

November 30, 2012

Dear Parents, Guardians, and Staff:

As you know, the safety of our students is our first priority. I need to share that on Wednesday, November 28, we were notified that an allegation of inappropriate physical contact with a student was made against a teacher at Traina Elementary School. We take all allegations extremely seriously. The Tracy Police department was contacted immediately and they have been vigilant in investigating this incident. As per our policy, the teacher was immediately removed from the school site and placed on administrative leave pending the outcome of the investigation.

We understand parents may desire more information than we are able to provide at this point. We are committed to following police recommendations as to not undermine the integrity of the ongoing investigation.

We care about our students and want to ensure they are safe. All of us; parents, students, staff and community members need to work together to best support the needs of our children. With that in mind, we have attached some tips adapted from the National Association of School Psychologists about how to best support children during a crisis event.

Traina principal Mr. Ovick and his entire staff are working diligently to maintain the continuity of the educational program at Traina School. They are committed to make students feel safe and keep the school day looking typical. School and District Counselors will be available on the Traina campus on Monday and on into the future should students, staff or parents wish to speak to someone about this situation. Should these services be needed at another school site, please contact your school principal who will arrange for them.

While we are limited in the information that we can provide, please direct any questions to the district office at (209) 836-3388. If you or your children have any information that would be helpful to police in this investigation, you are encouraged report it to Detective Gary Castillo of the Tracy Police at (209) 831-6589.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Dana Eaton', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Dana Eaton, Ed.D  
Superintendent, Jefferson School District

**Tips for Supporting Children and Youth After a Crisis Event**  
*Adapted from the National Association of School Psychologists*

**Be reassuring.** Children take their emotional cues from the significant adults in their lives. Your reactions are most important. Recognize that some children may be concerned about something bad happening to themselves, family or friends. Explain to them the safety measures in place and reassure them that you and other adults will take care of them.

**Be a good listener and observer.** Let children guide you to learn how concerned they are or how much information they need. If they are not focused on the crisis, do not dwell on it. However, be available to answer their questions to the best of your ability. Young children may not be able to express themselves verbally. Pay attention to changes in their behavior or social interactions.

**Monitor the news.** Images of a crisis event can become overwhelming, especially if watched repetitively. Young children in particular may not be able to distinguish between images on television and their personal reality. Older children may choose to watch the news, but be available to discuss what they see and to help put it into perspective.

**Emphasize people's resiliency.** Help children understand the ability of people to come through a tragic event and go on with their lives. Focus on children's own competencies in terms of how they coped in daily life during difficult times. In age-appropriate terms, identify other crises from which people, communities, or countries have recovered.

**Maintain as much continuity and normalcy as possible.** Allowing children to deal with their reactions is important but so is providing a sense of normalcy. Routine family activities, classes, after-school activities, and friends can help children feel more secure and better able to function.

**Spend family time.** Being with family is always important in difficult or sad times. Even if your children are not significantly impacted by this tragedy, this may be a good opportunity to participate in and to appreciate family life. Doing things together reinforces children's sense of stability and connectedness.

**Do something positive with your children to help others in need.** Taking action is one of the most powerful ways to help children feel more in control and to build a stronger sense of connection. Suggestions include making individual donations to prevention or support agencies, holding a school or community fundraiser, or even working to support families in need within the community.

**Ask for help if you or your children need it.** Any crisis can feel overwhelming for families directly affected, particularly those who have lost loved ones. Staying connected to your community can be extremely helpful. It may also be important to seek additional support from a mental health professional to cope with overwhelming feelings.

**Communicate with your school.** Children directly impacted by the crisis may be under a great deal of stress that can be very disruptive to learning. Teachers should determine what extra support or leniency students need and work with parents to develop a plan to help students keep up with their work. Your school psychologist, social worker, or counselor can also provide extra support.

**Be aware of your own needs.** Don't ignore your own feelings of anxiety, grief, and anger. Talking to friends, family members, religious leaders, and mental health counselors can help. It is important to let your children know that you are sad. Understand that if you lost family or friends, just getting through the day can be overwhelming. You will be better able to support your children if you can express your own emotions in a productive manner. Get appropriate sleep, nutrition, and exercise.