



February 15, 2018

**Office of the Chancellor**

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Dear Families,

I write today with a heavy heart after the school shooting in Broward County, Florida.

I am heartbroken for the students and families directly impacted. I also feel for the many families and students across the country – including here in New York City – who see what happened in Florida and may be fearful about their safety in schools.

It is our job to ensure that every school is a safe haven for our children and families.

I want to assure you that the Department of Education works in lockstep with the NYPD to keep all students and school staff safe – both physically and emotionally. We have a standing requirement that all schools conduct safety drills, including one between February 2 and March 15, and principals will also be reviewing the individual safety protocol for their school buildings with school staff. I've asked our educators to also discuss why they are conducting these drills and what their purpose is with the entire school community. Additionally, within our classrooms, I have asked educators to engage in the challenging questions and conversations about tragedies like this one. It is important that we have these conversations at school and at home, and to always remind our children that they are safe in our schools and that we will do everything within our power to keep it that way.

We also need your vigilance and partnership to ensure that any safety concern is immediately reported through the proper channels. If you see something, we need you to say something. Please reach out to your school administration, school safety agent, your parent coordinator or call 311, which will refer the issue to the NYPD or the DOE as appropriate. If it is an emergency, call 911 immediately.

As an educator who has always strived to help children grow, succeed, and live out their potential, what happened yesterday cut me to the core. I know many of you must feel the same way, and I hope you will discuss these feelings with your loved ones.

Warmly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Carmen Fariña'. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Chancellor  
Department of Education