



School District No.59 (Peace River South)

February 11, 2026

Dear Families,

Today, our community experienced a tragic and deeply traumatic event. We recognize that the trauma and impact of this loss are immeasurable. There is no timeline for how each of us will process this grief and immense loss, both individually and as a community. While words often feel inadequate in the face of such loss, coming together can help reduce isolation and remind us that we are not alone.

We have created a space for our school community to come together over the next few days and as needed. All will be welcome to attend and connect. Mental health professionals will be present to walk alongside and provide support:

Location: Tumbler Ridge Community Centre
340 Front Street Tumbler Ridge
Time: Starting at 10:00am

Our priority at this time is taking care of each other and re-establishing a sense of safety in our community. It can be especially difficult to know how to reassure our children when we ourselves are trying to process and make sense of such profound loss. 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 behaviour that may indicate a need for additional support. As a parent or caregiver, you may feel unprepared to support your child during this time.

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.

It is important to have conversations, and model with your own behaviours, an awareness of the additional traumatic impact for victims and families when upsetting images are re-circulated. We are respectfully suggesting that individuals do not watch, share, or repost any photos, videos, or social media.

Acknowledge feelings

Our children and youth will look to us for cues on how to process this distressing and traumatic information. 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.

It is important to note that the intensity of these feelings will be influenced by a family's connections to the event, their history of loss and trauma, and the degree of media exposure.

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. Ask what they may have heard and what that information means to them. You may uncover misconceptions and unfounded fears that need correcting. These questions will also help you understand if your child is coming from a place of concern or fear and will help you gain a sense of what your child may need from adults to feel safe and supported.

Provide facts

Tell the truth but do it gently. Keep conversations age appropriate: give your child facts, but ensure they are consistent with their stage of development. Children need to know their concerns and questions are being taken seriously by the adults around them and that they can trust their adults to be truthful with them. 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. It can also be important to give children permission to continue to find hope in their daily world.

Please find attached two helpful resources - one that highlights mental health supports available in our community, and another that provides guidance for supporting our children during this time.

As a school district, we recognize the broad range of supports that may be required in the coming days. We are working with our provincial partners to ensure that resources are immediately available to you now and in the days ahead.

As a reminder, we will share the times and locations where mental health resources and supports will be available as soon as details have been finalized.

Thank you for your continued support of our School District as we work together with provincial and community partners.

Sincerely,

Christy Fennell
Superintendent