



UPDATE: 8/23/2021

Dear Victoria Knights Family,

Thank you for your support during this challenging time. Our thoughts and sympathies continue to be with Colton's family.

I want to provide you an update on the events of today. Classroom teachers read a prepared statement to the students this morning with the verified facts about the crisis, where to get help at school and the funeral arrangements. The family gave us permission to release that it was ruled death by suicide. Because of that the prepared statement included the following:

Suicide is a complicated act and no one single thing causes it. A mental health condition may be part of it, then other life issues occur at the same time leading to overwhelming mental and/or physical pain, distress and hopelessness. These conditions are nothing to be ashamed of and are treatable with help. It's really important if you or someone you know is not feeling well in any way to reach out for help.

Different people react to this type of event in different ways, and that is OK. Some people may cry, others may have trouble eating or sleeping, some people may find it hard to do work, and others may not have much of a reaction at all. All of these reactions are normal. If you want to talk to someone about your feelings or reactions regarding Colton's death, tell your teacher (or another trusted adult), and we can make sure you get to talk to someone.

Staff members as well as school and community counselors have been available today and will continue to be available in the coming days and weeks. Please contact the school if you feel your student is in need of additional assistance. Note that students who are already vulnerable may be at greater risk due to exposure to the suicide of a peer. If you or your student needs help right away, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), call 911, text 741741 or take your student to the emergency room.

The funeral arrangements have been scheduled. A wake will be held on Wednesday at Hays Memorial Chapel from 5-8 p.m. and the funeral will be held on Thursday at 10 a.m. at the First United Methodist Church in Hays. Afterwards there is a graveside at the Munjor Cemetery. Lunch details for friends and family have not been finalized. If your student wishes to attend the funeral, parental permission will be required by Wednesday at noon. Please call or email the high school office. We strongly encourage you to accompany your student to the service.

Check our website for added resources:

- *Mental Health Service Providers in the Hays Area – October 2020
- *Supporting Your Teen After the Suicide of A Friend
- *Social Media After a Suicide Loss: Tips for Students
- *Social Media After a Suicide Loss: Tips for Parents

If you need help for you or your student(s) please reach out to the school. Additional updates will be provided as needed.

Sincerely,
Kimberly Woolf

USD 432

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