



November 21, 2018

Dear Glencoe Families,

Today, I'm writing to share some very sad news. Yesterday, we lost an important member of the Glencoe family when 2018 graduate Luis Diego Hernandez Garcia was tragically killed by 2017 graduate Ulizes Escobar while attending a social gathering. Both young men have siblings that currently attend Glencoe.

The District's Flight Team, a specially-trained group of counselors, Care Coordinators, and District administrators, will be at the school on Monday, November 26, providing information and assistance to students and staff.

A support room will be set up in the College and Career Center where students can take a break from the school day to talk to counselors, write letters to the family, or just process their feelings.

Please know that in times like these, school is the best place for students to be. Here, they are surrounded by caring, trained adults, as well as their friends, to sort through the many emotions they are feeling. A resource sheet is included with this letter to help you in talking with your child and supporting them through this difficult time. There are additional resources on the District website in the For Families/Parents and Guardians section.

If you feel your child needs additional support, please feel free to contact your child's [counselor](#) at 503-844-1900.

If you have additional questions or concerns, please contact me at [rufc@hsd.k12.or.us](mailto:rufc@hsd.k12.or.us).

Diego's tragic passing and the involvement of a fellow Glencoe graduate is heartbreaking and shocking for all of us. It will take time to heal, but we will get through it together. Our thoughts and deepest sympathies go out to Diego's family and friends.

Thank you very much for your understanding and patience through this difficult time.

Sincerely,

*Claudia Ruf*

Claudia Ruf  
Principal

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***Engage and challenge all learners to ensure academic excellence***

2700 NW Glencoe Road, Hillsboro, OR 97124-1518  
TEL: 503-844-1900 ■ FAX: 503-844-1949 ■ WEB: [www.hsd.k12.or.us](http://www.hsd.k12.or.us)



**Message for Staff to Read to Students at GHS at the beginning of 1st and 2nd period on Monday, November 26, 2018**

On Wednesday, November 21, we received sad news that 2018 Glencoe graduate Luis Diego Hernandez Garcia was tragically killed by 2017 Glencoe graduate Ulizes Escobar while attending a social gathering.

With Diego's death, we have lost an important member of our Glencoe family. We grieve his passing and we send our sincerest condolences to his family and friends.

A death that occurs through an act of violence presents us with many questions we may not be able to answer right away. The involvement of a classmate adds to the sadness and confusion around the incident. Rumors may begin to circulate, and we ask that you not spread rumors you may hear. We'll do our best to give you accurate information as it becomes known to us.

Each of us will react to Diego's death in our own way, and we need to be respectful of each other. Feeling sad is a normal response to any loss. Any death, even if you didn't know the person, can bring up feelings and emotions related to other losses. Some of you may not have known Diego very well and may not be as affected, while others may experience a great deal of shock, sadness, anxiety and anger. Some of you may find you're having difficulty concentrating on your schoolwork, and others may find that diving into your work is a good distraction.

We have counselors in our building today to help anyone who needs support. These counselors will be in the College and Career Center, which will be used today as a Support Room for students. If you want to go to the Support Room, you will have to sign out of your class as you leave and sign in to the Support Room when you arrive. It is important that all students be in some setting that has an adult present. For those of you who wish to talk one-on-one with the school counselor, our counselors will be in their offices and will see students during the day. Just ask to go to the Counseling office. **Whether you go to the Support Room or to the Counseling office, we need you to walk there with another student or staff member.**

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## Talking To Children About Death A Brief Guide For Parents

### WHY IS IT SO HARD TO TALK TO MY CHILD ABOUT DEATH?

**As adults we are taught to protect children.** We may even have been taught that children do not grieve the way adults do. Now we know that this isn't true. Children do grieve when they lose a loved one. Sometimes the way they show grief is different, but the sadness is there.

### HOW DO I TELL MY CHILD?

**Tell your child the truth.** Tell them who died and tell them why. This is very difficult for a parent, but it is helpful to children. If you can, avoid using euphemisms like, "he passed away", or "he went to sleep and never woke up". If a child hears "sleep" used where death occurred, he or she might develop a fear of sleeping. For a young child, use simple, direct words that they can understand. Let them ask questions, and answer them as best as you can.

### WHAT ABOUT MY OWN FEELINGS?

**If someone you cared about died, you will have your own feelings grief.** If you begin to cry, that is okay. When children see that even adults can be sad, it gives them permission to be sad. If your child looks worried, you can explain that you are very sad right now, but you will be okay.

### WHAT IF MY CHILD WANTS TO GO TO THE FUNERAL?

What works well is to invite children or teenagers to the funeral, without forcing them to make a particular decision. A basic guideline is to let your child decide what he or she wants to do. Many children prefer to attend the funeral or memorial service. Some may prefer not to attend. It can be very healthy for a child to attend funerals, especially when they have support from you, from another trusted adult or from their friends. Wakes and funerals are ways in which we all grieve together and begin to heal. If your child has never been to a wake or funeral you can help prepare them by telling them what they might see or hear. If there is an open casket, you need to help them prepare for the fact that they will see the person and that he or she might look different to them. You can also talk about the experience after you return home.

### WHAT KIND OF REACTIONS MIGHT MY CHILD HAVE?

**Children, like adults show a wide range of reactions to death:** Unlike adults, it may be impossible for them to hide "unacceptable" feelings. Thus, if your child giggles when they are told about the death, or when at the wake or funeral, try not to respond with anger. Laughter can be a child's reaction to anxiety. Children may also be sad, angry, numb, show no reaction at all or be disbelieving. They move from one feeling to another quickly. All of these reactions are normal.

**Children, particularly those younger than age 10, express a lot of their feelings through their behavior:** Don't be surprised if your child becomes overactive, irritable, argumentative, restless, or picks a fight with another child or with you. These are all ways of expressing feelings. Gently set limits with your child and talk to them about what they might be feeling. As adults, we know that stress often brings out the worst in us...the same is true of children.

**Children ages 6 and below do not understand the finality of death.** You might find that you tell your child that someone died and a few minutes, hours or days later they ask, "when is he or she coming back?" This is normal. This is sometimes very difficult for adults who find that they must explain the painful facts over and over again.

**Children ages 7 – 12 may ask a 1000 questions.** They may want to know every detail of the death, the funeral and what happens after death. Children manage their anxiety through

asking questions or imagining the most gruesome details. Don't be shocked if children ask about blood and guts, worms, etc. This can be upsetting for adults but it is important to answer these questions as best as you can. If you don't know the answer, you can just say so.

**Children (and adults) often struggle with guilty feelings, particularly if the person who died is another child or a parent:** They think they did something to make the person die. Children often think their behavior makes bad things happen. It makes them feel less helpless. If your child expresses these feelings, you can tell them that you can hear how badly they feel, tell them again how the person died and explain that their behavior could not have caused the death. They may need to hear this more than once as they experience their grief.

**Children often respond to loss with difficulties eating, sleeping or concentrating:** They may bed wet or cling to you. They may talk about fears about their own health, their friends' health or yours. They may be afraid of the dark, heights, etc. They may have trouble letting you out of their sight even to go to school or to let you go to work. If these symptoms are very severe or if they last for a long time, the child needs to see a professional. However, in the short run, these are normal grief reactions.

**Children sometimes feel bad if they have a happy moment:** They think if they love someone who dies, they are supposed to be sad all of the time. This is natural. Adults often feel the same way. The truth for most of us, however, is that we move from one feeling to another. It is okay to be happy. You can help your child by letting them know that this is acceptable. Sometimes, it is easier for us to feel sadness or anger if we know that we can also have moments of happiness.

**Normal grief reactions in children include:**

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• shock and denial</li><li>• sadness</li><li>• emotional detachment</li><li>• anger and resentment</li><li>• regressive (immature) behaviors</li><li>• explosive emotions and acting out behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• anxiety, insecurity and fear</li><li>• guilt</li><li>• asking the same questions over and over</li><li>• physical symptoms: stomachaches, headaches, difficulty sleeping, changes in appetite (overeating or lack of interest in food)</li></ul>
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**WHAT CAN I DO FOR MY CHILD?**

**Listen to them and be with them:** Don't force them to talk when they feel like withdrawing, but let them know you will be there for them when and if they do want to talk. Allow them time to talk to their friends. Sometimes children share with each other more easily than with adults. Sometimes they can talk to another adult more easily than they can talk to you because they want to protect you from their feelings. They know that when they hurt, you hurt.

**One of the hardest things we can do in life is just to be with another person we love who is in pain.** This is even harder when that person is your child. Knowing that we cannot take the pain away makes us feel helpless, but sometimes the greatest gift we can give is to sit with each other. Allow your child to grieve. Give your child the opportunity to tell their story and be a good listener.

**Keep up your normal rules and structure.** Structure and routine helps children feel safe. Allow some leeway if a child has difficulty doing homework, concentrating or falling asleep but try to maintain normal expectations. Let your child's teacher know what has happened so that he or she can also help.

**Take care of yourself:** As a parent, it is hard enough to watch your child grieve, but you too may be hurting. Give yourself some time to talk to someone you trust. Death is hard for all of us and can stir up your fear and pain. **Consult your school counselor with any concerns.**

**REMEMBER: There is no perfect way to handle grief. YOUR LOVE IS MOST IMPORTANT.**

Compiled from these websites: <http://www.adapp.org/>; [www.nasponline.org](http://www.nasponline.org); [www.dougy.org](http://www.dougy.org)