



October 4, 2020

Dear Fort Smallwood Elementary School Families:

It is with true heartache that I write to you today to let you know we have lost a member of our Fort Smallwood Elementary School family. Anaya Abdul, a kindergarten student at our school, died yesterday as the result of a homicide.

Anaya was a very sweet little girl. Though quiet, she was quite animated when called upon, and always had something to say in her classroom. She enjoyed drawing, and was considered an angel in her family.

Her family relayed to us that she adored princesses, and had gowns and crowns at home. She also enjoyed making videos, dancing, and singing.

We have been in touch with Anaya's family to provide any support we can to them. Even though our building is closed to students, I want to make sure you know that our school counselors and other members of the Student Services team remain available to speak with any students who have a need to talk about their feelings about the impact of Anaya's death. Should you or your child have that need, please call the school tomorrow and we will ensure that someone contacts you.

If the need is more urgent, I encourage you to call the Anne Arundel County Crisis Warmline at 410-768-5522. That service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

I encourage you to talk openly with your student about this sad event in a way that you deem most appropriate, and to help them understand that it's OK not to have answers to every question. Children learn how to deal with grief by watching adults deal with grief. Please do not be afraid to express your emotions in front of your children. Healthy outlets of emotions can be a valuable lesson for them.

I know that you will keep Anaya's family in your thoughts and prayers in the difficult days and weeks ahead. Please don't hesitate to reach out to me if we can be of assistance.

Sincerely,

Bobbie Kesecker
Principal

BK/bm