

## Yukon School Post-Incident Communications

Guidance for School Administrators on post-incident communications to parents/guardians

**Purpose:** To ensure that parents/guardians maintain confidence in the safety and security of their children while at school, especially after an incident occurs at the school or in a setting connected with school-sanctioned activities. Schools should proactively share information with parents/guardians to advise them of the nature of the incident while maintaining the privacy and dignity of staff and students involved.

### School administration will seek to:

- Ensure that parents/guardians are informed when incidents that may cause concern to families occur.
- Provide assurance to families and the wider school community that the safety and security of students while attending school and school sponsored activities is a top priority.
- Promote factual understanding of a potentially concerning incident that has occurred at the school or in a setting connected with school-sanctioned activities.
- Support staff in their work.

**Guidance:** Incidents at school can range from minor to critical incidents and the communications response should be proportional to the severity – or the perception of the severity of the incident.

**Example incidents**

**Minor Incidents**

- Student accident causing injury
- Student physical contact causing injury
- Injury resulting in EMS/Paramedics/Ambulance attending the school
- Escalated behaviours that result in a Workplace Risk Assessment (WRA) form with a low or medium severity

**Who to communicate with**

- Only the parents/guardians of the students directly involved should be contacted.
- Classroom teacher communicates directly to parents/guardians of students involved;
- Or, if repeated or if disciplinary action is required, by the school administration.
- If repeated or if disciplinary action is required, school administration should ensure their Superintendent is aware of their intended approach.

**What information to include**

- ✓ Nature of incident
- ✓ Time and date
- ✓ How it was addressed
- ✓ Any next steps to be taken

Reviews/approvals

- ✓ No further approval beyond school to communicate directly with parents/guardians in this case.
- ✓ School administration should keep their Superintendent informed of their intended approach.

**Example communication:**

Dear Parent/Guardian,

I am writing to inform you of a physical altercation between <child> and another student on the playground today. The students were <action of school staff>. I would like to have a discussion about the incident and work together on some actions and support for <student>. Please let me know a convenient time to talk.

Sincerely,  
Teacher



<b>Concerning incidents</b>	<b>Example incidents</b>	<b>Who to communicate with</b>	<b>What information to include</b>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Escalated behaviours that result in a Workplace Risk Assessment (WRA) form with a high severity</li> <li>Escalated behaviours that are witnessed by large groups of students</li> <li>Fight between students</li> <li>Assaults of students or staff by students that are witnessed by other students</li> <li>Physical restraint of a student by school staff</li> </ul>	<p><u>Administration</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Principal must make Superintendent and Director of Community Relations &amp; Engagement aware of incident and intended approach to communicating with students, staff and families.</li> </ul> <p><u>Students and families</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>School administration should consider targeted, wider communications to parents/guardians of students who witnessed the incident.</li> <li>Communication sent by the school's administration.</li> </ul> <p>Further advice can be sought from Superintendent and Director of Community Relations and Engagement (or designated Communications Analyst)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Nature of the incident</li> <li>✓ Time and date</li> <li>✓ Steps taken to ensure the safety of students/staff;</li> <li>✓ Any next steps</li> <li>✓ Contact name for questions/concerns</li> </ul> <p><u>Reviews/approvals</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Any communication sent should be reviewed and approved by a Superintendent.</li> </ul>

**Example communication**

Dear Parents/Guardians of Grade #,

You are receiving this email because of an incident that occurred at the school today. At 10 a.m., a student's behaviour became escalated to the point where they struck and injured a school staff. Before this incident occurred, students were removed from the classroom, but some may have witnessed the staff member receiving treatment for their injury. Staff effectively managed the situation to keep students away from the escalated student in accordance with the school's emergency plan.

A team of school staff members will be working to debrief the incident with students who witnessed the incident and the school administration will be working with the escalated student and family to determine the next steps.

If you have any questions or concerns or would like to discuss supports your child may require, please feel free to contact the school principal at [email.address@yesent.yk.ca](mailto:email.address@yesent.yk.ca).



**Example incidents**

**Major incidents**

- Fire department attends (aside from planned drill)
- Uniformed police attend the school and exercise the use of force or make an arrest of a student, staff member, or individual
- Evacuation of the school
- Lockdown or “hold-and-secure”
- Bomb threat
- School closure (or potential for school closure)

**Who to communicate with**

Administration

- Principal must notify Superintendent and Director of Community Relations & Engagement ASAP.
- Superintendent must notify ADM of Schools.

Students

- Staff must discuss the incident with students before the end of the day and refer any students who may require support to the school’s administration.

Families

- Should result in notification to the entire school community ASAP, but no later than 5 hours after the incident has concluded.
- If a long delay is anticipated to develop an approved communication, a short communication acknowledging the incident may be sent to indicate more details will be forthcoming.
- If the Principal is unable to complete the parent notification, the Superintendent should be contacted, debriefed, and responsible for coordinating the communication.

**What information to include**

- ✓ Nature of the incident
- ✓ Current level of risk or threat to students
- ✓ Steps taken to ensure the safety of students/staff
- ✓ Contact for questions or concerns
- ✓ Information on supports and services for families

Reviews/approvals

- ✓ Any communication sent should be reviewed and approved by a Superintendent.



**Example communication**

Preliminary communication

Dear Parents/Guardians of NAME OF SCHOOL:

You are receiving this email because of an incident that occurred at the school today. All students and staff are safe and there is no risk of injury or harm. At 12 p.m., it became necessary to evacuate the school. Students were evacuated outside and were able to return into the school within 30 minutes. I will send another email with more details later today after more information about the incident can be confirmed.

Sincerely,  
School Principal

Active incident communication

Dear Parents/Guardians of NAME OF SCHOOL:

You are receiving this email because the school is currently in a “hold and secure,” which means that students are required to remain in their classrooms while instruction continues. All students and staff are currently safe and there is a low risk of injury or harm. RCMP have advised the school they are dealing with a situation at a home near the school. Out of an abundance of caution, they have requested that the school be placed in a “hold and secure.” We will send another notification when the “hold and secure” has been lifted. If you have any questions or concerns, please contact the school principal at [email.address@yesent.yk.ca](mailto:email.address@yesent.yk.ca) or superintendent at [superintendents@yukon.ca](mailto:superintendents@yukon.ca)

Sincerely,  
School Principal

Follow-up / or main communication

Dear Parents/Guardians of NAME OF SCHOOL:

You are receiving this email because of an incident that occurred at the school today. All students and staff are currently safe and there is no risk of injury or harm. At 1:15 p.m., it was determined that an individual was trespassing on school property and the school was placed in “hold and secure” (where students were required to remain in their classrooms while instruction continued). At 1:30 p.m., the RCMP attended the school and arrested the individual without further incident. Staff effectively managed the situation to keep students away from the individual in accordance with the school’s emergency plan. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact the school principal at [email.address@yesent.yk.ca](mailto:email.address@yesent.yk.ca) or superintendent at [superintendents@yukon.ca](mailto:superintendents@yukon.ca)

Sincerely,  
School Principal



## Critical Incidents

### Example incidents

- Serious injury, critical illness or death of a student or staff member
- Acts of significant violence at the school

### Who to communicate with

- Follow Major incident guidance above
- And, refer to Response to Critical Incidents (9.06 in Student Procedures Handbook) or Violence Threat Risk Assessment [VTRA] (9.05 in Student Procedures Handbook).

### What information to include

- ✓ Follow Major incident guidance above
- ✓ Consider meetings with small and/or large groups or students/parents/guardian to fully communicate and debrief the incident.

### Example communication

- Follow Major incidents guidance above
- Communications should include supports and services available at the school and through other agencies. This may include helpful resources and materials.

## Incidents or allegations of assault/abuse/criminal behaviour

### Example incidents

- Assault or abuse of a student by a staff member
- Criminal Code of Canada offences

### Who to communicate with

- RCMP/ Child and Family Services
  - Required reporting under the [Child and Family Services Act](#)
  - Provide as much detail as possible (nature of incident/allegations, time and date, observations or suspicions, other students and staff who may be impacted, etc.)
- Department of Education Administration
  - School must inform Superintendent
  - Superintendent must inform Assistant Deputy Minister, Schools and Student Services

### What information to include

- ✓ Nature of the incident
- ✓ Time and date
- ✓ Steps taken to ensure the safety of students/staff;
- ✓ Any next steps
- ✓ Supports available to students and families (at school and in community)
- ✓ Contact name for subsequent questions/concerns or to provide more information



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- Assistant Deputy Minister, S&SS must inform Deputy Minister, Director of Human Resources, Director of Community Engagement and Relations, and Director of Policy
  - Director of Policy (or designate) coordinates with other departments (e.g. Health and Social Services, Justice, RCMP) for information sharing (including communications advice)
  - Human Resources/YTA
    - Superintendent must inform Human Resources Consultant to assess the need for a workplace investigation.
    - If an investigation is required, YTA must be notified to allow for employee representation.
  - Students/families/school staff
    - The ADM of Schools and Student Services will coordinate with RCMP, CFS, PSC and Justice to consider approach to communicating with students, families and school staff based on:
      - Any ongoing investigation
      - An assessment of the rights, privacy legislation and dignity of staff and students
    - Examples of approaches may include:
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- Direct conversations with impacted students/families and school staff
  - Meetings with families and school staff
  - Written communication to all staff and families
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### References:

- [Violent Threat Risk Assessment \(VTRA\) Protocol](#)
- [Workplace Risk Assessment \(WRA\) Protocol](#)
- [Nonviolent Crisis Intervention \(NCI/NVCI\) Protocol](#)
- [Critical Incidents Response Guidance](#)