

Dr. Jake Heibel, *Principal*  
Mr. Charles Dunbar, *Assistant Principal*  
Mr. Daniel Hart, *Assistant Principal*  
Dr. Lisa Johnson, *Assistant Principal*  
Ms. Rhonda Morgan, *Assistant Principal*  
Ms. Donna Thorstensen, *Assistant Principal*



Ms. Audra Bishop, *Counselor*  
Ms. Jennifer Cole, *Counselor*  
Ms. Crystal Joseph, *Counselor*  
Ms. Judith Stokes, *Counselor*  
Ms. Molly Trageser, *Counselor*  
Mr. Ryan Hanley, *Activities Director*

<http://schools.smcps.org/gmhs>

March 1, 2019

Dear Great Mills High School Student and Families,

As we start the month of March, I want to take the time to acknowledge that we are approaching the one year mark of last year's tragic event. Each person's experience and recovery surrounding the incident that occurred on March 20, 2018 is different and we want to make sure that resources and support are available to those who need it. It remains difficult in predicting how people will react. The best we can do is to be supportive and responsive to our students and staff. In general, it is important to remember that the vast majority of us are resilient and have shown signs of recovery from an event like this; however, those with a previous history of trauma are more vulnerable and may have a stronger reaction and need a longer recovery period. Please keep the following in mind during the days and weeks ahead:

**Some signs that your student may be struggling are:**

- Anxiety, fear, and worry about safety of self and others
- Worry about recurrence or consequences of violence
- Discussion or events and reviewing of details
- Heightened difficulty with authority, redirection, or criticism
- Hyperarousal (sensitivity to noises, physical contact, sirens, sudden movements, etc.)
- Changes in behavior:
  - Withdrawal/avoidance from others or activities
  - Irritability with friends, teachers, events
  - Angry outburst and/or aggression
  - Change in academic performance
  - Decreased attention and/or concentration
  - Increase in activity level
  - Absenteeism
  - Increase in impulsivity, risk taking behavior

**How you can help your student:**

- Open lines of communication (If you don't know how to talk with your student, don't be afraid to admit it)
- Share your own personal thoughts and feelings with them
- Validate their feelings and reassure them that what they are experiencing is normal
- Don't hesitate to seek assistance from a professional

Over the next few weeks we will have additional mental health supports available both in and outside of Great Mills High School. Additional information about resources will be available through the Counseling Office and/or on the Great Mills High School website. For those students who are experiencing significant emotional reactions during the school day, please refer them to the counseling office. I am so proud of our students, staff, and community as we continue to show what it means to be **HORNET STRONG**.

Sincerely,

Jake Heibel, Ed.D.