



Friday, February 13, 2026

Dear Westmount Families,

The tragic events at Tumbler Ridge Secondary School in British Columbia have deeply shocked and saddened communities across the country. As educators and parents, our hearts go out to the students, staff, and families directly impacted. The Westmount Charter School community extends our sincere thoughts and condolences to all those affected.

News of a school tragedy can be unsettling for children and adults alike. Each child may respond differently depending on their age, temperament, and prior experiences. We encourage families to create space for open, supportive conversations at home over the long weekend.

Below are some helpful talking points and guidance for supporting your child:

- **Face Your Own Feelings First**
 - Children often look to adults to gauge how to respond. Before initiating a conversation, take a moment to acknowledge and process your own emotions. Approaching the discussion calmly helps create a sense of safety and reassurance.
- **Listen and Offer Perspective**
 - Begin with a neutral check-in, such as, “What have you heard about what happened?” or “How are you feeling about the news?”
 - Avoid making assumptions about what your child may be thinking or feeling.
 - Listen carefully and validate their emotions: “It makes sense that you might feel worried or sad.”
 - Provide age-appropriate reassurance and perspective while emphasizing the many adults who work to keep schools safe.
- **Watch for Signs of Mental Stress**
 - Younger children may not always express feelings verbally. Their behaviour may tell you more than their words.
 - Signs of distress can include:
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Changes in appetite
 - Trouble concentrating
 - Increased irritability
 - Withdrawing from friends or activities they usually enjoy
 - Repeatedly talking about or fixating on the event

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Fostering Gifted Education from the Inside Out

- If your child or teen continues to struggle, experiences persistent fear or sadness, or cannot stop thinking about the incident after a couple of weeks, you may wish to seek additional support through the school, your primary-care provider, or a mental health professional.
- **Maintain Routines**
 - Routine is stabilizing and helps reduce feelings of uncertainty. Keeping regular meal, bedtime, and activity schedules can provide children with a reassuring sense of normalcy.

For families who would like additional guidance, we encourage you to review the following article, which provides helpful strategies and practical suggestions for speaking with children and teens about tragic events: [How to talk to your kids and teens about the Tumbler Ridge mass shootings - Okotoks & Foothills News](#). The link offers age-appropriate advice and reinforces many of the talking points shared above.

With schools closed for the Family Day long weekend, several local support services are available in Calgary should your family need assistance:

- Kids Help Phone - Call 1-800-668-6868 or text CONNECT to 686868
- Calgary Distress Centre - 403-266-HELP
- Suicide Crisis Help Line - 9-8-8
- Alberta 2-1-1
- Alberta Health Services Link - 8-1-1

When school resumes next week, our staff will be available to support students as needed. If you feel your child would benefit from additional school-based support, please get in touch with your campus:

ECadmin@westmountcharter.com

MHadmin@westmountcharter.com

Thank you for your partnership in supporting our students' well-being. Please do not hesitate to reach out if we can assist in any way.

Sincerely,



Dr. Adriana Klassen
Superintendent
Westmount Charter School