

October 2019

ONcall

ready-to-use NEWS

Update your school letter templates for the new school year

Fall is a busy time for schools. When an unexpected event happens, schools should have letters ready to send to parents with key messages and reassurances. Here are letter outlines that principals can revise to quickly update parents while managing the other aspects of the particular crisis or normal operations.

These letter templates address some common school events. They are adaptable and can help ensure a faster response when a crisis hits.

These letters are addressed to parents from the school principal. Schools should print them on letterhead, modify them as needed and send with a principal's signature — or email them if that is standard practice. Replace any italicized text with school-specific information.

After they have been sent, post the key messages from the letters on school websites and social media sites.

For subscription information, contact WSSDA at (800) 562-8927 or (360) 493-9231.

For content questions, contact: Marcia Latta Communications Consultant (503) 580-2612.

The letter topics in this packet include:

- Stranger danger reminder
- Stranger danger incident
- A student or staff member is arrested
- A student is injured on school grounds
- Biased messages in graffiti or on social media

Contributed by Marcia Latta, communications consultant

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**From the Principal:
Stranger Danger Reminder**

This letter is about the important issue of safety. Here at (*School Name*), the safety of our students and staff is our first priority. We have a safety and emergency plan. All staff members are trained in school safety, and we teach safety to students.

We are dedicated to keeping all students safe, which is why we need your help teaching kids about personal safety. Please help us share safety messages by talking to your child and going over basic safety rules. The best way to protect children is to talk to them and teach them personal safety lessons.

Please go over the following tips with your child. We are all working together to keep kids safe.

- Talk to your child about stranger danger.
- If your child walks to and from school, walk the route with your child.
- Point out safe places for them to go if they get into trouble.
- Tell them to never go anywhere alone - to always travel with a group.
- Make sure your child knows his/her address and phone number, and how to reach you in case of an emergency.
- Get together with other parents and see if you can share the responsibility of walking students to and from school.
- Remind children that adults who need help should not ask children to help them. They should ask other adults.
- Remind children to use the buddy system. It is safer to be in groups when going somewhere or playing outside.

Thank you. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to give me a call at (*school number*).

Sincerely,
Principal

**From the Principal:
Stranger Danger Incident**

Dear Parents,

School safety is our priority. We work hard to keep students safe, and I am writing to you about an issue that happened today and an important safety reminder.

Today a student reported being approached by a stranger on the way to school. The student is safe. They followed safety tips and ran to the school building, which was nearby.

Police are investigating the incident, and we are thankful that there was no additional contact between the stranger and the student. However, this event is a good opportunity to review safety tips with your children to teach them how to be safe in public.

Please remind your children to walk in groups, avoid dark or deserted areas and avoid talking to strangers or approaching strange vehicles. We will provide these lessons at school as well. We can work together to keep our students and our community safe. If you have any questions, please call me at the school office.

(Over)

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Principal

**From the Principal:
Arrests: Staff Member**

Dear Parents,

You may have heard about the arrest of one of our staff members today. I know there are many concerns and fears based on the arrest, and I'm sure you have questions. I am writing to tell you that we care deeply about our students, and we will do our best to protect them and ensure that school operations continue as normal.

The police are in charge of the investigation, and we are honoring their role by letting them determine what information to share about the case. The police do not tell us what we may or may not say, but we must avoid any communication that could compromise their investigation.

If you have information that pertains to this case, please share it directly with the police. We can pass information along, but it is best for people to work directly with the police because they are conducting the investigation.

If the police ask us to share specific information, we will. I can't answer questions about this case, but I can assure you that student safety is our priority. If you have any questions about our student safety procedures, please contact me.

Thank you for understanding.

Sincerely,
Principal

**From the Principal:
Arrests: Student**

Dear Parents,

Today, one of our students was arrested on charges related to conduct toward another student. School officials are cooperating with the police investigation, but this is a police matter. Any school investigation would only occur after the police have finished their work.

We understand that people will be curious about the incident, but the investigation will determine the official facts, and we will not release confidential student information or pass along unofficial versions of what happened.

In the event that a school investigation is necessary, any information about student conduct and discipline would be part of the confidential student record.

We will continue to focus on supporting the students and staff in our school and ensure that they can continue to learn in a safe environment.

(Over)

Sincerely,
Principal

**From the Principal:
Student Injury on School Grounds**

Dear Parents,

I want to make you aware of an incident that took place at our school today. Your children may have questions or concerns, and we want you to have accurate information.

An accident took place on our school playground today. A student was injured, and paramedics transported the student to the hospital. School staff reacted quickly and made sure the student received medical treatment right away.

Providing a safe learning environment for our students and staff is our top priority. This was a very unfortunate incident. We are investigating it and will take steps to prevent incidents like this from happening in the future.

We also have counseling available for students who may have anxiety and need to discuss the event. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at (*school number*).

Sincerely,
Principal

**From the Principal:
Biased Messages in Graffiti**

Dear Parents,

We think it's important to keep you informed and wanted to share information about an incident that took place today.

This morning, our school custodian noticed graffiti on our school building that contained racial slurs. He immediately began efforts to remove the offensive messages, but some students who were arriving for the day may have seen it before it was gone.

We want to assure you that we work hard to build a welcoming, safe and inclusive school culture. We will conduct a school investigation, and we will take appropriate disciplinary action against any student we find to have taken part in these activities to damage school property and demean other students.

Creating a positive school climate is essential for students to be successful, and it is the right of each student to be treated with respect.

If you have questions, or if your child has tips to help us identify who may have written the graffiti, since it might have been visitors or someone else, please contact me.

Thank you.

Sincerely,
Principal