



DEER VALLEY
Unified School District

20402 N. 15th Ave.
Phoenix, AZ 85027
623.445.5000 Phone
623.445.5086 Fax
www.dvUSD.org

January 7, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

We are very sad to inform you that Terramar Academy of the Arts teacher, Mary Boyse died on December 30, 2018 after a battle with cancer. She had been on leave since mid-December. Mrs. Boyse served Terramar as a first grade teacher since 2017.

Psychologists and counselors with the district crisis team have been available to all of our students and staff and will continue to be with us for as long as we need additional support. Not only was Mrs. Boyse a Terramar teacher, but she was also a parent. Her three daughters attend Terramar in second, fifth, and seventh grades.

Our school community is saddened by this loss. We feel fortunate to belong to the Terramar school family, where we can support each other through difficult times. Because you may want to discuss this with your child, we are providing information along with this letter on how to support your child in coping with grief.

A celebration of life for Mary Boyse is scheduled for January 14, 2019, 3:30pm at CCV Peoria Campus.

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

Sharon Wieser
Principal
Terramar Academy of the Arts

SUPERINTENDENT
Curtis Finch, PhD

GOVERNING BOARD
Jenny Frank
Ann O'Brien
Ann Elizabeth Ordway
Julie Read
Darcy Tweedy

HELPING CHILDREN COPE WITH DEATH AND GRIEF

Guidelines for Parents

Be a Good Listener

Children need your support, love and guidance. Listening to their concerns, fears and feelings with an open heart is very healing for them. Listen to what the child is asking, and provide only the necessary information to answer. It is okay to admit you don't have all the answers.

Be Reassuring

Your acceptance and reassurance will help them feel safe and secure during a time that is scary. Make time to be physically close to them; extra hugs are always a good thing.

Be Honest

It is very important that children are told the truth about what happened. Children can often deal with devastating news when told appropriately. Secrets and half truths are often more harmful in the long run and add to the child's confusion and feelings of trust. Also share your feelings; let your child know how you are doing.

Be Flexible

Children need to have their daily routines maintained; this provides for a sense of security. At the same time, parents need to be flexible in making some allowances while the children are trying to deal with their grief feelings.

Be Aware

Focus on your children, watch their behavior and monitor any changes, unusual reactions or physical symptoms. Limit the amount of TV or violent games your children are exposed to. Make sure your children are getting the appropriate amount of sleep, exercise and nutrition. Their continued good health is so important.

Be Open

Grieving children need positive outlets for their emotions. Allowing for the expression of feelings is very important. Children may need to work out their emotions in play, artwork, sports, music, writing or reading. Allow for the many different ways of dealing with such intense feelings. Provide the children with as many outlets as you can. Also be open to the fact that you may need outside help. Seek out assistance when needed; it is a sign of strength.

Be Patient

Working through such intense emotions and challenges takes time. The duration for grief is unique to each person. Children often go in and out of grief—sad and withdrawn one minute, active and playing the next. This roller coaster of a journey has many ups and downs; children need time to process and heal.



1510 E. Flower St. • Phoenix, AZ 85014 • 480.951.8985 • 480.951.8794 fax • thenewsongcenter.org

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