relevant to the demands of a modern society.*



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#### **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.

#### **Provide facts**

Give your child facts as long they are appropriate for their age and stage of development. 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.

#### **Encourage empathy and compassion**

Remind your child there may be others in their daily lives who may be impacted by this tragedy.

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 or access the community supports identified in the resources below.

Sincerely,

Stephen Larre

Superintendent, Vancouver Island West SD84

#### **Resources**

- [Canadian Mental Health Association](#)
- [ERASE](#)
- [Healthlinkbc: Helping Children with Grief](#)
- [Kelty Mental Health](#)
- [Learning through Loss](#)
- [Foundry Virtual BC - Foundry BC App](#)
- BC Crisis Centre: 1-800-784-2433 or call/text 211
- KUU-US Crisis Line: 1-800-588-8717 (culturally safe support for Indigenous community)
- Kids Help Phone: 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868

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