



St Peter's C of E Primary School

Liverpool Grove Walworth London SE17 2HH

Tel 020 7703 4881 Fax 020 7703 1601

Monday 5th June 2017

Dear Parents and Carers,

We were all shocked and saddened by the horrific events in London Bridge on Saturday and Manchester two weeks ago. I know that you will join me in sending our thoughts and prayers to the victims and families of the terrorist attack, which took place within our community and capital city on Saturday evening.

Inevitably many children will come to school with an awareness of the events and our priority is to support and guide their questions and concerns.

All our staff have been given guidance to help us address the children's concerns, worries and questions but, also, guidance to support us to promote understanding of other faiths and challenge views of other religions that automatically assume that people committing terrorist attacks in other parts of the world are typical of any faith.

Staff will be open to allowing time for children's questions and discussions should these be brought up by the children. As a school we are uniquely positioned to support conversations, questions and honest dialogue that promote positive understanding of each other in the multi-faith community in which our children are growing up.

These issues will be addressed through our RE syllabus, P4C, class discussion and in collective worship. At all times our response will reflect the school's Christian values and will be guided by Galatians 5 v22-23 which talks of the fruits of the Holy Spirit being "**love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control.**"

School trips/visits:

The advice from Southwark local authority is to continue as planned but being extra vigilant. We will make decisions on trips/visits on an individual basis. Our staff carry out very detailed risks assessments for each trip, including thinking about alternatives in case of an emergency. All staff follow national and local guidance given the current threat of terrorism. All staff have received relevant safeguarding training. We will endeavour to ensure we have additional adults on trips.

If you have any further concerns please do not hesitate to contact me or speak to your class teacher.

Overleaf is a document you may find helpful entitled 'Talking with Children when the talking gets tough', distributed by Purdue University in the United States. You will also find links to websites that are useful. Please do look at our website for further support in how to address these events with your child.

Peace, love and hope,

Anne-Marie Bahlol



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Talking with Children - When the Talking Gets Tough

Wars, terrorist attacks, natural disasters —as adults we hope that these and other tragic outcomes will never happen anywhere and definitely will not impact the children and youth we care about. We would like to protect those young minds from the pain and horror of difficult situations. We would like to ensure that they have happy, innocent, and carefree lives.

So what is a parent, teacher, or other caring adult to do when disasters fill the airwaves and the consciousness of society?

Don't assume that the kids don't know about it.

They probably know more than you think. The reality of today's world is that news travels far and wide. Adults and children learn about disasters and tragedies shortly after they occur, and live video footage with close-ups and interviews are part of the report. Children and youth are exposed to the events as soon as they can watch TV or interact with others who are consumers of the news. Not talking about it does not protect children. In fact, you may communicate that the subject is taboo and that you are unavailable if you remain silent.

Be available and "askable."

Let kids know that it is okay to talk about the unpleasant events.

Listen to what they think and feel. By listening, you can find out if they have misunderstandings, and you can learn more about the support that they need. You do not need to explain more than they are ready to hear, but be willing to answer their questions.

Share your feelings.

Tell young people if you feel afraid, angry, or frustrated. It can help them to know that others also are upset by the events. They might feel that only children are struggling. If you tell them about your feelings, you also can tell them about how you deal with the feelings. Be careful not to overwhelm them or expect them to find answers for you.

Help children use creative outlets like art and music to express their feelings.

Children may not be comfortable or skilled with words, especially in relation to difficult situations. Using art, puppets, music, or books might help children open up about their reactions. They may want to draw pictures and then destroy them, or they could want to display them or send them to someone else. Be flexible and listen.

Reassure young people and help them feel safe.

When tragic events occur, children may be afraid that the same will happen to them. Some young children may even think that it already did happen to them. It is important to let them know that they are not at risk. Try to be realistic as you reassure them, however. You can try to support them and protect them, but you can not keep all bad things from happening to children. You can always tell them that you love them, though. You can say that, no matter what happens, your love will be with them. That is realistic, and often that is all the children need to feel better.



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Support children's concern for people they do not know.

Children often are afraid not only for themselves, but also for people they do not even know. They learn that many people are getting hurt or are experiencing pain in some way. They worry about those people and their well being. In some cases they might feel less secure or cared for themselves if they see that others are hurting. It is heartwarming and satisfying to observe this level of caring in children.

Look for feelings beyond fear.

After reassuring kids, don't stop there. Studies have shown that children also may feel sad or angry. Let them express that full range of emotions. Support the development of caring and empathy.

Help children find a course of action.

One important way to reduce stress is to take action. This is true for both adults and children. The action may be very simple or more complex. Children may want to write a letter to someone about their feelings, get involved in an organization committed to preventing events like the one they are dealing with, or send money to help victims or interventionists. Let the young people help to identify the action choices. They may have wonderful ideas.

Take action and get involved in something.

It is not enough to let children take action by themselves. Children who know that their parents, teachers, or other significant caregivers are working to make a difference feel hope. They feel safer and more positive about the future. So do something. It will make you feel more hopeful, too. And hope is one of the most valuable gifts we can give children and ourselves.

If you would like more information, here are some websites:

Websites:

For parents and families, the **NSPCC** website now includes updated information and practical guidance about what to do if young people are worried about terrorism: www.nspcc.org.uk/what-we-do/news-opinion/supporting-children-worried-about-terrorism/

<https://www.winstonswish.org.uk/london-terror-attack-talking-tragic-events>

<https://childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/worries-about-the-world/>

□ Finally, for young pupils in particular, the team at **BBC Newsround** have put together an excellent page of advice and reassurance for those worried or frightened after these events: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002>