



Dear Chippewa Valley Families,

We are shocked and saddened by the tragic loss of life that occurred yesterday at Oxford High School. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the students, families, staff members, and community that have been affected by this unthinkable tragedy. As parents and as educators our most important job is to ensure the safety and security of our children. When safety and security are compromised anywhere, it impacts educators, parents, and students everywhere.

Over the next several days as information is shared by the media, children may be exposed to a lot of information that is difficult for them to understand. They may need to express their feelings and ask questions. It is important to respond with age-appropriate information and assurances that you are there to support them and keep them safe. We have included tips on talking to your child.

To ensure the safety of our Chippewa Valley students, we have established a variety of procedures and protocols throughout the district. We have secure entrances, emergency alert systems, School Guard security glass protecting every classroom and office, high tech security cameras, card access systems for staff, and locked perimeter doors during the school day. Through the support of our townships, we also employ four full-time police resource officers.

Our staff members are trained and alert and practice emergency drills with our students including those focused on avoid, deny, and defend procedures. We have a District Crisis Coordinating Team (DCCT) and highly skilled school social workers, school psychologists, and counselors ready to assist any student or family in need of intervention or referrals to community resources.

We remind our students about the importance of reporting threats, bullying or any incident that makes them feel uncomfortable to a trusted adult. We have numerous reporting mechanisms in place for students, including *OK2Say*.

We all share the same goal of providing a world class education in a safe and nurturing environment. By working together, we can continue to provide this for every Chippewa Valley student.

Sincerely,

Ron Roberts
Superintendent

Considerations for Parents

Supporting Children/Teens in the Aftermath of the Oxford Schools Shooting

Incidents of high profile violence, like the recent Oxford Schools shooting, may create confusion and fears for children and teens. The visual imagery in graphic news reports and the footage of students involved in the event now on Twitter can be traumatizing. Parents can serve as a source of assurance and guidance.

Some Considerations:

- **Limit media exposure** as it can increase the anxieties of children of all ages. Visual images are particularly impactful.
- **Start a conversation** by asking children in the upper elementary grades and older what they know about the incident. With *younger children*, who may not be aware, observe to see if they bring up the incident rather than initiating a conversation.
- **Listen** to determine their fears and perspectives.
- **Provide accurate information about the circumstances in keeping with your child's age.** Younger children need simple explanations coupled with reassurance. Older children (middle and high school) generally benefit from more extensive conversation about factual elements of a tragic incident. Encourage them to seek support at school from their counselor or social worker if they are feeling stressed.
- **Encourage them to ask questions and express feelings.**
- **Reassure that they are safe.** "This kind of event is very unusual. There are many thousands of schools across the country that haven't experienced this kind of event." ... "Schools are safe places." ... "Your safety is important to me and everyone in your school."
- **Observe** for signs of distress, currently and over time, including the behavioral changes noted below.
- **Maintain a normal routine** as it is reassuring and supportive.
- **Contact your student's school counselor or social worker if you have concerns.**

Common Signs of Significant Anxiety for Children/Teens Include:

- Perseveration on the crisis situation
- Difficulty concentrating
- Decline in academic performance
- Irritability, easy "startle" response, agitation
- Increased combativeness and oppositional behavior
- Fear, excessive vigilance
- Emotionality, mood swings, or numbness
- Regressive behaviors, e.g. clingy, separation anxiety
- Social withdrawal
- Sleeplessness

For more information, visit www.nasponline.org and www.nctsn.org/resources/talking-children-about-shooting