

School Safety & Prevention Series with Rick J. Kaufman, APR

A Parent's Guide to School Crisis Response





What we'll cover...

- Steps to engage parents in the school safety conversation
- What parents want to know
- What to do before, during & after a crisis
- Emergency communications



Rick J. Kaufman, APR Crisis Communication Consultant



Clay Moore Regional Sales Director

Today's Reality

- Children spend more time at school other than home
- School security remains a top-of-mind concern for parents, staff & community
- Staff, parents seek reassurances schools are safe









"The midst of a crisis is not the time to let students, staff and families know what to do in an emergency. That needs to occur before it happens."

Margaret Spellings

Former U.S. Secretary of Education



Key Stakeholders: Parents

- Must know if children are safe, unharmed
- Failure to allay fears, anxiety undermines organization's credibility & reputation
- Often view themselves as "victims" if child's school is impacted

"Parents have the biggest stake of all in school safety ... their own children." ~ Michele Gay







Parent & Family Emotions

- Sympathy
 - Elicits a range of supportive behaviors
- Anger
 - Direct ire at organization, leaders; may elicit a negative bandwagon effect on other stakeholder groups
- Anxiety



What Parents Want to Know

- What's being done to ensure schools are safe, secure?
- Training for school employees? Students?
- How do schools respond to an emergency?
- What happens in a school emergency?
- What should parents do in a school emergency?
- How will parents be notified in a school emergency?
- Why does it take so long to inform (parents)?





What to do?

Engage parents in school safety conversations and planning to:

- Prepare in advance how schools will communicate in a crisis
- Create strong relationships
- Reduce anxiety associated with a lack of knowledge in a crisis







Engage Parents: Start with a conversation

- Greatest fears?
- Safety elements that stand out as effective in your child's school?
- Most pressing safety/security needs in your school?
- Barriers to improving current or non-existent safety/security measures?
- Safety topics to be aware of in the event of a school emergency?
- Prevention, response efforts you aware the school has in place?
- Steps to prevent violence?

Prepare

Prevent

Respond

Recover







Parents: Before a School Emergency

- Ensure emergency contact info is accurate & current, including who is authorized to pick up your child
- Establish a family emergency plan, including communications
- Become familiar with school/district social media sites where emergency info is posted
- Understand school/district "School Safe Conditions" or protocols of response; stress importance of following procedures
- Emphasize that cell phones **should not** be used during an emergency unless directed to do so by a teacher/adult

SOMETHING SOMETHING





Parents: During a School Emergency

- **TRUST** that child's school is **FIRST** doing what is needed to protect students ... communication will follow
- Remain calm; monitor information sources
- Natural instinct to want to rush to child's school ... DON'T
 - Phone lines, staff & roads are needed for emergency response
 - Parents will not be allowed on campus
- Do not phone or text child
 - Sound, vibration or conversation could put students in danger
 - Students need to be paying attention to instructions from trained staff



Parents: After a School Emergency

- Parents, guardians will be directed to child's specific location
- Parent Reunification Plan: Students will be released ONLY to parents/guardians or other pre-designated persons identified on emergency contacts.
 - Reunification process is time consuming ... be patient
- Listen to & acknowledge child's concerns
 - Provide reassurance child is safe & additional prevention efforts are being put in place
 - Seek help from school or mental health professionals if concerns persist





A school crisis is an incident that affects students and staff and can occur before. during or after regular school hours. We want our parents to feel confident in the safety of their children while they're at school, so we've provided responses to a few of the most frequently asked school safety questions.

What plans are in place to help children stay safe?

Bloomington voters supported the 2013 safety and technology referendum that provided resources to initiate best practices in school safety, including access and visitor management systems, emergency preparedness measures, school and district crisis response teams and ongoing training and drills.

Our emergency response and recovery plan is aligned with recommendations provided by the U.S. Departments of Education and Homeland Security to reduce risks and ensure the safety and well-being of students and staff.

All school staff are trained to assess the potential for serious incidents and respond according to our plan's established procedures and guidelines.

What can parents do when a school is in crisis?

Trust that we are first doing what is needed to protect your child(ren); then we'll communicate with available information. It is important to remain calm and monitor information sources. We understand the natural instinct to want to rush to your child. Phone lines, staff and roads are needed for emergency response. Parents will not be allowed on campus.

Refrain from calling or texting your child(ren). The sound, vibration or conversation may put students in danger. Students need to be paying attention to instructions from trained staff.

As soon as it is safe to do so, and under the guidance of emergency responders, we will evacuate students to a secure location and begin the parent-student reunification process.

What happens in a school emergency?

In the unlikely event of a school crisis, schools will initiate one of the following school safe conditions:

- Lockdown when the perceived threat is inside a
- building or on the campus. Shelter-in-place when a potential threat exists near the
 - campus and requires police or fire response.
- Evacuation when conditions are safer outside the building.

from the incident location.

- Hold-in-place when an urgent or medical incident occurs to a student or staff. The response is intended to shelter students
- Severe weather when conditions warrant relocating students and staff to a more secure location inside the

school.

Sign up for text notifications Parents may opt in to receive District emergency notifications via text message. To opt in, each parent must update individual contact preferences in Infinite Campus: · Log in to Infinite Campus. Select Update Contact Preferences in the left menu. To opt in to text messages, provide a mobile number AND check the Text box

in the Emergency column. To update phone numbers on record, click sehold Information > Update and/or Family Members > Update. Please allow up to two school days for changes to take effect.

Bloomington Public Schools • 952-681-6403 • commrelations@isd271.org • bloomingtonschools.org

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What Parents Need to Know BEFORE a School Emergency

- Ensure emergency contact info is accurate and current, including who is
 authorized to nick up vour child Become familiar with school/district web and social media sites where
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- Understand school/district "school safe conditions" or protocols of response in
 the averat of an incident/americancy talk with Volts shild should the importance of Understand school/district "school safe conditions" or protocols of response in the event of an incident/emergency; talk with your child about the importance of following procedures
- DURING a School Emergency
- Emphasize that cell phones should not be used during an emergency unless
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Palm Beach County

School District

Police Department

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School Safety"

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- Do not phone or text child. Sound danger. Students need to be
- AFTER a School Emer- Parents
 - Be proactive in protecting the safety of our children. BECOME A VOLUNTEER!
- To sign up and learn more about how you of our students (your can help, contact your child's school loyees are a top priority, all parents, must sign in to the ent a picture ID to office obtain a visitor's badge/pass. t allowed to be inside the t a visitor's pass at any time.

(561) 434-8400

- Florida State Statute response upon grounds or facilities of a Chief Frank J. Kitzerow itimate business on the camp Palm Beach County School District zation, license, or invitation t ther authorization, incense, or invitation or or remain upon school property; or a student currently under suspension of Police Department 3330 Forest Hill Blvd., Ste B-127 West Palm Beach, FL 33406
- ired to practice emergency us are required to practice emergency onse procedures by conducting practice onse procedures by conducting practice is throughout the school year. These clice drills include: Evacuation (Fire Drill), clice drills include: Evacuation (Fire Drill), Ictice artius include: Evacuation (Fire ckdown, Shelter in Place, and Severe Vease be aware that during practice drills, parents will be asked to participate in the drill and follow encourse encounter according to parents will be asked to participate in the dri and follow response procedures according to

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ain one. Failure to comply will

administration taking your

a serious safety incident.

If you arrive to the campus during a lockdown If you arrive to the campus during a lockd, drill, you will be asked to wait outside the campus until the drill concludes. the building and are asked to







screened by ringing a doorbeil at the main entrance to request access. The door is monitored by office



Parting thought ...

When schools take time to talk with parents, ask for feedback and opinions, and communicate in a timely manner when bad stuff happens, it creates an environment where children and parents feel secure.

We'd like to hear from you!

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Next Webinar: June 4, 2019

Crisis Communications Principles that School Emergencies Taught Us

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Thank you!