



Joseph N. Meloche, Superintendent
Malberg Administration Building
45 Ranoldo Terrace, P.O. Box 5015
Cherry Hill, NJ 08034-0391
(856) 429-5600, ext. 4309 Fax (856) 354-1864
Email:JMeloche@chclc.org

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Dear Cherry Hill Community,

As the events at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School unfolded yesterday, our nation was once again touched by the horrific sights of a tragic school shooting. This has prompted many community members to inquire about the safety and security in the Cherry Hill Public Schools, as well as the resources available to students.

As Cherry Hill has grown, new residential developments have matured, businesses and medical facilities have flourished, and the faces of the families and the residents have changed, our schools have remained a constant. The foundation of our incredible community is our public schools. The 11,300 children who spend their days in our 19 schools are the most beloved and cherished part of our community.

Safety and security remain the primary focus of our responsibility, every day. We have every confidence in our Director of Security, Anthony Saporito, and the guidance of the Cherry Hill Police Department and Camden County Prosecutor's office in leading our best practices and protocols for prevention and emergency response. Drills are done within all of our schools every month, with reports and analysis of those drills shared and discussed with law enforcement.

Accept the shared responsibility in making safety and security a priority for our children and our schools. Talk to your children. Talk to your friends and neighbors. Please do not become embroiled in online rhetoric laden with factual inaccuracies and emotional diatribes about our district or our community. If you are going to join the conversation, do so in a manner that is positive and beneficial to our children. Remember that our children watch what we do and what we say, they learn from all of us every day.

Students may have a mixture of strong emotions for which assistance is available. I encourage students to speak with their guidance counselors and/or student assistance counselors. Resources are also available on the District web site, www.chclc.org, under the "Departments" pull-down menu by clicking the "Student Assistance" link. The direct link is www.chclc.org/departments/student-assistance. There you will find links to resources for parents, and mental health and crisis information resources. Families requiring printed information regarding these resources should contact their building principal.

As a community, we must approach school safety together. Pay attention to your children and get to know their friends, be aware of their interactions online, be aware of what they are doing and what they are sharing and with whom they are spending time. If you have a concern, even the slightest of concerns – speak up, say something, share your concern. Contact the school counselor, the school principal, or contact me directly if you have a concern. Contact the Cherry Hill Police Department if you have a concern that is criminal in nature – the men and women of the Cherry Hill Police Department, under Chief Monaghan's leadership, are vigilant and engaged and involved, they are incredible partners for us all.

Safety and security is everyone's responsibility. If you have additional questions, please contact your building principal or contact me directly.

Sincerely,

Dr. Joseph Meloche
Superintendent, Cherry Hill Public Schools