

Dear AFA Families, As-salāmu alaykum.

As you are most probably aware, there was a national crisis connected to the certification of the Presidential vote yesterday in Washington DC. AFA condemns the acts of inciting and engaging in violence by those who purported to register their disagreement and disapproval with the proceedings.

There are many teachable moments from what took place during the day, including recognizing the critical historical relevance of the events in the context of our country's current climate. As part of our school's mission and vision, we will continue to engage students in how to further their civic engagement and social justice understanding, including race and class issues.

We are aware that related events impact our school families in some form or another. Because of our community's geographic proximity to the US Capitol (where our students regularly go to meet with elected officials), as well as some families whose work might be connected to the Hill, we recognize that there may be a concern about safety and wellbeing.

In addition, we are cognizant of the fact that your children might be affected by images, words, and actions that they may have been exposed to during the day, as well as what they glean from the reactions of the adults in their lives.

Here's how our teachers and staff respond to current events overall and also some guidance for you on how best to respond as a family.

Our staff and teachers will:

- Not proactively engage lower elementary students on the information about this event.
- Listen carefully and attentively to student conversations and concerns raised between them and be responsive as needed
- Help students understand where information comes from and how to mindfully filter what they hear - age-appropriate
- Reassure students that adults are responsible for their safety and security and are taking appropriate measures
- Look for signs of distress or anxiety through behavior or non-verbal expressions
- Create an open space for older students to share their concerns and thoughts
- Contact the parents of students who express or show signs of extra-ordinary distress
- Reach out to administration if a teacher feels a student needs more direct attention
- Connect students to school counselors for check-ins as needed.

Parents and adults are advised:

- Be mindful of how children take in the news, your reactions, and discussions among adults surrounding them.
- Keep routines as normal as possible. Children gain security from the predictability of routine, including attending school.
- Limit exposure to television and the news. Perhaps watch or listen together and discuss - age-appropriate.
- Be honest with children and share with them as much valid information as they are developmentally able to handle.
- Listen to children's fears and concerns without dismissing them as being "not real".
- First deal with and assess your own responses to crisis and stress. Find ways to share your own concerns and feelings with other adults.
- Increase activities that build bonding between the family and help all to feel a sense of control or peace in your life - make dua together, clean up the street, do an act of kindness for a neighbor, collect items for the shelter, write in a journal, build/cook/create something together.

We are partners with you to support our children together. Please keep us informed if your child seems exceptionally upset or you feel he/she needs further assistance as our school counselors along with administrators are involved and engaged.

May Allah (s) protect us all and give our leaders the wisdom and perseverance they need to make decisions that benefit us all.

Please look for more guidance from us shortly.

Wasalam

AFA Administration Leadership

**AFA Core Values: Be Intentional & Mindful | Build Community | Uphold Excellent Character
Create Serenity & Peace | Transform Knowledge into Action | Practice Stewardship & Service**

www.alfatih.org info@alfatih.org



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