



Dorothy Fox Elementary School Crisis Communication Plan

**Response to Internal or External Threats
to Our School or Student Body**

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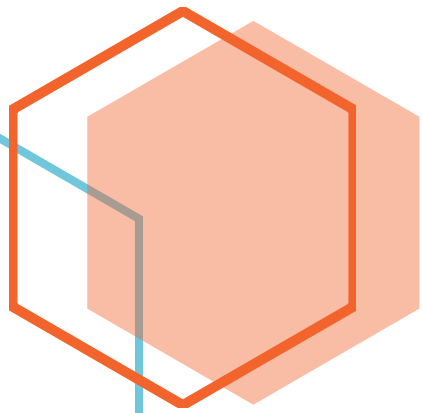




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Introduction

Threats are a given for any institution, and we need to plan accordingly. In the event of a threat or crisis at Dorothy Fox Elementary, the following crisis communication plan will serve as a framework for streamlining communications between the school, the District, local media outlets, and the public.

The goal of this plan is to identify key resources for crisis management and to set a path forward for disseminating urgent messages to the public or other interested stakeholders.

Our Mission Statement:

Dorothy Fox Elementary has always believed that its students come first. We aim to nurture our children so that they reach their full academic potential and become well-rounded students. Our teachers and staff believe in working with students, families, and the greater community to create a safe and nurturing learning environment in which students can thrive. We teach a culture of inclusivity and our school motto is “Kindness Matters.”

Statistical Data

Dorothy Fox is a public school located at 2623 NW Sierra St. in Camas, Washington. As one of five elementary schools in the Camas school district, we serve over 450 students from kindergarten to fifth grade. We have over 35 full-time staff members and administrators, and our student to teacher ratio is 19:1. (Niche, 2019)

History

Our school is located in the historic town of Camas. Since its inception in 1883, Camas has been the home to various paper mills. Our schools are proud of this heritage, and our district mascot is the Papermaker.

Mrs. Dorothy Fox was an educator in Camas’s oldest elementary school. She had a special way with students with physical and learning disabilities. Long before special education classes were implemented, teachers came from across the region to watch Mrs. Fox teach and to learn from her methods.

When the district began work on a new building for elementary students, it was decided that the building would be named Dorothy Fox Elementary. We continue to honor her legacy.



Crisis Teams

In the event of a crisis at our school, we have identified key staff members as being crucial to our efforts to contain and communicate about the crisis. These individuals represent key departments in our school and district and will work together to ensure the safety of our students.

Once these teams have been established, they will operate out of an established joint information center (JIC) in the school's onsite trailer ("Rainy Day Room"). This room is equipped with on-line computers, phones, a fax machine, and photocopiers. It is well-stocked with office supplies.

Crisis Team members:

Dr. Cathy Sork, Principal

Ms. Kathy Duley, Team Leader

Responsible for convening the team, operating the JIC, holding conference calls.

Ms. Shauna Ruse, Front Office Coordinator

Responsible for answering main phone lines, logging incoming calls.

Mr. Don Holmes, School Safety Officer

Responsible for working with emergency personnel to lock down or vacate the school building.

Mr. Chris Baxter, Counselor

Responsible for intervening with students who may be in distress both during and after the crisis.

Mr. Ryan Smith, IT Support

Responsible for maintaining all equipment necessary in the JIC.

Communications Team members:

Ms. Doreen McKercher, Spokesperson

Responsible for delivering key messaging to parents, the community and the media; responsible for fielding questions from these same groups.

Ms. Lianne Lauda, Communications Coordinator

Responsible for writing media releases, maintaining social media sites, initiating robocalls, writing emails.



Threat Assessments

Types of Threats

Threats come in different forms. There are threats which are nature-driven (ie weather, illness) and those which are human-driven (ie bomb scares, threatened assault). Threats that are human-driven can further be broken down into the subsections of transient threats (expression of anger that can be resolved) and substantive threats (something planned, victims named).

Potential Threats to Dorothy Fox Elementary School

1. Nature-Driven

- a. Fire. As with any structure, Dorothy Fox Elementary must be prepared in case of fire. Students and administrators practice fire drills on a regular basis and the nearest fire station is just over a mile from the campus.
- b. Earthquake. Camas is listed as having a high likelihood of earthquake activity in the next 50 years. In early January 2019, there was a 1.3 magnitude earthquake 30 miles from Camas. The U.S. Geological Survey has estimated that there is a 32% chance that the local region will see a 5.0 earthquake in the next 50 years. Students and administrators practice earthquake drills on a regular basis.
- c. Illness. Dorothy Fox is in Clark County, WA, which has recently seen a number of measles cases arise. School students and administrators are required to show proof of their measles vaccinations. In addition, the region has recently seen an increase in the number of reported flu cases. While the school has not had to close its doors this year due to wide-spread illness, the potential remains.

2. Human-Driven

a. Transient

- i. Dorothy Fox Elementary School families and the community are very close-knit and supportive of one another. Despite that, the threat always exists that a student or adult could voice anger (either in-person or on social media), make an off-hand comment or joke, or vent frustration. If any of these instances were serious enough, the school might have to consider ways of reaching out to the aggrieved party to mitigate any potential problem.

b. Substantive

- i. Bomb threat. Bomb scares can be serious threats to any organization. With nearly 500 students and administrators, Dorothy Fox would need to partner with local law enforcement to safely and efficiently remove all involved from any threat area. There would be a high likelihood of chaos and confusion as worried parents



call and came to the school to find out about their children's well-being. Effective communication would be critical.

- ii. Active shooter. Students and administrators practice lock-down drills on a regular basis. Camas School District has invested in security equipment both inside and outside of Dorothy Fox, and there is only one entrance into the building during school hours (through which a visitor must be granted access). Local police officers regularly patrol all district campuses, and the Dorothy Fox main office has an emergency alert system which notifies authorities in case of emergency.

Key Stakeholders

It is important in times of crisis to be aware of all key stakeholders both internally and externally. The following is a list of potential stakeholders relevant to most crises which could arise at Dorothy Fox.

Internal Stakeholders:

1. Dr. Cathy Sork, Principal
 - a. Means of contact: school phone, pager, walkie-talkie, email
2. Ms. Shauna Ruse, Front Office Administrative Assistant
 - a. Means of contact: school phone, walkie-talkie, email
3. Teachers and staff
 - a. Means of contact: classroom phones, walkie-talkies, school loudspeaker, face-to-face conversation, automated cell phone messages
4. Students
 - a. Means of contact: teachers, school loudspeaker.

External Stakeholders

1. Parents
 - a. Means of contact: automated cell phone messages, emails, Facebook page updates, website updates
2. Community members
 - a. Means of contact: Facebook page updates, website updates, local newspaper, radio, tv.
3. Members of the media



- a. Means of contact: phone calls, emails, Facebook page updates, website updates, in-person interviews.

Crisis Operations

Crisis Team

In the event of a crisis at Dorothy Fox, both the crisis management and communication management teams will convene. These teams will be called together by Ms. Kathy Duley who will serve as the teams’ leader. Teams will be assembled as follows:

Crisis Team

- Ms. Kathy Duley, Team Leader
- Dr. Cathy Sork, Principal
- Ms. Shauna Ruse, Front Office Coordinator
- Mr. Don Holmes, School Safety Officer
- Mr. Chris Baxter, Counselor
- Mr. Ryan Smith, IT Support

Communications Team:

- Ms. Doreen McKercher, Spokesperson
- Ms. Lianne Lauda, Communications Coordinator

Crisis Messaging

In crafting our messaging in response to a crisis situation, we will make use of the “Four Hard C’s,” which ensure that messages be *quick, candid, consistent, and creative*. Additionally, we will employ a message mapping technique which is based on the idea that audiences are best able to process just three key messages at a time. Our rubric, then, will be as follows:

Key Message #1	Key Message #2	Key Message #3
Identify threat; give update on status of the children	Update on status of the threat; provide information on how students will be reunited with families	Provide information to families on what they need to know for the next day(s)

Key Message #1



1. Target audiences:
 - a. Families
 - b. Community members
2. Method of information relay:
 - a. Email/text message - families only
 - b. Social Media (Facebook, website)
 - c. Television news outlets (KOMO & KATU news)
 - d. Radio (Oregon Public Broadcasting)
 - e. Newspaper (*The Columbian, The Portland Tribune*)

Key Message #2

3. Target audiences:
 - a. Families
 - b. Community members
4. Method of information relay:
 - a. Email/text message/robocall - families only
 - b. Social media (Facebook, website)
 - c. Television news outlets (KOMO & KATU news)
 - d. Radio (Oregon Public Broadcasting)
 - e. Newspaper (*The Columbian, The Portland Tribune*)

Key Message #3

1. Target audiences:
 - a. Families
2. Method of information relay:
 - a. Robo call/text
 - b. Email

In keeping with these best messaging practices, we will also ensure that we:

- Never speak off the record;
- Never say, “No Comment”
- Never leave the public’s questions unanswered.

Media Relations

In the event of a crisis at Dorothy Fox, having a team member who can speak to the media will be critical. We will want to work effectively with local news media to get our story out accurately and quickly and to quell any fear or uncertainty that the public may have. To meet this goal, Camas School District’s Doreen McKercher will serve as our spokesperson. As a member of our communications team,



Ms. McKercher will prepare our most updated information for release to the public. She will work closely with Lianne Lauda, our communications coordinator on creating press releases and preparing for media statements and interviews.

Checklist of Procedures for Successful Media Relations

When speaking with the media during and after a crisis, it is important to remember the following:

- Always express concern for those affected by the crisis;
- Respect the emotions that the public may be feeling;
- Don't place blame;
- Never assume that an answer is "off the record"; and
- Give brief, honest statements and answers.

News Outlets

The following is a list of our area's major news outlets:

Newspaper

1. *The Columbian*
 - a. News desk: (360) 735-4569 Attn: (metrodesk@columbian.com)
2. *Portland Tribune*
 - a. News desk: (971) 204-7863 Attn: Jim Reddon (jimreddon@portlandtribune.com)

Television

1. KATU News
 - a. News director: (503) 231-4264 (newstips@katu.com)
2. KGW8 News
 - a. News director: (503) 226-5000

Radio

1. Oregon Public Broadcasting, FM 91.5
 - a. News line: (800) 241-8123 (opb.org/contactus)
2. KXL, FM 101.1
 - a. News line: (503) 417-9595 (news@kxl.com)
3. KEX, AM 1190
 - a. News line: (503) 802-6397



Sample Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Doreen McKercher
Communications Director
Phone: (360) 335-3000
Doreen.mckercher@camas.wednet.edu

Threat of XYZ at Dorothy Fox Elementary School

[Camas, WA, Date] Event that occurred, number of students/faculty impacted...

Who responded to the incident...

What action is being taken...

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If you would like more information about this event, please contact Doreen McKercher, Camas School District Communications Director, at (360) 335-3000 or at Doreen.mckercher@camas.wednet.edu

Social Media Management

The following is the social media plan to be implemented during or after a crisis at Dorothy Fox Elementary. Posting on various sites and the monitoring of those sites would be done by Doreen McKercher and Lianne Lauda from our communications team. Sites listed below have been chosen for their ease of use, their efficiency, and the likelihood that our invested stakeholders will readily be able to access those sites.

Social Media Platforms

Dorothy Fox's crisis team would use the following platforms during and after a crisis:

- Facebook (to post narratives, messages, links, or pictures (if appropriate));
- School website (post updates; make sure this is smartphone-friendly)

Objective of Communicating Via Social Media

Social media sites would be used to:

- Reach parents and the public with timely news updates and needed instructions/follow-up during and after the crisis;



- Convey the team's/district's risk perception levels;
- Address, get ahead of, and gauge public fear or outrage;
- Help shape the public narrative/discourse around the crisis and answer the public's questions;
- Get an idea of public support and public opinion; determine who could be an asset to our team during or after the crisis.

Conclusion

As crisis and threat situations can happen at any time, it is important that our school be prepared and ready should a crisis arise. The plan laid out in these pages is meant to serve as a roadmap for the specific courses of action Dorothy Fox will take to keep our students safe and to inform the public at each stage of a crisis.