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**Westmount Junior Public School**

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Michelle Lawrence, Principal

January 15, 2019

Dear Parents and Guardians,

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the death of much-loved Westmount JS teacher Manisha Patel, who passed away yesterday following a long illness. We know that you will join with us in expressing our deepest condolences to grieving family and friends.

Manisha was a caring and key member of our staff for eight years prior to beginning a medical leave two years ago, and she has remained an important part of our school family. As a teacher at a small, close-knit school, she knew and interacted with many of our students, families, and staff over the years. She will be especially remembered for her kind, cheerful, and positive personality and her dedication to education. One of her passions was environmentalism. She brought that to our school and started the highly regarded eco schools program, working tirelessly to help us achieve platinum level status. Manisha was always thinking about how to make Westmount a better place and how students could individually and collectively contribute to make a difference in our community. She will be so sorely missed by our entire community.

This is a sombre time for all of us at Westmount JS. As students become aware of this news, they may be understandably upset. Be assured that we will do all that we can to help them. Toronto District School Board staff are available to offer support as needed. I know that you will also want to help your children in any way possible. We encourage families to talk in whatever way is appropriate for each family. The following tips might assist you in conversations with your children:

- Allow your child to express as much concern and grief as they wish.
- Listen carefully to what they are saying and respond appropriately.
- Be empathetic. Your child's grief responses and concerns may be different than those of an adult.
- Remember that the grief process can continue beyond the first day. It is not uncommon for grief reactions to last several days or weeks.

If you would like to send your condolences or have pictures that you would like to share, please visit:

<https://lotusfuneralandcremation.com/>

If you have any concerns or questions, please feel free to contact the school.

Sincerely,

*M. Lawrence*

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