May 23, 2018

Dear Families and Caretakers,

It is with sincerest regrets that I inform you of a tragic loss to a member of our school family. Today, our community experienced a great loss as we learned that one of our former students passed away. We all feel her loss and our thoughts and prayers go out to her family.

Today, The School District of Philadelphia’s Emergency/Crisis Response Team had a number of trained professionals onsite to counsel and support the children and staff throughout the school day. A team of professional counselors has been provided to speak with children individually and meet with others in small groups as needed. Today, we discussed feelings that are normally experienced when a tragedy occurs, and urged everyone to talk about their feelings. We will also have this same support available tomorrow.

We encourage you to speak with your child so that he/she may share with you his/her feelings and experience in the days ahead. Should you note any unusual change in your child’s behavior or mood, please contact Hill-Freedman and ask for a member of our counseling staff. We can be reached at 215-400-3530. Additional resources are provided along with this letter.

Sincerely,

The Hill-Freedman Family

**Resources For Families** **Grief Support**

**Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia**

“Evenstar Bereavement Program” is an ongoing support group for parents and siblings, as well as workshops offered throughout the year. Please call **215-590-3273**.

**The Center for Grieving Children, Teens and Families**

A safe and caring place where young people, ages 6-18, and their families who are grieving a death can find help to grow through the healing process. Peer grief support groups are available for elementary school age, middle school age, and teens. A group for adults is held while the children meet in their groups. Please call **215-744-4025.**

**Services of the Anti-Violence Partnership**

* For information on free counseling services for families, individuals and children that have been traumatized by violence, please call **215-567-6776**. In West Philadelphia, call **215-748-7780**.
* For victims needing advocacy and/or assistance navigating the criminal justice system, please call **215-686-8033**.

**Services of the Department of Public Health**

The Division of Maternal, Child and Family Health’s Grief Assistance Program provides counseling and supportive services to families who have lost an infant or child. For information, please call **215-685-7448**.

**The Compassionate Friends Network**

The mission of The Compassionate Friends is to assist families toward the positive resolution of grief following the death of a child of any age and to provide information to help others be supportive.

For chapter referral information, call the TCF National Office toll-free at 877-969-0010 or write nationaloffice@compassionatefriends.org

**Signs and Symptoms**

**Of Students in Distress**

## Classroom Tip Sheet

# *What to Look for in the Classroom After a Traumatic Event…*

• Increased irritability

• Difficulty concentrating, “daydreaming”

•  Negative response to noise or touch (heightened “startle response”)

• Tearfulness

• Moodiness

• Withdrawal

• Appearance of lethargy, sadness

• Comments about the event

*What to Do if You Notice the Above Signs….*

• Privately check in with your child/student

• Let your child/student know that help is available

• Let your child/ student know that you are going to ask the counselor to check in with him or her to make sure he/she is ok