

October 5, 2018

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We received word this morning that an SGMS 8<sup>th</sup> grader died last night. We are deeply saddened by this loss.

We all react in different ways to the death of one of our school community members. Please expect and try to understand there will be a variety of emotions and responses. The most important thing we can do is to be supportive and encourage an open expression of feelings. This is a time to keep a close eye on your child. In our school district, we have implemented a plan for responding to this tragedy focused on helping our students and their families get back to school routines, structures and everyday activities as the situation and people allow. We encourage you to do the same. Our handling of such experiences has evolved from experience with death in the past and the advice of mental health professionals in the community. As we move through the next days, please respect the family's privacy and do not put unkind words out on social media.

If you feel that your child or family needs some assistance, please contact us and we will do everything we can to help you. Please know that there are grief support groups through Rise Up Montana at the Cool Café, 118 South Main Street, for parents and youth today at 3:30 and 6:00 p.m. today (Friday, October 5<sup>th</sup>). In addition, support groups will take place tomorrow (Saturday, October 6<sup>th</sup>), at Living Hope Church, 226 South 3<sup>rd</sup> Street, at 2:30 p.m. led by psychologist Rachel Jergensen. All are welcome.

For more information on grief support groups, please contact Rise Up Montana at 223-LIFE (5433). Schools also have a list of local mental health resources available.