



**PRAIRIE SPIRIT
SCHOOL DIVISION**

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Dear Prairie Spirit parents and caregivers,

Supporting your child following the recent tragedy

Following the recent tragedy in Tumbler Ridge, we know your primary goal is to help your children feel safe and supported. Because children express distress differently based on their age, we have prepared this brief guide to help you recognize trauma reactions and provide the support they need at home.

What to Watch For:

- **Preschool & Young Children:** May show helplessness or general fear if aware of a tragedy, often expressed as a loss of skills (e.g., toileting or speech). They may have trouble sleeping alone or exhibit "traumatic play"—repetitive play focused on the event.
- **School-Age Children:** Often feel persistent concern for safety following a high-profile tragic event. Watch for physical complaints like headaches or stomach aches and difficulty concentrating.
- **Adolescents:** May become withdrawn or self-conscious about their emotions, fearing they are "abnormal". They may "act out" to voice their anger or express fantasies of revenge.

How You Can Help:

- **Provide Reassurance:** Frequently remind younger children that the event is over and they are safe. Maintain consistent caretaking and routines, such as picking them up from school exactly when expected, to rebuild their sense of security.
- **Encourage Expression:** Help children verbalize their feelings through talking, drawing, or play so they don't feel alone with their emotions. Acknowledge that their feelings are normal and correct any misinformation they have about the event.
- **Limit Media Exposure:** Encourage children and teens to limit social media and news searches about the event to help them maintain perspective and balance.
- **Support School Success:** If your child is struggling to focus, please let their teacher know so we can adjust expectations and support them in the classroom.

The involvement of family, school, and our wider community is critical in helping children navigate the emotional and physical challenges following a traumatic event. We are dedicated to partnering with you to ensure your child feels safe, heard, and supported both at home and in the classroom as we work together to restore a sense of normalcy to their lives.

Our Division continues to follow our protocols in supporting student safety: [Student Threat Risk Assessment](#).

The Division's website offers a variety of resources for families: [PARENTS – Prairie Spirit School Division](#).

Sincerely,

PSSD Caring, Healthy and Safe Schools Team:

Peggy Mattila-Bains, Learning Superintendent

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