



Auburn Community Unit District No. 10



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The faculty, staff and students in the Auburn School District are filled with indescribable grief for the families in Newtown, Connecticut who are experiencing the unthinkable. Our thoughts and prayer are with the families and friends that our grieving.

This most recent event reminds us all of how precious our children are and how the safety of our children is the absolute top priority. No safety plan can totally rid the county of such a random act of violence, however; it is reassuring to know that the emergency plans and procedures implemented in the Auburn School District are reviewed and improved upon annually by our staff and local law enforcement. It is imperative that as a school and as a community we stand together to insure our students' safety.

For parents or children needing guidance, there are counselors available at the school.

The following statement and guidelines were released by the Illinois Association of School Administrators:

The tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Connecticut this morning has evoked sadness, grief, anxiety, and anger. Children who are struggling with their thoughts and feelings of the shooting may turn to trusted adults for help and guidance. We offer these suggestions as you talk to your child:

Limit media exposure. Limit your child's exposure to media images and sounds of the shooting, and do not allow your very young children to see or hear any TV/radio shooting-related messages. Even if they appear to be engrossed in play, children often are aware of what you are watching on TV or listening to on the radio. What may not be upsetting to an adult may be very upsetting and confusing for a child. Limit your own exposure as well. Adults may become more distressed with nonstop exposure to media coverage of this shooting.

What does your child already know? Start by asking what your child/teen already has heard about the event from the media and from friends. Listen carefully; try to figure out what he or she knows or believes. As your child explains, listen for misinformation, misconceptions, and underlying fears or concerns. Understand that this information will change as more facts about the event are known.

Gently correct inaccurate information. If your child/teen has inaccurate information or misconceptions, take time to provide the correct information in simple, clear, age-appropriate language.

Encourage your child to ask questions, and answer those questions directly. Your child/teen may have some difficult questions about the incident. For example, he/she may ask if it is possible that it could happen at their school; he/she is probably really asking whether it is "likely." The concern

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about re-occurrence will be an issue for caregivers and children/teens alike. While it is important to discuss the likelihood of this risk, he/she is also asking if he/she is safe.

Be patient. In times of stress, children/teens may have trouble with their behavior, concentration, and attention. While they may not openly ask for your guidance or support, they will want it. Adolescents who are seeking increased independence may have difficulty expressing their needs. Both children and teens will need a little extra patience, care, and love. (Be patient with yourself, too!)

Providing a safe learning environment for our students and safe working environment for our staff is something we take seriously and is our first priority. Additional information and resources are available online from the National Child Traumatic Stress Network, www.nctsn.org.

If you or your child needs additional support, please contact your school principal.

Darren J. Root