

Simmondley Primary School

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As you may be aware, the police have informed us yesterday that they have found two bodies which they believe are Jenson and his mum. This is very sad news and our thoughts and condolences are with their family and friends.

I wanted you to be aware of this sad event so that you can support your child if they are upset. We have spoken to all the pupils in school about these recent events, and made sure key staff are available to address individual worries or concerns. I have taken advice from the Educational Psychology Service about the best way to help the pupils understand what has happened, and to support them at this difficult time.

If you choose to talk to your child about what has happened, the school's Educational Psychologist has offered the following advice about the best way to talk to children about bereavement. Your son or daughter may feel sad and they might cry. This is a normal reaction and they are helped by your understanding and comfort. On the other hand, everyone responds to events differently and your child may not react like this – this is also fine, just allow your child to react in their own way.

When you talk to your child, it is important to:

- * Remain calm, it is helpful for children to see that adults are in control
- * Share your feelings with your child at an appropriate level, it is ok to show that you are sad or upset about what has happened
- * Tell them what has happened truthfully, at a level your child can understand, but do not give them details they do not need to know or which may frighten them, and do not speculate or guess about what might have happened
- * Avoid euphemisms such as 'passed away', 'lost', 'gone to sleep' etc as these can confuse children and create further difficulties, it is better to use the word 'died' – at this stage, we can only say we believe that Jenson and his mum have died as this has not yet been formally confirmed
- * Say 'I don't know' if they ask a question you do not know the answer to – there are a lot of unanswered questions at present and it is better not to guess, or make assumptions
- * Keep everything else as normal as possible

I have enclosed some further guidance on supporting your child following a tragic event which I hope you will find useful.

Please do not hesitate to contact the school if you have any concerns about your child's response to this sad news

Deborah Greaves