

Dear parents and carers,

I know that many pupils, parents, carers, teachers and school staff right across Sheffield will have been affected by the devastating death of Harvey Willgoose last week.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with all who have been impacted by this awful event.

I am sure there will also be some of you concerned about your children's safety, in schools and across our city.

I wanted to get in touch with everyone to explain that I understand you are worried but would encourage you to support your children back into school. We know that it is important for children to attend their school or centre for education and receive their education and emotional support from their friends and pastoral teams.

Educational settings here in our fantastic city are committed to safeguarding your children and young people and wider community – as they are right across the country.

Schools and other educational settings are skilled in reaching out into communities. They offer extensive pastoral support, welfare checks and reassurances that their safeguarding processes and their children's well-being remains, as always, their highest priority.

Across the city, our schools are dedicated to the children they work with, maintaining the safeguarding of their school community. I have been assured that schools are offering opportunities for any worried or impacted families to speak to staff in their setting. Your child's school or educational setting will be able to tell you what measures they have in place at their site.

As well as pastoral care, by attending school, children and young people also receive the social benefits of being around their peers. Support from friendship groups can be especially important at difficult times such as this.

I'm aware there have been assemblies and other whole school gatherings happening in Sheffield and across the UK reassuring their children; signposting different ways they can express worries or concerns and repeating the message that their experienced and skilled staff continue to prioritise the health, safety and wellbeing of its community.

Again, I of course understand the concerns being expressed by pupils and parents across Sheffield as the city comes to terms with what happened last Monday. But Sheffield City Council and all the city's schools are here to listen to them and to provide reassurance that your child can attend their school or educational setting.

The Council's Youth Services have also been out and about across the city carrying out reassurance patrols by talking to children and teenagers who might have concerns or worries. Their usual provision of activities has also continued, with sessions ranging

from sports to youth clubs to arts and crafts and music sessions allowing young people to come together in a safe space where they could discuss anything they needed reassurance on.

Every school will have its own process for handling child and parental concerns, with existing mechanisms in place to support you and your family. Please enquire with staff at your child's school about how to access such services if you are not already aware.

For further support above what your school provides, there are external organisations which offer additional advice and support:

- **Cruse Bereavement Care**
www.cruse.org.uk tel: 0808 808 1677
- **Childline**
www.childline.org.uk tel: 0800 1111
- **Samaritans**
www.samaritans.org tel: 116 123
- **Child Bereavement UK**
<https://www.childbereavementuk.org> tel: 08000 288840

Please make use of every resource available to you and your family, talk to each other, lean on each other and ensure that together we can continue to foster safe and welcoming schools for our children and young people.

Thank you.

Cllr Dawn Dale,

Chair, Education, Children's and Families Committee