



EAGLE RIDGE

ACADEMY

February 16, 2018

Dear Eagle Ridge Academy Staff and Families:

Today, the American flag flies at half-staff in honor of the victims and heroes of Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School. This Wednesday, my heart broke more each time I heard new details about the tragic incident in in Broward County, Florida. Our thoughts and prayers go out to the Parkland High School community. The violence toward our country's children is unexplainable and incomprehensible. As educators, the safety of our students and school is always at the forefront of our efforts. More importantly, as parents, we worry about the safety and security of our children in our schools.

At Eagle Ridge Academy, this incident hits home and we do think about these kinds of possibilities. In fact, we prepare for them. Last year, Eagle Ridge Academy developed a new comprehensive crisis response plan that addresses a full range of emergency situations to include lockdown drills that are specific to our new facility. These plans are distributed and communicated to ERA staff on an annual basis. We also conduct five practice lockdown drills per year. We have communications tools both for alerting police of a situation and for alerting parents to what has happened and where to go to be reunited with their children.

In today's media world, your child has heard this news in some way. Because it took place in a school, a place students see as safe and welcoming, it may be very disturbing to them. Here are a few suggestions for helping to make children feel safe:

- Turn off or monitor the television. Endless news programs are likely to heighten anxiety, and young children cannot distinguish between images on television and their personal reality.
- Maintain a normal routine.
- Stick to facts. Answer questions factually.
- Remember to filter what you say to a child. Avoid graphic details.
- Remain calm and reassuring. Children take their cues from their parents and adults.
- Be optimistic.
- Be a good listener and observer. Pay attention to changes in behavior.



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A C A D E M Y

Take care of yourself. You are better able to help your child if you are coping well. If you are anxious or upset, your children are more likely to be so as well.

We don't always know how a child will be affected in a crisis, but you know your child the best of anyone. Be prepared for your child to do any of the following:

- Claim not to be affected
- Ask a lot of questions
- Act agitated and angry
- Try abnormally hard to be good
- Withdraw
- Have frightful dreams

We will continue to work in order to ensure that we are providing appropriate supports for our students and staff members.

Sincerely,

Jason Ulbrich, Executive Director

