

Announcement to Students

There are many ways to announce deaths and tragedies to students. Some schools call an assembly, some use the PA, and some ask teachers to read the announcements and discuss the events with students in the classroom.

There may be times when any of the above may be appropriate, however, it is highly recommended that you have the announcement read by teachers in the classroom. Often, if an assembly is called, students who are most upset will depart to the nearest bathroom (or leave campus) and struggle with their emotions alone. Likewise, making the announcement over the PA tends to be impersonal. A PA announcement may find students not yet settled in the class or otherwise inattentive. The value of announcing the event in each classroom is that teachers can get students focused. Teachers announcing the event also have the opportunity to give immediate support to students. Finally, teachers know students individually, and as a group, and are better suited to manage this sensitive time with their students' best interests at heart.

Some teachers may want someone else to read the announcement in their rooms, as they may feel unable to do so themselves. Ask Flight Team members to provide this support and to lead the initial discussion. Have teachers remain in the room so they're aware of how things unfold as well as students' reactions.

A guideline for such an announcement might be:

Today we received tragic (or sad) news. We learned that one of our students, _____, died by _____. {Give basic appropriate information without too much detail.} When things like this happen, people have all different kinds of reactions, like shock, sadness, fear and anger. Those reactions may rise and fall throughout the day, and even for days to come. Some of us will want to have quiet time alone and others may want time to talk with peers or adults. Some of you who didn't know _____ may be ready for your teachers to return to academics (or "lessons") sooner than others. We all just need to practice patience and have respect for each other.

*We can take some time to talk about this today and in coming days. While some of you will be ready to return to class work, others may still wish time to talk or think about this. Students wanting to make cards for the family, talk with one another or needing more time alone to think and talk about the impacts of this tragedy may go to the _____ (Safe Room location) which has been set aside for that purpose. You'll have to sign out of your class as you leave and sign in to the _____ as you arrive. **It is important that all students be in some setting that has an adult present.** For those of you who wish to talk one-on-one with the school counselor, (she, or he) will be in (her, or his) office and will see you during the day. (Tell them how to sign up for a visit with the counselor.)*

The school day will remain on schedule, but teachers in any class may suspend regular classroom activities in order to allow you to talk about this event as a group.

At this point we know the following about the memorial or funeral arrangements...