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# Crisis Communication Samples

## Cleveland Metropolitan School District

**Chief Communications Officer**



**Dr. Roseann Canfora**

Roseann provides leadership, direction and strategic planning for the CMSD Communications Team and serves the Office of the CEO as communications and media strategist and as official spokesperson for CMSD.

[Email](#) | [Bio](#)

Office: 216.838.0086 | District Cell: 216.647.6072



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# Death/Injury of a Student/Parent



**Audrey Staton-Thompson**  
Principal, Warner Girls Leadership Academy

To Warner Girls Leadership Academy Families

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

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**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

It is with great sadness that that I inform you of a fatal accident this weekend that resulted in the loss of one of our students and her beloved mother. Another one of our students, the sister and mother of the victims witnessed the accident.

While city safety forces in Cleveland are committed to fully investigating the accident, our school staff is committed to providing needed emotional support for our students and staff who are or will be affected by this tragic loss in our school community.

News about the death of a friend or loved one can have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who are close to the victims. Our school staff is committed to helping students who need support to understand and manage their feelings of sadness. We encourage you to listen to your children and to discuss any feelings and reactions they may have to news that a friend or classmate has died, including the following signs of stress or worry:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior (i.e., thumb sucking)
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call INSERT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_. Our student support teams will be available at the school this week to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or confusion about the news.

Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child. Our school staff remains committed to providing needed supports during times of grief and sadness and every day of the school year.

Sincerely,

Audrey Staton-Thompson  
Principal



# Iowa Maple School

**Natalie K. Smith-Benson**  
Principal

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

**Board of Education**  
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Shailetha T. Mitchell

Justin L. Monday, Esq.

Stephanie Morales

Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

Dear Parents and Caregivers of Iowa Maple Students:

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the heart-breaking loss of one of our first grade students over the weekend in a tragic incident that authorities are committed to fully investigating.

News like this may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who personally knew or were related to the victim. We therefore encourage you to listen to your children and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, including these signs of stress:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior (i.e., thumb sucking)
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call [Insert phone number here]. They, along with other members of our student support teams, will be available at our school on [Monday and throughout the week?] to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or fear.

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for children and adolescents who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child as your school staff remains committed to providing needed supports at school today and every day.

Sincerely,

Natalie K. Smith-Benson  
Principal

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

**Board of Education**  
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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

To: Parents and Caregivers of Louisa May Alcott School

It is with great sadness that that I inform you that a tragic shooting at a west side home Tuesday night resulted in the serious injury of one of our students and a possible life-threatening injury to one of her family members. While city safety forces in Cleveland are committed to fully investigating the incident, our school staff is committed to providing needed emotional support for our students and staff who may be affected by the tragic news affecting a member of our school community.

News about violence affecting friends or loved ones can have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who are close to the victims. Our school staff is committed to helping students who need support to understand and manage their feelings of sadness. We also encourage you to listen to your child and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to news that a friend or classmate has been hurt, including these signs of stress or worry:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior (i.e., thumb sucking)
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call INSERT NUMBER \_\_\_\_\_. Our student support teams will be available at the school this week to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or confusion about the news.

Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child's concern for his or her classmate. Our school staff remains committed to providing needed supports a school today and every day.

Sincerely,

Eileen Stull  
Principal



**YOUR NAME HERE**

Your School Here

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

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Shalettha T. Mitchell

Justin L. Monday, Esq.

Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

Dear Parents and Caregivers of \_\_\_\_\_ School.

It is with great sadness that we inform you that a tragic incident that occurred over the weekend resulted in the unfortunate death of one of our students. While city safety forces are committed to fully investigating the tragedy, our school staff is committed to providing needed supports for our students and for other students who may be affected by this tragedy.

Tragic news in the city may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who knew or were related to the victims. We therefore encourage you to listen to your child and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, and watch for any signs of stress, including:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior (i.e., thumb sucking)
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call \_\_\_\_\_. Our student support teams will be available at our school this week to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or anxiety at this tragic news.

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for adolescents who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child. Our school staff remains committed to providing needed supports at school today and every day.

Sincerely,

Principal

Dear Parents and Caregivers of \_\_\_\_\_ School.

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

It is with great sadness that we inform you that a tragic incident that occurred at a local business on Tuesday morning resulted in the unfortunate death of a family member of one of our students. While city safety forces are committed to fully investigating the tragedy, our school staff is committed to providing needed supports for our student and for other students affected by this tragedy.

Tragic news in the city may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who knew or were related to the victims. We therefore encourage you to listen to your child and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, including these signs of stress:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior (i.e., thumb sucking)
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call \_\_\_\_\_. Our student support teams will be available at the school this week to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or stress.

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for children and adolescents who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child. Our school staff remains committed to providing needed supports at school today and every day.

Sincerely,

Principal



August 29, 2016

Dear Parents and Caregivers of Iowa Maple Students:

It is with great sadness that we inform you of the heart-breaking loss of one of our juniors over the weekend in a tragic incident that authorities are committed to fully investigating.

News like this may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who personally knew or were related to the victim. We therefore encourage you to listen to your children and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, including these signs of stress:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Regressive behavior
- Guilt
- Separation anxiety
- Fearfulness and worries

If these or any unusual symptoms present a cause for concern, please call [Insert phone number here-check with your crisis team]. They, along with other members of our student support teams, will be available at our school on [Monday and throughout the week?—again confirm with your crisis team] to talk with students who are experiencing sadness or fear.

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for adolescents who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child as your school staff remains committed to providing needed supports at school today and every day.

Sincerely,

Lennox Thompson  
Principal

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

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Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Death/Grief Talking Points

# **DEATH/GRIEF MESSAGING:**

## **Communicating with staff & students**

*CMSD Communications - August 29, 2016*

EMAIL OR DISTRIBUTE TO YOUR STAFF THE US Dept. of Ed GUIDELINES for managing grief and tragedy in schools:

[http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis\\_safety/deathgrief.pdf](http://www.nasponline.org/resources/crisis_safety/deathgrief.pdf):

### **SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR PRINCIPALS TO USE IN EMAIL OR STAFF MEETING:**

- The U.S. Dept. of Education has produced valuable resource for how to help students cope with the death of a student or staff member
- Bereavement among school-age children is a common experience
- Our student support teams are trained to provide supports at times like this
- With their help, school staff can help students cope with death by referring those with difficulty to available supports and keeping others focused on school work.
- Teachers should identify any students affected personally (because they were close to victims or are related to them) or students who are at increased risk of adjustment problems.
  - **NOTE PAGE 3** of the US. Dept. guidelines of what schools can and cannot share when managing crises, but specific to THIS incident:
    - Do not discuss news reports or circumstances surrounding the incident in hallways and offices to avoid increasing speculation or spreading rumor. Let the city do its job in investigating the person in custody for the shooting.

### **SUGGESTED TALKING POINTS FOR TEACHERS:**

- If students appear curious or distracted by news in the hallway that one of their peers was shot and killed over the weekend, teachers may, at the start of class, talk generally

about what happened and allow students who need to do so to express their feelings or ask questions.

- **TALKING POINTS:** These can be selected or adjusted to fit the situation and age of students at your school:
  - A tragedy occurred this weekend resulting in the death of one of the students who attended our school.
  - We have a support team here to help anyone who is having difficulty understanding or coping with this sad news or with the loss of a friend.
  - Our support team also needs your help in knowing if you think someone you know needs our help.
  - An important letter is being sent home to your families today so they know what we are doing to help any student who is feeling sad or confused about this
  - It's not up to us to figure out what happened. When bad things happen to people, police do their work to find out why.
  - There are many ways for us to help others cope with news that someone they knew or loved has died. What are some of the ways we can help others at times like this?
  - I know many of you are feeling sad today about what happened. What ways can we show our support for his family and friends who are grieving?
  - Have any of you ever lost someone close to you? How did other people help to make you feel better?

**MANAGING MEDIA:** It is customary when a story is in the news, that media may arrive in our school parking lot or outside of school hoping to get someone who knew the victim to comment on the tragedy, even if the incident did not happen in our schools.

- **ALL media should be referred to Roseann Canfora in the CMSD Communications office.**

For those caught on camera (very few reporters just 'roll' without asking if you're willing to talk about ). But if that happens:

- Don't exhibit anger or say "no comment."

- Don't give information about victim or students affected
- It's perfectly fine to:
  - Thank them for their interest in how educators help students cope with sad news like this.
  - Then refer them to them to the CMSD Communications Office where we will assist reporters with any information they need.



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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Death of a Staff Member

February 5, 2019

Dear Families of Miles Park School Scholars:

It is with sadness that I inform you of the passing of one of our beloved staff members. Mr. Keith Adams reportedly passed away in his home on Monday. Mr. Adams served as a dedicated paraprofessional, serving our MD/AU students in 6<sup>th</sup>-8<sup>th</sup> grade this year. While he had students to which he was assigned specifically, he was also known to many other students that he interacted with (list ways if known, or omit this sentence if he was not known to other students).

As we work to comprehend this heartbreaking loss to our school community, we are committed to helping any of our students who may be saddened or confused by the unexpected loss of someone dear to them.

News of the passing of someone they know may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who personally knew the victim. We therefore encourage you to listen to your children and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, including these signs of stress:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Fearfulness and worries

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for children who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child if you see any signs of sadness or confusion at news of this loss to our school community. I know you share our sympathy for the family of Mr. Adams. Please contact our office if you have any questions regarding the information provided.

Sincerely,

Tamika Taylor-Ivory  
Principal

**Chief Executive Officer**  
Eric S. Gordon

**Board of Education**

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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

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Alex Johnson, Ph.D.  
Harlan M. Sands, J.D., MBA



**Virmeal Finley**  
Principal, Wilbur Wright School

May 19, 2017

Dear Parents and Caregivers of Wilbur Wright Students:

It is with great sadness that I inform you of the passing of our beloved school secretary, Ms Christine Cooper. She served as our front line staff member for 20 years and was seen by students, staff and community as the heartbeat of our school office.

As we work to comprehend this heartbreaking loss to our school community, we are committed to helping any of our students who may be saddened or confused by the unexpected loss of someone so dear to us all.

News of the passing of someone they know may have a powerful effect on students, particularly those who personally knew the victim. We therefore encourage you to listen to your children and to discuss with them any feelings and reactions they may have to the death of a friend or classmate, including these signs of stress:

- Sleep difficulties (i.e., nightmares, trouble falling asleep, and sleeping too much)
- Changes in appetite
- Inability to concentrate
- Absentmindedness
- Irritability
- Thoughts about death or dying
- Isolation
- Withdrawing from normal activities and friends
- Increased aggression or acting out
- Fearfulness and worries

Death is always painful to understand, particularly for children who are experiencing the finality of death for the first time. Please call us if you have any questions or concerns about your child if you see any signs of sadness or confusion at news of this loss to our school community. I know you share our sympathy for the family of Ms. Cooper, who lived in our school neighborhood was one of our own CMSD graduates

Sincerely,

Virmeal Finley  
Principal

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Alex Johnson, Ph.D.



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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Bomb Threat

**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Friday, October 13, 2017 3:32 PM  
**To:** Koonce, Andrew; Woody, Jennifer  
**Cc:** Moxon, Valentina  
**Subject:** Re: Lockdown???

Give this statement to any parent who calls or who writes:

A bomb threat, determined quickly to be a prank this morning, was managed as we do all safety drills. While CPD attended to the person who phoned in the false alarm, we proceeded with our usual safety drill, first as a precaution, and second, as an opportunity to practice what to do in the event a threat is real.

At no time was any student in danger today; if so, we would have communicated about the drill to parents.

Roseann

TO ALL OF YOU: When there is a false alarm like this--particularly when it involves the family of one of our students--we must protect the privacy of the family member who was charged with this offense, protect the privacy of the student who would be subjected to rumor or ridicule--by not going specifics about how CPD learned so quickly that it was a false threat.

Communicating widely about this instead of managing communication with the few who will inquire (as recommended above) runs far lesser risk of rumor running rampant or media making this a story about one of our families.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
EDUCATOR: Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

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SUGGESTED IVR:

This is an important message from Tiffany James, principal of John Marshall High School.

As we have seen in the media lately, a number of schools in the greater Cleveland area were subjected to bomb threats recently that were found not to be credible.

This afternoon we received a similar threat that our CMSD and city safety forces also believed not to be real.

Nonetheless, I want you to know that we take all threats seriously and we are grateful to our safety forces for responding immediately to investigate the anonymous threat that, again, proved not to pose any harm to our students

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114



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Lisa Thomas, Ph.D.

**Ex Officio Members**

Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Ebola

**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Thursday, October 16, 2014 6:16 PM  
**To:** Henry Duvall; PRE  
**Subject:** Communicating about possible Ebola risk

In Cleveland, we worked overnight to manage local and national media inquiries after one of our teachers reported to us that she had been in contact with an infected person over the weekend.

Once learning about the level of risk last night (which the Health Dept. assured was no risk to our students), we:

- placed the teacher on paid administrative leave
- issued an IVR (voice recorded message) to all families
- Instituted Cranwood staff call trees and all-staff e-mail alerts
- posted tan Alert banner on our website and on Facebook and widely distributed this message to our email and media lists:

- **CMUSD takes Ebola precautions at Cranwood School** "Late Wednesday, October 15, CMUSD was made aware that a teacher who works at Cranwood School may have come in contact with a person diagnosed with the Ebola virus. After being assured by City Health Department officials that our students, families and staff are not at risk, we nonetheless took a number of precautions to allay any concerns about safety at Cranwood School.
- Families and staff were notified about the precautions we are taking.
- Overnight, the school was thoroughly cleaned with a bleach-based cleaning solution, according to guidelines provided by the Center for Disease Control.
- The teacher suspected of having contact with an affected person is at home and will remain at home until cleared by health officials to return to work.

The steps we chose to take at Cranwood School are strictly precautionary and were done to allay any concerns of our students, staff and families, given the nation's heightened anxiety about the Ebola virus."

All local stations, along with Reuters, CBS and CNN covered the story today.

Our CEO did interviews outside the school and we invited all of them into the school before the students began arriving to see our halls and walls glistening. The smell of bleach was apparent and neither the media, families, students nor staff appeared concerned. Overall, the coverage was fair and all of our talking points made their way into the reports:

- gratitude to the teacher for swift notification to ensure safety of our students and staff

- concern for the well being of our staff member, on leave and being monitored for possible exposure
- kudos for the work of our cleaners, our operations crew and even our Chief Operating Officer who worked from midnight to 5:30 a.m. to sanitize every inch of the school according to CDC guidelines
- widespread communication to raise awareness without increasing anxiety

I have attached documents that were helpful to us in communicating with families and staff in the last 24 hours.

Roseann

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
EDUCATOR: District Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District

## Information about the Ebola Virus

The health and safety of our students is a top priority of the Cleveland Metropolitan School District. Therefore, when issues of concern are brought to our attention, we feel it is important to share information with our parents, staff and community and to keep them fully informed.

On Wednesday evening, October 15, we learned that one of our teachers who works at Cranwood School's E<sup>3</sup>agle Academy may have had contact with an individual recently diagnosed with Ebola. After informing families of the precautionary measures we took avoid any risk to our students and staff, we prepared the following information for parents, staff and community members who seek information available through the Center for Disease Control.

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **What is Ebola and what are the symptoms of illness from Ebola?**

Ebola is a rare and severe disease caused by infection with the Ebola virus. Symptoms may appear anywhere from 2 to 21 days after exposure to Ebola but the average is 8 to 10 days. Signs and symptoms of illness from Ebola typically include: fever (greater than 38.6°C or 101.5°F), severe headache, diarrhea, stomach pain, vomiting, or unexplained bleeding or bruising.

#### **How is Ebola spread?**

Individuals with Ebola cannot spread the virus until symptoms appear. The virus can only be spread through bodily fluids. It is not an airborne disease.

#### **How does someone become infected with Ebola?**

Infection with Ebola can only be spread to others by:

- Directly touching blood or body fluids (including feces, saliva, urine, or vomit) of a person who is sick with Ebola.
- Directly touching objects (like needles) that have been contaminated with blood or body fluids of a person who is sick with Ebola or infected animals.

Ebola is NOT spread through the air or water.

A person infected with Ebola IS NOT contagious until symptoms appear.

#### **Who is at the greatest risk of exposure?**

In an outbreak, those at highest risk include healthcare workers and family and friends of a person infected with Ebola.

**What can I do to prevent being infected?**

Always wash your hands with soap and water. Cook food properly. Consider visiting a health facility when you have a headache, fever, pain, diarrhea, red eyes, and vomiting.

**What treatment is available for Ebola?**

Currently there are no specific vaccines or medicines (such as antiviral drugs) that can prevent or treat against Ebola. Only symptoms of Ebola are treated as they appear.

**How was the teacher who was possibly exposed to the Ebola virus identified and how is the teacher being monitored?**

The teacher who was determined to have possibly been in contact with the patient with Ebola is being monitored daily by the health department. The teacher's health is being closely observed for appearance of symptoms of Ebola. Any close contacts that develop a fever or illness symptoms will be isolated and medically evaluated. Persons who remain healthy after 21 days are not at risk for Ebola and can stop monitoring for symptoms.

**Is it safe for my child to attend school?**

Your child is not at risk for Ebola while attending school. There is a possible risk for Ebola only if you come into contact with a person ill with Ebola. The teacher who had contact with the ill patient was not sick when the teacher attended school. The teacher is currently at home simply to facilitate close monitoring for the remainder of 21 days.

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This information has been compiled from CDC resources. For more information, visit the CDC website: <http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola/resources/index.html#crfactsheets>



*A Union of Professionals*

## AFT Health, Safety and Well-Being

# Preparing for Ebola in Schools

Most of us are aware of the terrifying Ebola outbreak in Africa. More than 3,000 people have died in Liberia, Sierra Leone, Guinea and Nigeria, and many more are expected to die before this tragic epidemic ends. Media reports have put the mortality rate at greater than 90 percent in most of these countries, except in Nigeria (which has a better health system) and where the spread appears to be under control.

With the first report of a U.S.-confirmed Ebola case in Dallas, the specter of the epidemic is closer to home.

We should not panic. Chances are there will never be an Ebola epidemic in the U.S. Despite early bumbling in the Dallas hospital where the Ebola patient is being treated and in the public health department, health officials have this case mostly under control. The risks still remain extremely low for U.S. citizens to contract Ebola. And the chances of transmission in a school setting are even lower.

Understanding some basic facts about Ebola is the first step to protecting yourself, co-workers and students in the event Ebola comes to your community or school.

### **Ebola**

Ebola was first reported in 1976 in Africa. Since then, there have been small outbreaks, usually in rural areas. The current Ebola outbreak is the largest in history. Ebola is considered a hemorrhagic (bleeding) fever disease, because victims experience high fevers and often external bleeding.

The current epidemic has spun out of control because it is occurring in cities that lack hospitals and public health capacity to institute good infection control, garner community support and educate people about preventing the disease. There are many myths and misconceptions about Ebola that circulate in West Africa and may begin to circulate here.

The early symptoms of Ebola often make it difficult to diagnose. Once someone is infected, the virus may incubate two to 21 days with no symptoms. Early symptoms include high fever (usually over 101 degrees Fahrenheit), chills, muscle aches and fatigue. As the disease progresses, victims often develop a rash over their torso, abdominal tenderness and diarrhea. Some experience kidney and liver failure, profuse bleeding from the mouth and gastro-intestinal tract, and severe neurological symptoms. Patients usually endure a two-week course

## **Ebola Quick Facts**



### **Incubation period**

Once someone is infected, EVD may incubate two to 21 days with no symptoms



### **Early symptoms**

High fever (usually over 101°F), chills, muscle aches and fatigue

of painful symptoms. If they survive, they generally have no long-term health effects associated with infection and have lifetime immunity to the disease.

There is currently no specific anti-viral therapy for Ebola. However, several new therapies and a vaccine are now being tested. If these clinical tests are successful, the Centers for Diseases Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization plan to have all of these available by early 2015 for West African patients and any others in need.

American Federation of Teachers, AFL-CIO

555 New Jersey Ave. N.W. · Washington, DC 20001 · T: 202-879-4400 · [www.aft.org](http://www.aft.org)

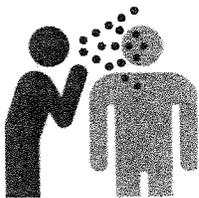
## Routes and transmission and risk of infection

A person is at risk of infection if he or she comes into direct contact with the blood and/or body fluid of a **symptomatic infected person**. Most Ebola victims were exposed because they cared for loved ones at home or were healthcare workers whose protective equipment and gear were inadequate. According to the CDC, the virus is not transmitted through the air or water.

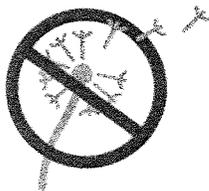
## Ebola Risk Facts



**You are at risk ONLY IF** you come into direct contact with the blood and/or body fluids of a **symptomatic infected person**



## Ebola Route Facts



**EVD is NOT TRANSMITTED** through **air or water**, according to the CDC



## What precautions should be in place in schools?

Practicing standard universal precautions is the most effective method to protect students and staff. Since the Occupational Safety and Health Administration—OSHA promulgated the bloodborne pathogens standard, most school districts have adopted universal precautions. Now is the time to reinforce their use in schools. In summary, these precautions include:



Frequent hand-washing and use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers when hand-washing is not feasible.



Equipping all staff (school bus drivers, school nurses, teachers, paraprofessionals, custodians and office personnel) with gloves and barriers that can be used to prevent exposure to blood and body fluids.



Maintaining puncture-proof needle-disposal boxes in the nurse's office.



Having a strict protocol for cleanups of blood and body fluids.



Judicious use of disinfectants and sanitizers to clean up blood and body fluid spills.

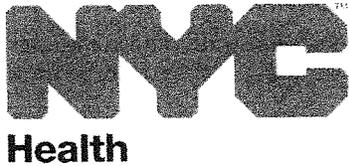
Along with the practice of universal precautions, every school should have a new protocol for early identification of children with high fevers. Children with high fevers should not be allowed to stay in the general school population; they should be isolated as soon as possible. This preventive strategy also may help protect students and staff from unnecessary influenza exposure during flu season.

Every child or staff person with a fever of 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit or higher should be evaluated for travel to or from a high-impact area in West Africa or contact with a confirmed or suspected case of Ebola. If a student or staff person meets these criteria, there should be arrangements to work with the local health department to transport them to the appropriate healthcare facility.

All staff should be trained on this terrible disease so that the emotional and social toll of Ebola will be lessened for students and parents. Reducing fear and anxiety will be a high priority if the goal is to keep everyone safe and minimize unnecessary school disruption.

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For more information, contact the AFT health, safety and well-being department at [Health&Safety@aft.org](mailto:Health&Safety@aft.org).



## Guidance for Daycares and Schools: Receiving Students or Staff from Areas Affected by Ebola

### Background:

- There is an Ebola outbreak in West Africa. Check the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website ([www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola)) for the latest affected areas.
- The chances of getting Ebola are **extremely low** unless a person traveled to an affected area **and** had direct contact with the blood or body fluids (e.g., blood, vomit, diarrhea) of an Ebola-infected person, or with objects soiled with that person's blood or body fluids.
- Fever in people who traveled to the affected areas is most likely due to more common infectious diseases in West Africa (e.g. malaria), but should still be checked by a doctor.
- Early Ebola symptoms can include fever, headache, muscle pain, vomiting, diarrhea and stomach pain.

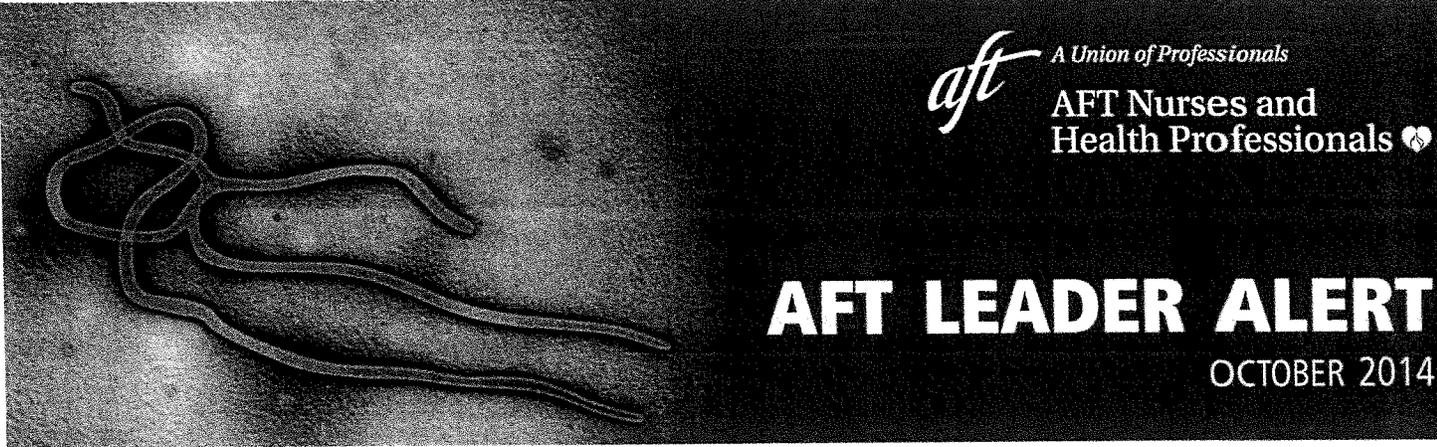
### Recommendations for Students and Staff:

The CDC recommends that **all healthy people** who arrive in the United States from an Ebola-affected area **should check for fever daily for 21 days**, starting the day after leaving the affected area. They may continue their usual activities during this time. If they remain healthy during the 21 days, they are not at risk for Ebola.

- If a student or staff member gets a fever or another early symptom of Ebola (see above) within 21 days of returning from an area affected by the outbreak, he or she should consult a health-care provider **right away**. The staff member (or parent, if a student has a fever) should tell the provider about the symptoms and recent travel **before** going to the office or emergency room.
  - A staff member who recently traveled to an affected area and develops fever or another symptom of Ebola during the school day should leave the workplace, call his or her doctor **right away** for advice and mention the recent travel.
  - If a student who recently traveled to an affected area develops fever or another early Ebola symptom while at school or daycare, he or she should be seen by the school nurse. If there is no nurse, the student should stay in a private room until parent pick-up, and the parent should be told to seek **immediate** medical advice and to tell a healthcare provider about the recent travel history **before** going to the office or emergency room.
  - If anyone at school needs immediate medical care, tell 911 or the EMS operator about the sick person's recent travel.
- Students or staff who get sick more than 21 days after returning from an Ebola-affected area **do not** need to be checked for Ebola and are not at risk for Ebola.

### More Information on Ebola:

- For more information about the CDC's travel recommendations, visit [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel)
- For more information about Ebola, visit [nyc.gov/health](http://nyc.gov/health) and search for "Ebola" or go to [www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola](http://www.cdc.gov/vhf/ebola)



## AFT LEADER ALERT

OCTOBER 2014

# Preparing for Ebola in School Settings

**In September 2014, public health officials announced the first confirmed case of Ebola in the United States, an infected patient in Dallas. As the details unfolded, two things became clear: Despite the sophistication of our health system, the victim was not immediately identified and isolated, but allowed to stay in the greater community for several days; and school-age children were among the contacts of the patient. This case is not likely to be the last diagnosed in the U.S., nor the last to involve school-age children. For that reason, it is essential that every school district have a plan in the unlikely event a similar scenario develops in its community.**

**It also is important to understand that the risk of Ebola exposure and an Ebola outbreak is extremely low in the U.S.**

**The Dallas Independent School District had to scramble to respond after finding out that students had contact with the Ebola patient. The response was mounted in haste to address any possibility of viral contamination in the school, and included disinfecting four school buildings over the course of several days. This is a prime opportunity for other school districts to develop an effective plan of action.**

The AFT recommends that local leaders engage in a conversation with their administration on the importance of having a comprehensive plan in the event of an Ebola case in their local district. In that conversation, leaders should seek some confirmation that a plan is in place and that it includes some of the following elements:

- 1. A coordinated effort with the local health department.** The health department should work hand in hand with the district on a response that focuses on early identification and assessment of suspect cases of Ebola at school. Early symptoms of Ebola—high fever, muscle aches and pains, nausea—are so nonspecific that the plan should focus on identifying students and staff with high fevers and immediately isolating them.

**The triage looks something like this:**

- Early identification and isolation of students/staff with fevers greater than or equal to 101.5 degrees Fahrenheit.
- Travel history (Has the person recently traveled to or from an affected area in West Africa?)
- Contact history with persons known to have, or suspected of having, Ebola.

**High-risk individuals have:**

- mucous membrane exposure to blood or body fluids of a symptomatic Ebola patient;
- direct skin contact with or exposure to blood or body fluids of a diagnosed Ebola patient; and
- needle-stick or mucous membrane exposure to blood or body fluids of a diagnosed Ebola patient.

### Low-risk Individuals include:

- household contact with an Ebola patient;
- other close contacts;
  - being within three feet of a symptomatic Ebola patient; and
  - having direct brief contact (e.g., shaking hands) with a symptomatic Ebola patient.

*NOTE: Walking by a person with Ebola does not constitute a close contact or even a low risk.*

The plan should be written and distributed to all key personnel in the district—school nurses, principals, and anyone expected to do the initial evaluation. The plan also should discuss how and when the health department and other health officials are to be informed, as well as transportation of any individuals in need of medical attention.

We have attached a circular that the New York City Health Department distributed to schools in New York City as an example. Every school district should have a similar document in force.

## 2. A well-developed plan to communicate and educate everyone in the school community in the event of a confirmed case of Ebola.

There is a great deal of misinformation and anxiety linked to potential Ebola exposure. The district should have ready basic information about Ebola, methods for everyone to assess their risk, and contact information for concerned individuals who want more detailed information. At a minimum, districts should have:

- a. A letter to parents at the ready if an Ebola contact or victim has been in school; the letter should detail the nature of any potential exposure; what the risk is (most likely very low or nonexistent); how the district is responding to protect students; and provide good resources for further information and a contact number in the district.
- b. Fact sheets and training for all school staff so they understand the basics about Ebola. The information and training should outline the early identification protocol, the fact that they are at risk of exposure only after an Ebola victim becomes symptomatic, what their roles and responsibilities are in the early identification process, and how to talk to their students and parents. Staff also should be given background on the epidemic in West Africa and contrast how it would be handled should several cases of Ebola appear in the U.S. (i.e., epidemic would be stopped because we have a superior healthcare

and public health system; the mortality rate would more than likely be much lower).

- c. Updates on U.S. and worldwide efforts to contain the current epidemic. Most experts believe the epidemic will be brought under control in the next six months. The U.S. military is helping with the response, and new vaccines and therapies are likely to be available by the first part of 2015.
- d. Reassurance for the “worried well.” As with any terrifying infectious disease, many students and staff may become overly anxious about their risk of exposure. Everyone in the school community should understand where they can seek help and guidance if they do become concerned.

## 3. Re-energizing the bloodborne pathogens policy for staff and students.

Ebola is transmitted primarily by contact with a **symptomatic** victim’s blood and/or body fluid. Most school districts have a bloodborne pathogens exposure prevention policy and should remind everyone to practice universal precautions. Everyone should be reminded to wash their hands frequently and use hand sanitizer when hand-washing is not practical. Gloves and other protective equipment should be readily available to staff if they must respond to someone who is injured or ill.

Custodians, school nurses and others with care responsibilities should have a refresher on cleaning up spills of blood and bodily fluids. They also should have readily available spill kits.

## 4. Designing a reasonable disinfection and cleaning policy.

Researchers don’t know how long the Ebola virus lives outside the body. Estimates are a few hours to several days (in pools of blood). Surfaces that a victim may have touched or contaminated should be disinfected, using the least-toxic EPA-registered disinfectant (i.e., effectively kills adenoviruses, polio, and noroviruses etc.). Bleach is effective but highly corrosive, and research indicates that overexposure to bleach is associated with new cases of asthma in adults and children. One less-toxic disinfectant that we recommend that is EPA-registered is Oxivir TB. Its primary agent is hydrogen peroxide.

There is no need to go overboard on disinfection even when an Ebola patient has been in close contact with a student or staff person in a school. As long as that contact was asymptomatic when in the school, the person poses no exposure risk to others in the school.

The Dallas ISD was caught off guard. With advance planning, the school district's response could have been more effective. Now is the time for school districts to have an Ebola plan. As with the development of any emergency plan, the union should be consulted and be included in the process. If there is a joint labor-management health and safety committee, it should be involved in the development of the district response.

**The AFT wants to hear from you on how your district is responding, if at all. Contact us at [Health&Safety@aft.org](mailto:Health&Safety@aft.org) or 800-238-1133, ext. 5674. The AFT department of health, safety and well-being will provide a basic fact sheet and occasional updates as more information becomes available.**

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Ronald M. Berkman, Ph.D.

Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Weapon confiscated at School

**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Monday, April 3, 2017 10:00 AM  
**To:** Hilliard, Charlene L  
**Cc:** Lockhart, Carol R; Ott, Thomas G  
**Subject:** Re: Incident today

Dr. Hilliard:

Here are the talking points that should be used for any parent or staff member that inquires.

If you believe you have staff who will forward a staff email to media, then just use the staff talking points verbally for any staff member that inquires.

Roseann

**For any parent who calls:**

An unloaded plastic BB gun was found in the book bag of a student this morning at the security checkpoint. CMSD's zero-tolerance for toy guns or facsimile weapons at school resulted in the referral of the student for discipline. At no time was any student or staff member in danger this morning. Security measures in place at the entrance of our school worked, and continue to enable our officers to keep all weapons, including toy guns, out of Rhodes High School.

There is no need for students to leave school. We are asking parents to assist us in keeping students focused on their education instead of an incident that at no time posed any danger to staff or students.

**For staff:**

An unloaded plastic BB gun was found in the book bag of a student this morning at the security checkpoint. CMSD's zero-tolerance for toy guns or facsimile weapons at school resulted in the referral of the student for discipline. At no time was any student or staff member in danger this morning. Security measures in place at the entrance of our school worked, and continue to enable our officers to keep all weapons, including toy guns, out of Rhodes High School.

Staff can serve our students best by keeping their focus on their studies today and not on an incident that was handled swiftly and appropriately at the entrance of our school.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
EDUCATOR: Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

To Parents & Caregivers of Campus International Students:

While it is advisable to keep matters of student discipline private, an incident at our school on Friday presented a teachable moment for school administrators and presents an opportunity for parents to remind students about the danger of anyone owning or possessing facsimile weapons, including BB guns, pellet guns, and plastic toy guns.

Two students followed our safety protocols and reported seeing a facsimile weapon in a student's bag on Friday. Because of their vigilance, we were able to retrieve what turned out to be an unloaded bb gun and to counsel the student regarding the danger of possessing such items, for the harm they can bring to themselves and to others.

Our goal at Campus International is not only to keep students safe, but also to keep them focused on learning. We are therefore asking for your help in quelling any rumor associated with this incident and talking with your child generally rather than specifically about it as you feel appropriate.

Together, we can reinforce Campus International School's intolerance for anything that poses a threat to student safety. Thank you for reminding your children of the serious consequences that can result when students have access to real or toy weapons, as both are seen as real and pose the same danger to the child and others.

Sincerely,

(Principal)

Reply all | Delete | Junk | ...

## Fw: Draft wording

Canfora, Roseann

Mon 11/13, 11:57 AM

Canfora, Roseann

Reply all |

Inbox

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**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Tuesday, October 11, 2016 3:29 PM  
**To:** Howell-Scott, Lisa E; Williams, Kamilah A  
**Cc:** Pierre-Farid, Michelle  
**Subject:** Draft wording

Kamilah,  
I would make the message even more succinct:

Yesterday, three students in your child's class alerted a substitute teacher that another student had a BB gun in his book bag. The unloaded weapon was confiscated, the student was referred for discipline and the three students who alerted adults to the situation were commended for their vigilance.

Although one student faced discipline for violating our safety rules yesterday, it is helpful to remind all of the students about the serious risks and consequences they face when they frighten others with even a toy weapon at school or at home.

Thank you for reinforcing these lessons at home with your child.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
EDUCATOR: Chief Communications Officer

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
EDUCATOR: Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114



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# False Media Report

**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Thursday, May 5, 2016 8:51:20 PM  
**To:** Snider, Rachel J  
**Cc:** Koonce, Andrew  
**Subject:** IVR Script

Good evening families; This is Principal Rachel Snider with an important message to ensure that you have accurate information about learning conditions at our school.

As you may know, Carl Monday at Channel 19 is expected to falsely report tonight that Ben Franklin students are being housed in unsafe basement classrooms. Using photos taken 10 months ago during summer cleaning, the Channel 19 report will give a false impression of the actual clean and safe learning environments our students actually use.

I want you to know how grateful I am to our staff and families for your cooperation this year when we moved our art and music rooms to comply with fire department recommendations at our school.

That is why I am most concerned that the hard work of our operations team and the cooperation of our staff and families to ensure our nearly century-old building was up to code is being completely misrepresented in this false report.

Please know that our CMSD Communications Department is committed to setting the record straight on any inaccurate reporting about our school, and I am grateful to the proud and caring Ben Franklin parents and volunteers who have already called to express their outrage that our beloved school is being put in such a false light.

I look forward to seeing your children in school tomorrow and I thank you for your continued support.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114



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Alex Johnson, Ph.D.

# Lockdown due to incident near school

 Reply all |   Delete  Junk |  ...

## Fw: Suggested IVR for east tech

Canfora, Roseann

Mon 11/13, 12:00 PM

Canfora, Roseann 

  Reply all | 

Inbox

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**From:** Canfora, Roseann  
**Sent:** Monday, April 11, 2016 3:33 PM  
**To:** Taylor, Temujin  
**Cc:** Gordon, Eric S; Fultz Jr, Lester W; Morgan, Warren G  
**Subject:** Suggested IVR for east tech

This is Temujin Taylor, Principal of East Tech HS with an important message for families about an incident that occurred before school let out today.

For the safety of students, we went into a brief lockdown just after 3 p.m. when a citizen witnessed at least one youth firing a weapon in an area outside East Tech High School, hitting the southeast side of the building.

Fortunately, students were inside the building when the incident took place and we are grateful for the quick response of the Cleveland Police Department and our own security officers who kept students safely inside until the area outside was deemed safe for dismissal.

This message is to allay any fears based on rumor or exaggeration of this incident.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

216.647.6072

VISIT THE CMSD NEWS BUREAU  
[ClevelandMetroSchools.org](http://ClevelandMetroSchools.org)

# Fw: shooting at east tech high school

Canfora, Roseann

Mon 11/13, 11:59 AM

Canfora, Roseann

Reply all

Inbox

Reply all | Delete | Junk | ...

From: Canfora, Roseann

Sent: Monday, April 11, 2016 3:54 PM

To: Bass, Janelle

Subject: Re: shooting at east tech high school

Hi Janelle,

For the safety of students, East High School went into a brief lockdown before dismissal this afternoon after a citizen witnessed a suspect firing a weapon in an area outside the school. Reportedly, a stray bullet hit the door of the building.

Fortunately, students were inside the building and were kept safely there until Cleveland Police deemed the area around the school safe for dismissal.

Roseann Canfora, Ph.D.  
Chief Communications Officer  
Cleveland Metropolitan School District  
1111 Superior Avenue E  
Cleveland, Ohio 44114

216.647.6072

VISIT THE CMSD NEWS BUREAU  
[ClevelandMetroSchools.org](http://ClevelandMetroSchools.org)

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From: Bass, Janelle <Janelle.Bass@fox8.com>

Sent: Monday, April 11, 2016 3:38 PM

To: Canfora, Roseann

Subject: Fw: shooting at east tech high school

Hi Roseann,

do you have any information about a shooting at or near east tech high school?

Janelle Bass, MBA  
Planning Producer  
FOX 8 News/WJW Cleveland, Ohio  
216-432-4240 – Assignment Desk  
216-432-4075 – Desk  
216-391-9559 – Fax  
Janelle.Bass@fox8.com  
tips@fox8.com – Email For Press Releases