



**Chiganois Elementary School**

11145 Hwy # 2 Masstown

RR#1 Debert, N.S.

B0M1G0

Phone:(902) 662-4420 Fax: (902) 662-4422

Dear Chiganois Families,

Please know we are thinking of all our students and families during this difficult time. We are here to support and help you in any way we can. We recognize the events from the past weekend has greatly impacted many people. Please encourage your children to reach out to us as we begin to process the tragedy that has taken place in our communities. At this time, we extend our sincere condolences to all who are mourning. Please take care of each other and know the Chiganois School staff is here for you.

In ordinary circumstances, we would offer support through our crisis response team, in person. Given the global pandemic, this may look different; however, supports will be available to help navigate this challenging time.

***Our school staff, teachers, school counsellors, psychologists, and mental health clinicians are working together to help facilitate supports in a manner that is respectful of the health guidelines at this time.***

If you feel like you or your child/children require more information or support, please don't hesitate to contact the school community and we will help you to connect with the appropriate supports.

- Your Child's classroom teacher
- Principal, Kevin Harnish [harnishk@ccrce.ca](mailto:harnishk@ccrce.ca) 902 843 0650
- School Counsellor, Nadine Arnold [arnoldn@ccrce.ca](mailto:arnoldn@ccrce.ca) 902 890 8599
- School Psychologist, Greg MacLean [macleanGH@ccrce.ca](mailto:macleanGH@ccrce.ca) 1 902 694 2036

If someone in your family requires immediate mental health assistance, two options include:

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| <b><u>Mental Health &amp; Addictions<br/>Provincial Crisis Line:</u></b> | 1-888-429-8167; text HOME to 686868       |
| <b><u>Kids Help Phone</u></b>  | 1-800-668-6868 (toll-free) Available 24/7 |

We understand that your child/children may have a lot of questions right now. When answering questions, please remember the following:

1. Provide only verified facts
  - Tell the truth (don't ignore or minimize)
  - Use brief and simple explanations for younger children
  - When discussing death avoid euphemisms (went away, went to sleep, lost, passed away) that may be taken literally and cause fear and misunderstanding
  - Expect to have to repeat facts.
  - Do not give details that children may not ask for.
  - Avoid speculating or sensationalizing
2. Allow children to ask questions
  - Let them know what is a rumor and dispel rumors
  - Let the children guide the information that is shared with their questions
  - Tell them you will give them one of two responses - the facts OR I don't know
3. Balance the information with reassurance about their safety.

As well, the following links may possibly be of some help for you and your family:

<https://www.apa.org/topics/shooting-aftermath>

<https://childmind.org/guide/helping-children-cope-traumatic-event/>

Once again, the Chiganois School Staff is here to support our students and families. Please do not hesitate to reach out to any of us at any time. You are all in our thoughts and in our hearts.

Take care of yourselves and one another.

Kevin Harnish  
Principal