

Dear Parents,

It is with great sadness that I write to you following the awful events in both Manchester and London. Our thoughts are with those who lost their lives and everyone else affected by the attacks. We have talked to the children, and observed the minute's silence today.

The Prevent Team at the Local Authority and the National Counter Terrorism Security Office have sent guidance to schools, which we are following, and I have selected key information to share with you in the hope that you find it useful.

Practical Tips:

### **1. Offer reassurance**

Children, especially younger ones, may be afraid that a similar attack will happen to them, or to their friends and family. It is important to reassure them from the outset that such attacks 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 a terrorist event 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 a terrorist attack 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**

A terrorist attack 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**

This attack goes against the values of the UK and those of our school. It is vital to reassure all children from different faiths that they are a valued and important part of the school community, and that we treat each other with kindness and respect. We all know how far away this kind of act is from Islam and is absolutely not an accurate reflection of what Islam teaches.

The following links provide useful advice on how to approach these difficult topics with young people:

- <https://www.winstonswish.org.uk/london-terror-attack-talking-tragic-events/>
- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/13865002>

CBBC's Newsround outlines the incident succinctly and in an age-appropriate way:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/40149168>

As you are aware, there is an increased number of police officers on duty, both armed and unarmed, who will provide a highly visible, reassuring presence across London. This is a result of the ongoing efforts to protect people, rather than a reaction to intelligence or a specific known risk. We have therefore been told that there is no need to cancel or postpone any school outings. Met Police advice is to be vigilant, as we would be whenever we take children out of the school setting.

Finally, we have been told that if we see anything suspicious, we should call the confidential Anti-Terrorist Hotline on 0800 789 321; if we think it is an emergency, call 999.

Yours sincerely,

Ms. Helen Swain  
Headteacher