

Dear Parents,

It is with great sadness that I write to you following the awful fire that happened last night in North Kensington. Our thoughts are with those who lost their lives and everyone else affected by the tragic event. In classes where children have raised this subject, we have discussed it with them, and we are likely to talk to all the children tomorrow.

The Local Authority and the Metropolitan Police have sent information to schools and I have selected key information to share with you in the hope that you find it useful. I have also adapted the information I sent you last week following the terror attacks, as the same principles apply in terms of how best to support children through these events.

Practical Tips:

### **1. Offer reassurance**

Children, especially younger ones, may be afraid that a similar incident will happen to them, or to their friends and family. It is important to reassure them from the outset that such incidents are very rare, and although it is possible, it is highly unlikely that something like this will happen to them, or to anyone they know.

### **2. Encourage questions and answer them honestly**

Younger children are naturally curious, and may arrive in school after hearing about the fire, full of questions and theories about what they have seen or heard. To ignore, dismiss, or not answer these questions, or to pretend that nothing has happened, can be counter-productive. It is important to answer children's questions honestly and in an age-appropriate way, in order to allay possible fears, but also to ensure that children are clear about separating basic facts about an event from speculation, rumour or untruths.

### **3. Clarify the facts**

Starting a discussion about such an incident could be broadly structured under three questions:

What exactly has happened?

What is happening now?

How do we know?

### **4. Allow children to talk about their feelings**

An incident can create a range of strong feelings within children, including curiosity, anxiety and fear. The way that children show their feelings will also vary, with some being open about their emotions, and others appearing to ignore or 'block out' what has happened. It is important that the feelings children express are listened to and valued, but differing reactions should be respected.

### **5. Encourage community cohesion**

I am sure that you will want to join us in providing some support for the families affected by this tragic event. Once we have more information, we will consider our options and decide what we can best do to help.

Anyone who is concerned about loved ones in relation to the fire should contact the Casualty Bureau on 0800 0961 233 or 0207 158 0197.

For further information regarding the ongoing critical incident, please use the following links:

<https://www.met.police.uk/news/major-incident-kensington-north/>

<https://www.rbkc.gov.uk/newsroom/all-council-statements/fire-grenfell-tower>

Extensive cordons remain in place and a number of nearby residents have been evacuated as a precaution. The A40 is closed in both directions. The public have been kindly asked to stay away from the area.

Those travelling to and from the area are asked to check before they start their journey using the link: [www.tfl.gov.uk](http://www.tfl.gov.uk)

Finally, our thoughts are with all of the members of the North Kensington community who have been affected by this tragic event.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Helen Swain  
Headteacher