



St. Luke School (Ottawa)
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Dear Parent/Guardian,

As a Catholic Community we are all deeply saddened by the tragic events that occurred in our city yesterday. Our thoughts and prayers are with all those affected, including the emergency responders.

Families and educators will together be instrumental in helping children and youth understand and cope with this act of violence and the loss of life. One of the goals in our schools is to work in collaboration with our parent community to help children feel safe and to understand that events like this are rare. Everyone is different. It is important to gauge each child's response, if any, and to allow them to express as much concern and grief as they wish. Following a traumatic event children and youth may feel frightened, angry, sad, guilty, or anxious. You may notice that they cry more often, are fearful, have trouble sleeping, have an increased or lessened appetite. Your child may wish to discuss their feelings with you. You can help them by listening carefully, spending more time with them, not overreacting, accepting their feelings and answering questions as simply and as honestly as you can.

Tips to help you support your children at this time:

- **Remain calm:** They will look to you for cues about how to react
- **Accept their feelings:** Let them know it is ok to be angry, upset. Allow them to express their feelings. Listen to what they are communicating.
- **Limit exposure to media:** Images viewed repeatedly can be overwhelming and difficult for them to separate from their reality.
- **Maintain normal family routines as much as possible:** Routines help us feel more secure.
- **Be aware of your own needs:** Caring for yourself is also important. Talk to your supports and ensure you are getting enough sleep and eating a healthy diet.

If you feel your child requires additional assistance in dealing with this situation, please do not hesitate to contact your School Principal. Social Work and Psychology staff from our Special Education and Student Services Department are available through the school.

Please be assured that our priority continues to be the safety and well-being of each of our students. We continue to pray for those affected by this tragedy.

Sincerely,

Nicola Benton
Principal

