

Dear Families,

Staff in our schools have received numerous contacts from students and parents expressing sadness and worry over the tragedy at Douglas High School in Florida. We want to take a moment to assure you of our commitment to safe schools by sharing the following points:

1. District staff train frequently to make sure we have the best response possible to any threat to our safety. We have plans in place for tornadoes and gas leaks and bomb threats and, yes, school shootings. As with each school based event such as Wednesday's, the FBI and the Department of Homeland security will study what happened and they will issue recommendations to schools across the nation about what they learned. SPSD works closely with our local law enforcement as well as with Sauk County Emergency Management to review and revise plans every time we learn something new.
2. Even with those plans, though, the best way for us to stay safe is to work diligently to prevent incidents from happening in the first place. In addition to the commitment of staff to establishing positive connections with and supports for students, SPSD is implementing measures that provide staff with processes to more closely and proactively examine and establish plans to address circumstances that may indicate risk.
3. The safety of our schools is something all of you can help support. Here is how:
 - a. If you see, hear or read something that concerns you, report it to a school staff member. When it comes to a threat to the safety of our school, we cannot worry about it being viewed as "snitching," or over-reacting. Acts of violence within school settings are prevented all the time because of the reports of other students or family members who care about keeping themselves and other students safe.
 - b. The doors to our schools are locked to provide for the controlled entry of all individuals accessing our buildings. Please know we ask that staff and students do not open a locked door for ANY ONE, even if it's a familiar person. Anyone who doesn't have a key, should come around to the front entrance. It might be inconvenient, but it's one way to keep us safer.
 - c. When you see us do something as a school that you worry makes us "unsafe," let us know. We get suggestions from students, parents and staff all the time. We won't always make the change you ask for, but we will ALWAYS consider it and process the suggestion with law enforcement.

Your children may come to you with questions about the events in Florida and may feel worried or scared. District staff are available to help your child process the complex emotions that may emerge following events of school violence. Please do not hesitate to reach out to your child's teacher, principal or school counselor to seek support for your child. In addition to school support staff - physicians, therapists, faith-based and other community support persons are also appropriate places to turn.

Please remember this critical fact - though school shootings get a lot of media coverage when they happen, and they are horrible tragedies for the communities they happen to, they are still very rare. Statistically, school is still the safest place for any of us to be.

We share this letter as one voice, one mind and one heart in support of each student and staff member entrusted to our leadership and care. If you have any questions or need any assistance, please contact us as we are here to help.

Sincerely,

The Sauk Prairie School District Leadership Team