

# PARKLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Student Services

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### **Returning to School After a Threat: How Parents and Educators can Work Together to Support Children**

After there is a threat made toward the school or the community, it is important for educators and parents to work together to help children regain a sense of security and normalcy. Below are some suggestions on how educators and parents can support children.

#### **Reassure their safety**

- Emphasize to children that educators and parents are there to keep them safe.
- Describe what educators and parents are doing to keep children safe.

#### **Spend time talking and listen with empathy**

- Communicate empathy when listening to children talk. An example is saying, “I hear that you are feeling nervous” when they talk about worries.
- Allow children’s questions to determine what information you provide.
- Help children identify an adult at school that they can go to if they are upset or uncomfortable.
- Keep children’s age and development in mind when talking about the incident. For instance, early elementary school children need brief, simple answers to their questions, and they may want to engage in play while talking about difficult topics.

#### **Model and discuss healthy coping skills**

- Explain to children how you manage difficult emotions in healthy ways such as going for a walk, talking with supportive people, engaging in a hobby, and making sure to get enough sleep.
- Encourage children to talk about healthy coping skills that they have used in the past or things they could try.

#### **Maintain a routine**

- Encourage children to keep a regular sleep and meal schedule. Sleep and regular, healthy meals are important for their physical and mental health.

#### **Contact your children’s [school counselor](#), if they are struggling with difficult emotions and returning to school.**

- All Parkland educators can offer the support described above.
- Parkland School District has at least one school counselor in every building. School counselors help students with academic, personal, and social difficulties. They can help children to manage difficult emotions such as anxiety and help them to build healthy coping skills when they are having difficulties returning to school.