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## **An Important Message from the Superintendent - How to Talk to Your Child About Safety & Security**

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March 25, 2025

Dear Irvington School Community,

In light of recent events, we understand that discussing safety with children can be challenging. We want to assure you that the safety and well-being of your child is our top priority and we are committed to maintaining a secure environment for all students. We encourage you to continue engaging in open conversations with your children, assuring them that there are adults here to support them. It's important to approach these conversations in a way that reassures your child and helps them process their feelings. Here are some helpful tips from the National Association of School Psychologists (NASP) on how to create a sense of security and support your child's emotional well-being:

### **Reaffirm Safety**

- Emphasize that schools are very safe places.
- Allow your child to express their feelings, and validate all reactions to the event.
- Support the appropriate expression of feelings and help them put things into perspective.
- Let your child's questions guide the information you provide.
- Be patient and look for signs that they want to talk.
- For younger children, use concrete activities like imaginative play to help them express themselves. Older children may prefer writing or playing music.

### **Make Time to Talk**

- Keep explanations developmentally appropriate for your child's age.
- Help your child identify one adult at school and in the community who they can turn to if they feel threatened or at risk.
- Review procedures and safety measures in both school and home settings.

### **Review Safety Procedures**

- Children may not always verbalize their feelings, but changes in behavior, appetite, or sleep patterns can indicate anxiety or stress.
- If your child shows more intense reactions, consider seeking help from a mental health professional.

### **Observe Children's Emotional State**

- Early Elementary: Provide simple information balanced by assurance of safety. Help them separate reality from fantasy.
- Upper Elementary & Early Middle: Emphasize the student's role in safety and how they can access support.
- Upper Middle & High School: Answer questions, provide clarity, and continue reinforcing safety and support measures.

### **Maintain a Normal Routine**

- Keeping a regular schedule is important for your child's physical and mental health.
- Encourage schoolwork and extracurricular activities, but don't push them if they seem overwhelmed.

- Limit TV exposure, especially to distressing content.

Remember, your child's emotional health is just as important as their physical safety. I have included a link below to a NASP resource. However, if you need any additional support or resources, please feel free to reach out to the District psychologists.

[SSC Talking to Children About Violence](#)

Best,  
Dr. Mara Ratesic  
Superintendent of Schools



6 Dows Lane  
40 North Broadway  
Irvington, NY 10533  
914-591-8500 | 914-591-3064



Irvington Union Free School District | 40 North Broadway | Irvington, NY 10533 US

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