

Responding to a Loss to the School Community: Returning to Class

Classroom Tips

1. Follow standard school schedule, including bells, preps, lunches, recess and afterschool activities.
2. Complete classroom attendance ASAP to identify who is out and if targeted efforts need to be made to contact students who are absent
3. Add support (including extra active supervision staff) in non-classroom settings and during transitions
4. Leave artwork, desks, lockers and other possessions of deceased students or staff in place for several days so friends, families and staff can visit them. Desks can serve as a collection place for cards, letters and notes. Already scheduled classroom acknowledgements for birthdays, student of the week or other activities involving the deceased student should proceed as planned. Involving classmates in some of the decision-making about next steps can be very helpful for all.
5. Bring questions about permanent markers or memorials to staff meetings for group discussion

Available Support

1. Extra district staff will be available throughout the day to cover classrooms time for teacher breaks, serve as extra hands during passing time, lunch or recess. Please contact the main office or administration if you need assistance.
2. Staff quiet spaces are also available in the main office area. Do not hesitate to take time for yourself throughout the day. District mental health support staff will be present there to be with you if you would like.

Student Behaviors to Watch Out For

Elementary students may show some of these behaviors following a loss:

- Shock/denial
- Restlessness, anger, aggressive behavior
- Sleeping or eating difficulties
- Headaches, tummy aches, body aches
- Withdrawal
- Sadness, tearfulness
- Poor concentration
- Unexpected fears and worries
- Acting younger than their age
- School avoidance

If you are concerned about the responses of a child in your classroom please contact administration, behavior support or one of the social work or psychology team members.