



Ellenbrook
Secondary College

18 July, 2018

It is with great sadness that we write to you about the tragic loss of one of our students, Bella Petersen. Her tragic death at the weekend has affected our College and wider community.

Our thoughts are with Bella's family at this difficult time. We respect their request for privacy and also acknowledge the impact on students, staff and parents of the deaths of Bella, her mother and brother.

There will be a service conducted at the College on Friday 20 July, 8.15am, for those students, their parents, and staff who wish to pay their respects. The regular College timetable will operate for the rest of the day. Family members are invited to stay for a morning tea at the College to hear about the support available to students as well as advice for supporting your child.

Since students returned to school yesterday we have had school psychologists, youth workers and chaplains available on site to support students and staff. Staff also provided information to students about this support which they can access for as long as is needed.

We are aware that there has been significant media coverage of this tragedy. Some students were classmates and friends of Bella while others may not have known her but nonetheless are affected. We encourage you to continue speaking with your child about how they are feeling about this tragedy.

We have been working closely with the school psychology service and are aware that some people who are exposed to a tragic event may experience some kind of emotional reaction. Reactions of students, staff and parents can best be understood as grief; as such each person's experiences may be different. There are a number of common responses that may include feelings of shock, confusion, anger or irritability, sadness, shame and/or interruptions to sleep and eating patterns. It is however, reassuring to know that even though these feelings may be unpleasant, they are a normal reaction to an abnormal event. Most people will recover naturally with the support of close family and friends.

If you would like to contact the College about student support, please phone 9297 9700 and ask for the Support Services team.

If you wish to seek additional support, please note these support services:

1. Parenting WA Line 6279 1200 or 1800 654 432
2. Kids Helpline 1800 55 1800 (24hrs)
3. Headspace (08) 9274 8860 www.headspace.org.au

We understand there have been some concerns from some members of the school community about our approach in acknowledging the death of Bella. We will continue to prioritise the provision of support for those affected while respecting the family's wishes and police advice.

Please feel free to contact John Foeken (Associate Principal) on 92979700 if you would like to discuss any concerns or queries.