



Huntington Union Free

School District

"A Tradition of Excellence Since 1657"

James W. Polansky

Superintendent of Schools

December 17, 2012

Dear Huntington Families:

In the midst of the holiday season, we are faced with an unthinkable tragedy and one that strikes very close to home. Our hearts go out to the people in Newtown, Connecticut who are mourning the lives of children and adults alike. We cannot help but share their grief, as well as feel their pain and loss.

Please continue to recognize that the safety of our students and staff remains our highest priority, as does their emotional well-being. We are blessed to possess a group of skilled and compassionate psychologists, social workers and counselors who are routinely available to provide any support needed. This support will be readily available throughout this week in response to Friday's tragic event. *Please do not hesitate to contact your child(ren)'s school(s) should you have any questions or concerns.*

Be advised that staff members in each building met on Friday or prior to the start of school today to review safety and security protocol. Significant points of discussion included:

- the maintenance of one entry point for visitors, with all other doors securely locked;
- maintaining fidelity in the use of building electronic door entry and buzz-in systems;
- the ongoing requirement that visitors show photo identification and sign in upon building entry;
- reinforcement of lockdown procedures/drill protocol outlined and discussed earlier in the year;
- other items in the district's emergency plans that are specific to each building.

Please note that our emergency response plans, addressing a range of potential situations, are reviewed annually and adjusted to reflect current staff and building situations. We will continue to take every action possible to ensure that our staff members and students are prepared and protected in our schools.

Although it may be difficult, please attempt to shield your child(ren) from the barrage of media coverage surrounding the recent event, as exposure will increase their anxiety and threaten their feelings of security. This is particularly important for elementary age children. Spend some time with your child(ren) in an effort to help them understand and process any information they may have heard, and encourage them to seek assistance from an adult if they are frightened or upset.

Again, please refer to the document prepared by the National Association of School Psychologists, as identified in Friday's automated call, for additional strategies related to helping students cope with a national tragedy. This document is now linked under the *Daily Download* header on the district website (www.hufsd.edu).

Be aware that we will continue to review with staff, reflect upon, and adjust as needed our security measures and procedures. Rest assured that we will be ever vigilant in our efforts to keep our facilities and the individuals within them safe and secure.

Sincerely,


James W. Polansky
Superintendent of Schools