

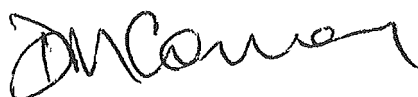
13 January 2017

Dear Parents/Carers

We would like to thank everyone within our school community for the support that has been given and expressed in so many ways in response to the tragic house fire and deaths of Emilia Kordaszewska and her mother, Alina Kordaszewska. It was such a shocking and unthinkable event that has changed our school community and it has been heartening to see how you have all been supporting each other during a very distressing time. We have spoken with some parents/carers, families and students during the Christmas break and since the start of term, and we wanted to acknowledge how difficult it was to have such a thing occur during a school holiday; meaning that there was a period of time when as families you were bearing the emotional impact of this tragedy yourselves. Having spoken with parents/carers about ways in which they have been supporting their children and each other as adults/friends and families there have been some key themes coming through about what parents/carers have been finding helpful and comforting including:-

- Acknowledging this awful event and the impact it is having on your child/children (and on yourself as an adult/parent/carer);
- Reassuring children (and your partners/yourselves) that there may be a variety of emotions that can be felt and that these emotions can change rapidly over time such as sadness, sorrow, anger, irritation, worries, anxiety and so on. There is no one way to feel when something so shocking happens;
- Feelings can be shown or not shown and there is no right or wrong thing to feel or do. Some people cry and it is ok to cry with or in front of children – it is helpful in a way for them to see how you manage this, to cry and to recover, to feel a little better afterwards and how to move on to doing something else;
- Children (and adults) sometimes need to lean on or return to things that help them feel safe or secure, perhaps extra hugs, checking in more, a favourite toy or bedtime routine. This is because shocking events like this make us feel a little wobbly and so it is helpful to do things that make us feel safe and secure and be reassured by things we know well;
- Spending time doing fun things, either alone, with friends or as a family. It is ok to enjoy life and to feel sad at the same time;
- Reminding children about 'regular things' like eating, sleeping, clubs and favourite TV shows. Sometimes big feelings can make people forget about their usual routines. Trying to live life alongside big feelings helps us to manage day by day. One parent told us 'today we will deal with today; we can think about tomorrow then';
- Talking about our memories of the person who has died can be helpful, sometimes doing things you liked to do together or going to places that remind you of them over time can make you feel a mixture of happiness and sadness but this is acceptable;
- Talking with other people about how they are doing is helpful to connect with each other and support one another.

With kind regards



Mr D Conway  
Headteacher