



New Milford Public School District

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World Events

October 13, 2023

Dear New Milford School Families and Community Members:

These are the letters superintendents never want to write. But given the recent events unfolding in our world, I feel compelled to do so. My heart is heavy following the devastating attacks on Israel which have taken the lives of more than 1,200 people. The images on the news are graphic, frightening and depict seemingly unending stories of loss. Some local families have friends and relatives who have been impacted directly. For others, they still have yet to hear from loved ones. I send my deepest sympathies to our faculty and staff members, our families, and our community members personally affected by these horrific events.

With access to news and social media, our students have likely witnessed the videos and images of the attacks. It is trending on all outlets; families are discussing it; most kids are talking about it. Depending upon their age and level of access to these messages, the stories could be practically inescapable and certainly difficult to process. As I hope you know, the New Milford Public School District believes in fostering a safe, compassionate, and nurturing environment for all of our school community members. Our commitment to promoting understanding and tolerance remains steadfast, especially during the most challenging and difficult times like these.

When these events arise in classrooms, we encourage our educators to address them in an age appropriate manner, ensuring students have accurate information and a safe platform to express their thoughts and fears. Sadly, teachers have become quite skilled at discussing unsettling world events with their students. I remind our teachers they are not alone in that process. Our school counselors, child psychologists, school social workers, our Student Assistance Counselor as well as our Care Plus counselor are prepared to meet the needs of our faculty/staff and students who may need additional support. We will continue to emphasize the importance of listening to each other, and demonstrating empathy, compassion, and respect. Otherwise, we hope to keep the school day as 'normal' and as predictable as possible, because that is important for our students.

As parents and guardians, these conversations are never easy, but I trust you will address your children's questions and concerns as you see fit. Most importantly, I ask you to remind them **they are safe at school**. If they seem restless or nervous, please encourage our counseling program, and remind them of our school based officers and our partnership with the New Milford Police Department. Should you need, please reach out to your child's teachers, counselors, school administrators, or to me.

Here are some resources to help navigate discussions with children:

- [Helping Children Cope with Terrorism](#) - National Association of School Psychologists (NASP).
- [How to Talk to Your Children About Conflict and War](#) (UNICEF: Eight tips to support and comfort children).
- [How to Talk to Kids About Violence, Crime, and War](#) (Common Sense Media).

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Danielle M. Shanley".

Danielle M. Shanley
she/her/hers