



WAPPINGERS | Empower
CENTRAL SCHOOL DISTRICT | Challenge
Grow

José Carrión • Superintendent of Schools
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Dear WCSD Families and Community:

The tragic and unthinkable events which unfolded in Florida have shaken our entire foundation. We understand that we have the greatest responsibility of all when you entrust your children in our care each day as you send them to school.

We want you to know that we will continue our efforts to review our security protocols, practice our procedures and implement improvements as needed in conjunction with our law enforcement agencies to ensure the safety of our students and staff.

Building safety teams, which include school safety personnel and law enforcement personnel, have already begun to focus on what we can learn from this event and how to make our schools safer for our students. As these conversations continue, we want to acknowledge what so many individuals are saying through various media outlets, and that is that we all have to work together as a community. "See something, say something" has become a common phrase that unites us in our resolve to ensure that such an event doesn't happen in our schools.

If you are concerned about the motivations of certain groups or individuals, we urge you to contact your building Principal or, of course, 911. If you feel your child is expressing anxiety or fear regarding this tragic event, please let us know as we can provide assistance through our support staff.

Below please find helpful tips to assist in speaking with your child about the events from this past Wednesday.

Sincerely,

José Carrión
Superintendent of Schools

Good advice for talking to students from psychologist Susan Fletcher, Ph.D.:

- Focus on the fact that many people are working to keep them safe. Point out specific ways your child's school is practicing safety (ex. exits are locked, intercom system to alert if there is a problem, everyone has to go through the front office, safety drills our schools practice, school safety officers).

The mission of the Wappingers Central School District is to empower all of our students with the competencies and confidence to challenge themselves, to pursue their passions and to realize their potential while growing as responsible members of their community.

- Allow your child to talk about fears. Help him or her with using "feeling" language so they can express themselves and be understood. Help your child build a vocabulary where they can talk about how they feel. Talking about fears is healthy. Being able to talk about how to manage fears is also healthy. It is unhealthy to feel fear and believe that it is a sign of weakness to have fear, thinking it is better not to show it or keep quiet about it.
- Ask your child questions to make it OK to talk about, "What would you do if you didn't feel safe in your school," "What if someone came in your school and you were afraid that you might get hurt." Talk about ways to keep yourself safe.
- Talk about a plan so they can explore what they would do — kind of like a fire drill mentality to be able to manage the fear and make an unknown ("What would I do if something happened?") to a known ("This is what I would do if something happened.")
- Limit exposure to news coverage. It can be mesmerizing and traumatic to keep hearing details of the shooting over and over. Acknowledge the news coverage, allow it in a small dose (depending on the age and emotional maturity of the child), and then turn it off and talk openly as a family to make it OK to talk about (that is better than redundancy of the details of what occurred as facts come out and new developments are reported).
- Focus on "more is the same than is different." Don't change your plans after school because it is such a sad day. Keep routine and typical plans to help your child feel they are functioning and that the world is still what they know. Focus on normal activities to foster resilience.
- Focus on how are we going to be better people because of tragedy. Whether it is the school shooting or the officer in Richardson, TX being shot, direct your children to live life and take advantage of each day being important. Focus on living.

Additional Resources:

[Tips for Talking to Students About a School Shooting](#)

[School Violence Prevention: Tips for Parents & Educators](#)

[Coping After A School Shooting](#)