

**SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**Sample Announcements for Use with Students after a (Possible) Suicide**

1. After the school's Suicide Response Team has been mobilized, it is critical for administration and/or crisis team members to prepare a statement about the death for release to faculty and students. The announcement should include the facts as they have been officially communicated to the school. Announcements should not overstate or assume facts not in evidence. If the official cause of death has not as yet been ruled suicide, avoid making that assumption. There are also many instances when family members insist that a death that may appear to be suicide was, in fact, accidental.
2. The Suicide Response Team should either visit all classrooms to give the announcement to staff or present the announcement at a meeting of all staff called by the building administrator as soon as possible following the death. If a meeting is held, the building administrator and a member of the Suicide Response Team could facilitate the meeting. The goals of such a meeting are to inform the faculty, acknowledge their grief and loss, and prepare them to respond to the needs of the students. Faculty will then read the announcement to their students in their homerooms (or other small group) so that students get the same information at the same time from someone they know.
3. The sample announcements in this section are straightforward and are designed for use with faculty, students, and parents, as appropriate. Directing your announcement to the grade level of the students is also important, especially in primary or middle schools. A written announcement should be sent home to parents with additional information about common student reactions to suicide and how to respond, as well as suicide prevention information.

**SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS DAY 1**

**Sample Announcement for When a Suicide has Occurred, Morning, Day 1**

*This morning we heard the extremely sad news that \_\_\_\_\_ took his/her life last night. I know we are all saddened by his/her death and send our condolences to his/her family and friends. Crisis stations will be located throughout the school today for students who wish to talk to a counselor. Information about the funeral will be provided when it is available, and students may attend with parental permission.*

**Sample Announcement for a Suspicious Death Not Declared Suicide: Morning, Day 1**

*This morning we heard the extremely sad news that \_\_\_\_\_ died last night from a gunshot wound. This is the only information we have officially received on the circumstances surrounding the event. I know we are all saddened by \_\_\_\_\_'s death and send our condolences to his/her family and friends. Crisis stations will be located throughout the school today for students who wish to talk to a counselor. Information about the funeral will be provided when it is available; students may attend with parental permission.*

**Sample Announcement, End of Day 1**

At the end of the first day, another announcement to the whole school prior to dismissal can serve to join the whole school in their grieving in a simple, non-sensationalized way. In this case, it is appropriate for the building administrator to make an announcement similar to the following over the loud speaker:

*Today has been a sad day for all of us. We encourage you to talk about \_\_\_\_\_'s death with your friends, your family, and whoever else gives you support. We will have special staff here for you tomorrow to help in dealing with our loss. Let us end the day by having the whole school offer a moment of silence for \_\_\_\_\_.*

**SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENTS DAY 2**

On the second day following the death, many schools have found it helpful to start the day with another homeroom announcement. This announcement can include additional verified information, re-emphasize the continuing availability of in-school resources, and provide information to facilitate grief. Here's a sample of how this announcement might be handled:

*We know that \_\_\_\_\_'s death has been declared a suicide. Even though we might try to understand the reasons for his/her doing this, we can never really know what was going on that made him/her take his/her life. One thing that's important to remember is that there is never just one reason for a suicide. There are always many reasons or causes, and we will never be able to figure them all out.*

*Today we begin the process of returning to a normal schedule in school. This may be hard for some of us to do. Counselors are still available in school to help us deal with our feelings. If you feel the need to speak to a counselor, either alone or with a friend, tell a teacher, the principal, or the school nurse, and they will help make the arrangements.*

*We also have information about the visitation and funeral. The visitation will be held tomorrow evening at the \_\_\_\_\_ Funeral Home from \_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_ p.m. There will be a funeral Mass \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ o'clock at \_\_\_\_\_ Church. In order to be excused from school to attend the funeral, you will need to be accompanied by a parent or relative, or have your parent's permission to attend. We also encourage you to ask your parents to go with you to the funeral home.*

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