

Dear Parents/Guardian,

It is with great sadness that I write this letter to you during this time. Our hearts grieve for our students, and we know the entire Millbrook community is heartbroken as well.

We understand the current events will impact our students, staff members, and their families. Questions will be asked and the need to talk with others is expected. We have put together some resources that will be helpful and available to you and yours during this difficult time.

- Community pastors and grief counselors are available at the school.
- Local school counselors will be available throughout the week.
- Members from the Montgomery Area COSA organization will be available to talk with and train staff members. 334-262-1692
- Mr. Mel R. Johnson with Autauga Baptist Association will be bringing his support members to the school throughout the week to offer chaplaincy support.
- The Elmore County Family Resource Center is available with the F.A.C.T (Family Assistance Through Community Ties) program for additional support @ 334-224-1868
- CARASTAR (formerly known as Montgomery Area Mental Health Authority) will be providing therapy sessions for the students and additional grief counseling.
- Local Law Enforcement Agencies are stationed at the school providing additional grief counseling.
- The National Suicide prevention lifeline is available 24/7 call or text 988 or 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Staff members will be trained with Mental Health First Aid to be able to talk about current issues and learn the possible warning signs. Rashawn Blassingame is the County Mental Health contact and can be reached at 334-567-1224/ rashawn.blassingame@elmoreco.com

Please know that the students are our main focus and highest priority. We would like to remind everyone that we have several resources in place, and we ask for your continued help in reporting any concerns. We will continue to tell our students, staff and families that if they hear something, or know something, to say something.

If your student needs additional support, please don't hesitate to contact the school office at 334-285-4263. I send my thoughts and prayers to every member of the STANHOPE ELMORE HIGH SCHOOL COMMUNITY and I ask you to continue to keep the families in your thoughts and prayers as well. Please reach out if you have any questions or concerns.

Coach Fuller

Commonly asked questions and appropriate responses:

Why did he/she die by suicide?

We may never know the answer to that question. The focus needs to be on helping you with your thoughts and feelings and everyone working together to prevent future suicides rather than explaining "why".

How can I deal with this suicide?

It is important to remember what or who has helped you cope when you have had to deal with sad things in your life before. Please turn to the important adults in your life for help and share your feelings with them. It is important to maintain normal routines, proper sleeping and eating habits and to engage in regular exercise. Please avoid using drugs and alcohol to cope with this. Resiliency, which is the ability to bounce back from adversity, is a learned behavior. Everyone does the best when surrounded by friends and family who care about us and by viewing the future in a positive manner.

What are the warning signs of suicide?

The most common signs are the following: making a suicide attempt, verbal and written statements about death and suicide, fascination and preoccupation with death, giving away of prized possessions, saying goodbye to friends and family, and dramatic changes in behavior and personality.

What should I do if I believe someone to be suicidal?

Do not minimize their feelings or problems. Listen to them, support them, believe them, and let them know that they are not the first person to feel this way. Do not keep a secret about suicidal behavior. There is help available--mental health professionals such as counselors and psychologists have special training to help young people who are suicidal. It is important to stay with the person until they are connected to their support system. If you feel someone is in imminent danger, call 911.