

November 3rd, 2016

Dear Parents, Staff, and Community Members:

In light of the recent tragedy in our neighbouring community of Abbotsford, I felt the need to write to you in regards to the incident. First, I know I speak for the Board and all my School District 75 colleagues when I say that our thoughts are with the families and staff impacted by this terrible incident. Abbotsford staff responded heroically, and bring credit to our profession, but the memories will last a lifetime. Second, I want to assure you all that Mission schools regularly practice our lockdown and lockout procedures, that we have good liaison with our RCMP, and staff are mindful of strangers and unexpected events at their schools. It may be worth mentioning that schools are not public property, and under the law the school principal has the power to eject or prevent entry for any member of the public if she or he deems it necessary for the safety of students and staff. Third, our counsellors and other professionals do an excellent job of supporting students in times of stress such as these.

With this said, schools should be places of curiosity, encouragement, and joy. We will continue to be vigilant, but we know the damage of living in fear can bring to us all, especially young people. I believe we can all keep sight that, despite tragic moments or dark times, we live in a wondrous world and our children need this reinforced. As a father to three children myself, it is important that we live with vision, compassion, and hope.

Should you have questions about the School District's emergency procedures, or our plans around critical incidents, do not hesitate to contact me at the number above or via email at angus.wilson@mpsd.ca. Thank you for your consideration on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Angus Wilson
Superintendent of Schools