

September 2021

ONcall

ready-to-use NEWS

Letter templates from schools to parents

A return to normal school operations means a return to normal parent communications. Letter templates are a helpful way to send out parent messages, especially during a crisis. Here are some ready-to-revise letters to help make your communications processes more efficient and less stressful.

These letter templates address some common school crisis situations. Adapt them for a faster, easier response when a crisis hits.

They are addressed to parents from the school principal. Have the school print them on school letterhead and ask the principal to sign. *Replace any italicized text with your own school information.*

Don't forget to post the key messages on your websites and social media.

Letter topics include:

- Back-to-school welcome
- Mask requirements and guidelines
- Student injury on school grounds
- Remove head lice and nits
- Child safety tips

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

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

Contributed by Marcia Latta

Reproduction rights for materials distributed as part of **On Call** are granted only to subscribing districts and are restricted to distribution as part of their local public relations programs.



(Over)

**From the principal or teacher:
Back-to-school letter**

Date

Dear Parent or Guardian,

We're so excited to welcome you back to *(name of school)*. The first day is *(day and date)*, and we are busy getting ready for a safe, fun, productive school year.

We are excited to see you and welcome you to come to the office if you have any questions or need any information to help you prepare for the new year. Our school office will be open *(hours here and dates if not open every day)*. You may also call us at *(office phone number)*.

To help you with start-of-school planning, here are important dates for the first month of school. Find additional information on our school website and Facebook page *(include addresses for each site)*.

Other information to include:

- Health and safety information, COVID protocols.
- Important dates: Student orientation, registration, parent club meetings, meet-the-teacher events. First day of school for each grade (if they differ) and the times that students are to be in school each day.
- Bus ridership information: Bus stops, times, driver names, transportation department information.
- Dress codes requirements
- Immunization requirements
- Other information for students: discipline policies, field trip schedule, cell phone use, etc.

We are looking forward to a great year, and we can't wait to see you back at school! Please contact me if you have questions or need assistance as you prepare for the coming year.

Sincerely,
(Principal name)
Principal

**From the principal:
Mask requirements**

Date

Dear *(school name)* Parent and Guardians:

The new school year is an opportunity to come back together to learn in person. We are hoping that this year will operate like any other normal school year, which will be good for our students and our whole school community.

We are following guidance from state health authorities and plan to follow recommendations to keep everyone safe. As new variants emerge, potentially posing greater risks, we want to make every effort to ensure a safe environment. This may include mandatory mask-wearing.

(Over)

If masks are required, we will be sure to communicate the rules in advance. We understand that some people oppose masks; we are committed to following any safety rules that may help protect individuals from sickness and that allow us to come back together.

We will be sure to share helpful guidelines, and we will have masks available for students who lose or forget their masks.

Here are some helpful tips for effective masks:

- Masks are less effective if wearer touches them frequently or swaps them with peers.
- Cloth masks should be washed daily.
- Students should have a plastic bag or holder to carry their mask when they are not using them.
- Paper masks need to be disposed and replaced if the user coughs or sneeze into them, so users will need more than one mask on them for school.
- Masks should fit properly with the elastic bands around your ears and the mask covering the nose and mouth.

We will be sure to communicate any changes to our policies or recommendations. Your child's safety is our priority. Please feel free to contact our school office if you have any questions.

Sincerely,

(Principal name)
Principal

**From the principal:
Student injury on school grounds**

Date

Dear Parents,

Your child may have told you about an incident that took place at school today. I would like to take a moment to share some information with you about it in case your child has questions or concerns.

Add brief information about the incident.

Sample incident: In your child's shop class today, an unfortunate accident took place, and a student was injured. We called paramedics and they transported the student to the hospital. The accident happened while a teacher was demonstrating work on a table saw. A student was injured when a piece of wood struck the student. Staff reacted quickly, and the student received medical attention as soon as possible.

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.

(Over)

We are also providing counseling for students who need to discuss this issue. If you have any questions or concerns about this incident, please feel free to give me a call at (*phone number*)

Sincerely,

(Principal name)
Principal

**From the principal:
Head lice**

Date

Dear (*school name*) Parent and Guardians:

Head lice or recently laid nits have been found in the hair on your child's head. Head lice have nothing to do with cleanliness or parenting skills.

Head lice are spread mostly by direct head-to-head contact and, less commonly, sharing hats, combs or hair accessories.

We don't want your child to miss any learning opportunities in school. Please send them to class, but it is important to follow treatment guidelines to eliminate lice and lice transmission.

Remove head lice and nits:

- Use a fine-toothed louse or nit comb. They are available at drug stores and are usually packaged with chemical lice treatments.
- Before using the fine-toothed nit comb, hair should be cleaned and combed or brushed to remove tangles.
- Use a bright light with magnification, if needed to see the nits. Work on a small section at a time. Repeat until no active lice or nits are visible.
- Comb every day for two weeks. It's important to continue this procedure, even if it appears the lice are gone. To occupy your child, play a video for them to watch.
- Be sure to carefully watch hair near the shaft where eggs are laid.
- If it is too difficult to comb your child's hair, ask your doctor or pharmacist for advice on anti-lice products or treatments. There are shampoos as well as chemical and non-chemical treatments. Read the instructions and warnings carefully.

Treatment of clothes and household items:

- To eliminate any lice on clothes and home items, you must wash them in hot water. Any items that can't be washed (e.g., large pillows) should be sealed in a garbage bag for a few days. Lice and eggs do not live longer than two days away from hair and scalps. Small items can be placed in a bag in the freezer.
- A clothes dryer set at high heat or a hot pressing iron will kill lice or their eggs on pillowcases, sheets, nightclothes, towels and similar items your child has been in contact with during the previous two days. (Lice and their eggs do not live more than one to two days off the head.)
- It is a good idea to thoroughly vacuum the house and clean all surfaces.

Lice are unappealing and inconvenient, but they can be treated. Please follow these steps to ensure that your child's routine is not disrupted. You can find more information on the school website.

(Over)

Please contact me if you have any questions.
Sincerely,

School Nurse or Principal
Phone #

**From the principal:
Child safety**

Date

Dear (school name) Parent and Guardians:

As children will be traveling back and forth to school, we want to send a reminder about child safety. Your child's safety is our highest priority, and we are your partners in your child's well-being during their school years.

The single most effective way to protect your child is to have regular and open communication with them. The first step is to practice communicating with your children and help them understand that they can talk to you. When children are comfortable discussing sensitive matters with you, they are more likely to tell you when they have been put in an uncomfortable situation by a stranger.

We follow approved policies for student safety procedures. We continue to update our practices and recommendations based on guidelines from child safety experts.

Please review the following safety tips and discuss them with your child:

- Be aware of the common lures, such as candy, puppies and requests for help. Don't ever accept a ride from a stranger.
- If someone follows you on foot or in a car, stay away from him or her. You DO NOT need to go near a car to talk to people inside.
- Grown-ups who need help should not be asking children for help; they should be asking other grown-ups.
- No one should be asking you for directions or to look for a lost puppy or telling you that your mother or father is in trouble and that he or she will take you to them.
- If someone tries to take you somewhere, quickly get away from them and yell or scream, "This man is trying to take me away!" or, "This person is not my mother (or father)." Run to other people or call 911 if you have a cell phone.
- It is safer to be with other people when going places or playing outside, so always use the buddy system.
- If someone tries to touch you in ways that make you feel uncomfortable, or frightened, tell them "NO" and go tell a grown-up you trust what happened.
- Know it is NOT your fault if someone touches you in a way that is NOT okay. You do not have to keep it secret. Tell your parents or teacher.

Sincerely,

(Principal name)
Principal