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Dear Families,

Like so many of you, I am deeply saddened by the dreadful events that occurred in Nashville on Monday. Six lives were taken far too early, and in a place that should know only safety and happiness. Gun violence is an epidemic in America. In the three months so far this year, there have been thirteen school shootings across the country resulting in death or injury. Just one incident of school violence is too much. Our hearts break for the families at Covenant School and across the state and country.

Please know, IEA considers the safety of our students and staff to be paramount. Just a few months ago, the West Hartford Police Department came to our building and assessed the building and safety plans. Our teachers and students have reviewed safety drills to ensure they know what to do in case of an emergency. Our counseling team, along with many members of our staff, have worked together closely and conscientiously to ensure we take the steps necessary to maintain safety without causing unnecessary stress, alarm or overwhelm for our students. Our related services department has been analyzing *The Violence Project: How to Stop a Mass Shooting Epidemic* to bring important takeaways to the way our school faces these issues.

Additionally, all of our standard safety precautions remain in place. Entrances at IEA are locked at all times. Staff can only enter with their key fobs and visitors must be buzzed in through the main office doors. No one is permitted entry into the school through any other door.

These acts of senseless violence can feel overwhelming and frightening. The one thing that we know is that when people build connections, they are less likely to commit acts of violence. Relationship and connection is key in so many aspects of our lives, and essential to how we operate at IEA. However, we know this is not something we can do alone. Gun violence is a societal problem and it is as a society that we will find a solution.

As you go through the next few days, you may find you need support for yourself or your child, especially as you have these difficult conversations. Please find suggested resources below, but please do not hesitate to reach out to anyone at the school if you need additional support.

- [The National Child Trauma Stress Network](#) (includes resources in both English and Spanish)
- [Tips for Talking to Children About Violence](#), National Association of School Psychologists
- [Anxiety Over School Shootings: Finding Proactive Ways to Deal with Worried Feelings](#), Child Mind Institute
- [Talking to your child about tragedy: Six tips for the autism community](#), Autism Speaks

Please know, IEA remains a safe place for your child.

With Compassion,
Lori Susi
Executive Director

Intensive Education Academy, Inc.

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