



SAMPLE CRISIS COMMUNICATIONS PLAN SCENARIO

Death of Student/Faculty (Non-suicide)

Scenario Description: A student or faculty member dies suddenly. Their passing may or may not be related to COVID-19.

Standby Statement:

This standby statement is intended to be the first statement, issued within minutes, prioritizing tone over details. In today's complex media landscape, we may not have the luxury of time to gather complete information before we need to begin communicating.

We are (shocked/deeply saddened/heartbroken) by the passing of one of our (students/faculty). The entire school community mourns the loss of (name), who passed away (last week/yesterday/last night/etc.) *IF APPROPRIATE* – reportedly due to complications from COVID-19.

We (wish his/her family peace/pray God brings peace) to (his/her) family during this unimaginably difficult time. As a community, we will rely on the love and support of one another to heal. We have made counseling services available to our students and faculty.

(PROVIDE DETAILS ON HOW TO ACCESS COUNSELING SERVICES.)

If appropriate: We will keep our community updated when funeral/memorial/service information becomes available.

If appropriate: As we navigate the challenging landscape of COVID-19, we are committed to providing the safest possible environment for our students, faculty and staff. With such a devastating loss, we will revisit our policies and practices to make sure we are protecting our community as best we can.

If appropriate: (COMMUNICATE DETAILS OF POSSIBLE EXPOSURE/QUARANTING MEASURES, ETC.)

Remind faculty/staff about privacy policies.

- All media inquiries should be forwarded to the Director of Communications & Marketing.
- Refrain from providing information, especially when related to specific individuals, to ensure we are treating personal or confidential information appropriately.

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Questions to Consider When Preparing Additional Statements:

While we cannot always prepare in advance the answers we must give – we can anticipate the questions we will receive. Consider these in advance and begin answering these questions at the earliest moment.

1. How did he/she pass away?
2. Did he/she die on campus or as the result of an injury on campus?
3. What are we doing to help his/her family?
4. What are we doing to help students directly affected by this loss?
5. What are we doing to honor his/her memory?
6. If appropriate: Will there be an internal or legal investigation?
7. If appropriate: Who will take over his/her responsibilities/classes/etc.?
8. If appropriate: Is the death somehow related to criminal circumstances?
9. If appropriate: Will the community believe this loss could have been prevented?
10. If appropriate: How many other members of your school community have tested positive for COVID-19?

Key Contacts: (Spokespersons for different levels of information):

Executive (Express the School's position, concern, caring and policy)

- Head of School
- Director of Communications & Marketing

Technical (Reaffirm concern; offer confirmed facts/details about the situation)

- Director of Student Life/Dean of Faculty

Key Audiences: Parents, Students, Faculty & Staff, Parent-Teacher Association, Board of Trustees, Alumni, Social Media Followers, Local/Regional Media

Who Communicates with the Key Audiences, and How?

Communicating during a crisis is about much more than working with the media – it is about engaging meaningfully with the audiences in whom we must preserve our trust and goodwill. Think about who these audiences are, and be clear about who is responsible for communicating with them.

<u>Audience</u>	<u>Communicator</u>	<u>Method</u>
Parents	Head of School	Email, Phone, Social Media
Students	Head of School Dean of Student Life	Email, In person, Social Media In person
Faculty & Staff	Head of School Dean of Faculty	Email, In person, Social Media In person
Parent-Teacher Association	Head of School	Email

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<u>Audience</u>	<u>Communicator</u>	<u>Method</u>
Board of Trustees	Head of School	Email, Phone
Alumni	Director of Comm. & Marketing	Email
Social Media Followers	Social Media Director	Post (proactive)
Local/Regional Media	Director of Comm. & Marketing	Media Statement (reactive)

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