

POMFRET

POMFRET SCHOOL
Crisis Response Plan

PART 1

Introduction

THE KEY TO MAKING GOOD DECISIONS in a bad situation is planning, preparation, and practice. This Crisis Response Plan contains all of the policies and procedures you need to know as a member of the Pomfret School community during an emergency.

This plan can be applied to a variety of emergency situations, including school violence, hazardous incidents, and/or weather events. In case of an emergency, always call 911 first. In addition, here are a few emergency contacts you may need to utilize during a crisis:

School Officer in Charge

(860) 450-6691
soc@pomfret.org

Day Kimball Hospital

320 Pomfret St, Putnam, CT 06260
Phone: (860) 928-6541

State Police Troop D

55 Westcott Rd, Danielson, CT
Phone: (860) 779-4900

K&B Ambulance

294 Westcott Rd, Danielson, CT
Phone: (860) 774-7625

Since a crisis may be sudden and without warning, this plan is designed to be flexible in order to accommodate contingencies of various types and magnitudes. However, nothing in this plan shall be construed in a manner that limits the use of good judgment and common sense. There is no perfect crisis plan.

PART 2

Stages of a Crisis

There are five distinct phases of crisis management: (1) Prevention (2) Mitigation (3) Preparedness (4) Response and (5) Recovery. Though this plan touches on all of them, it focuses primarily on **Preparedness and Response**.



PART 3

Common Crises

Suspicious Activity

Suspicious activity is any observed behavior, on or near campus, that could indicate a person may be involved in a crime or about to commit a crime. Some examples include leaving packages, bags, or other items behind.

Severe Weather

Severe weather is any dangerous meteorological phenomenon with the potential to cause damage, serious social disruption, or loss of human life. High winds, hail, excessive precipitation, excessive heat, and wildfires, thunderstorms, blizzards (snowstorms), ice storms, downbursts, and tornadoes are all forms of severe weather.

Fire

The most common type of fire in the US is the kitchen fire, where heat, electricity, water, and grease come together. Electrical fires, another common fire, are caused by faulty appliances, worn or faulty electrical wiring, improper use of electrical outlets, and worn out breaker boxes. Heater fires, typically caused by portable heaters, are particularly common in the winter months. Most smoking-related fires are started by cigarette embers igniting on furniture, bedding, or trash cans.

Active Shooter

An active shooter is defined as an individual or individuals attempting to cause serious injury or death to individuals on our campus. This attempt can be targeted at students, faculty/staff, or a random victim. Active shooter situations are unique and evolve very quickly. Individuals must be prepared both mentally and physically to deal with an active shooter situation.

Untimely Death or Medical Emergency

An untimely death, also known as an unexpected death, can be the result of a natural or accidental cause, and can be the result of a suicide or a homicide. A medical emergency is an acute injury or illness, such as sudden cardiac arrest, severely broken bone, or anaphylaxis, that poses an immediate risk to a person's life or long-term health.

Bomb Threat

A bomb threat is generally defined as a threat to detonate an explosive or incendiary device to cause property damage, death, or injuries, whether or not such a device actually exists. Most bomb threats are received by phone. Bomb threats are serious until proven otherwise.

Disease Outbreak

A serious disease outbreak, such as meningitis or Covid-19, occurs when the disease is in excess of what would normally be expected in a defined community, geographical area, and/or season.

PART 4

Crisis Response

In the event of a crisis, a member of the Crisis Response Team will issue a Crisis Response Notice via our Crisis Communications System, powered by Bright Arrow. Members of the Crisis Response Team are responsible for coordinating the crisis response, using this manual as a guide. All members of the team are trained in the emergency use of Bright Arrow. When a notice is issued, it will be sent to your cell phone as a text message and email.

The members of the team are:

- Tim Richards, Head of School
- Don Gibbs, Associate Head of School
- Ed Griffin, Chief Financial Officer
- Charlotte McMahon, Dean of Students
- Pat Boyd, Senior Form Dean
- Garry Dow, Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications
- Brenda Bullied, Director of Facilities Services
- Martha Horst, Dean of Faculty

Under certain extreme circumstances, the Crisis Response Team will establish a **Command Center**. This location will serve as the central hub and clearinghouse for all decision-making and communications. The preferred location for the Command Center is the Griffin Conference Room, located in the bottom level of the Main House. Alternative campus locations are the conference room in Lasell Alumni House and the conference room in Corzine Athletic Center. Off-campus options include Rectory School and The Vanilla Bean.

Different kinds of emergencies may trigger different crisis responses. For example, a severe weather event may trigger a Shelter Notice that is quickly lifted when the storm has passed, while an active shooter may trigger a Lockdown Notice, followed by a Gather Notice, followed by a Reunite Notice over a span of hours. Please read and understand the purpose and meanings behind each of these Crisis Response Notices and recognize your personal responsibilities.

These are the nine (9) Crisis Response Notices you absolutely need to know:



CHECK-IN
Tell Us You Are Safe

A **Check-In Notice** is issued whenever the School needs to conduct an emergency roll call of students and employees. This notice can be issued as a standalone request or (more often) in conjunction with a separate notice, such as a Lockdown Notice. When you receive a check in notice, you must follow the directions to confirm your safety and/or whereabouts quickly.

Drill: Respond to the prompt you receive through the text messaging system to confirm your safety and/or whereabouts as soon as you receive it. This is a timed drill.



ALERT
Extra Vigilance

An **Alert Notice** is issued when a concern is perceived at or near the school. This is a precautionary alert based on a *potential* threat. It is not necessary to seek shelter or otherwise disrupt normal daily schedules or campus activities. It is merely a request for everyone to adopt a heightened level of awareness and vigilance. You should report any unusual sights, sounds, or circumstances to the School Officer in Charge at (860) 450-6691.



GET OUT
Everyone Go Outside

A **Get Out Notice** is issued when a specific building or area becomes unsafe to occupy. This emergency notice is often but not always associated with a fire or gas leak. When a Get Out Notice is indicated, you must vacate the building. Gather together at a safe distance from the affected buildings or area.

Drill: Exit the building as quickly as possible and gather together at a safe distance from the building or area. This drill is initiated when the audible fire alarm system is activated in a building on campus. Common crisis scenarios include a building fire or gas leak. An All Clear Notice will be issued once an area is safe.



SHELTER

Everyone Go Inside

A **Shelter Notice** is issued when a potential threat occurs near the School. This warning is often but not always related to weather. Unlike a precautionary Alert Notice, you should immediately enter the nearest building on campus and wait for further instruction. A shelter notification is serious. Although this directive does not require “locks, lights, and out of sight,” as indicated in a lockdown, a Shelter Notice indicates it is not safe to be outside.



LOCKDOWN

Locks, Lights, and Out of Sight

A **Lockdown Notice** is the school’s highest-level emergency response. The most obvious example of when a lockdown is appropriate is in the case of an active shooter on or near campus. When a lockdown is indicated, you **MUST** immediately seek secure shelter in the nearest Lock Zone. A Lock Zone is any room or area that can be secured. When everyone near the Lock Zone is safely inside, lock the doors and turn off the lights.

Each community member must find the most secure place for themselves first, and then assist others. Do not open or unlock your door for anyone that you cannot confirm is an ally or innocent member of the community. In the event that running towards a campus building is unsafe, you also have the option to leave campus. Get in your car and drive away. Head for the surrounding woods.

During a Lockdown, you should limit conversation, noise, and other activities that could reveal your hiding space. Communicating via GChat, text, or e-mail is encouraged to provide any information that might be helpful to share.

Drill: Immediately seek shelter in the nearest secure space. “Lock, lights, and out of sight.” This drill is activated when someone triggers a Lockdown Notice. These drills are always noted as “drills” to avoid panic. It is important to know the difference between a Shelter Notice and a Lockdown Notice. A common crisis scenario for this drill is an active shooter on campus.



GATHER
Get Together Quickly

A **Gather Notice** is activated when the entire campus community needs to assemble quickly, typically in the immediate aftermath of a crisis. The most typical use of a Gather Notice is to conduct an in-person student attendance audit and/or to quickly assemble faculty, staff, and/or students to share critical information or instructions. A Gather Notice should be executed quickly and without delay. Our on-campus default assembly site is Hard Auditorium. Depending on the crisis, an alternative location may be communicated.



REUNITE
Find Your Family

A **Reunite Notice** triggers a process that connects students and families (or designated guardians) following a crisis event. During a reunification, students and parents should assemble in Strong Field House. All students will be asked to be seated by advisee groups. Parents and students should NOT leave campus without notifying a member of the Reunification Team. This enables Pomfret to document which families have been reunited and offer support to those families who are still waiting.



EVACUATE
Leave Campus Now

An **Evacuate Notice** is issued when it becomes necessary to leave campus. The destination of the evacuees will depend upon the threat and/or circumstance. When an Evacuate Notice is ordered, it may be preceded by one or more Crisis Response Notices previously described in this guide. We have two (2) sites designated for a full campus evacuation: a neighborhood site (Rectory School) and a town site (Pomfret Community School). Both sites are within walking distance. A decision will be made by the Crisis Response Team regarding which site is most appropriate.



ALL CLEAR
Resume Normal Campus Operations

An **All Clear Notice** is issued when the Response Phase of a crisis is over. It indicates that it is safe to resume normal campus activities. The All Clear Notice may be paired with another notice, such as Gather, after a lockdown.

PART 5

Off-Campus Incidents

The Crisis Response Plan also addresses responses to incidents and circumstances which may occur while our faculty, staff, or students are off campus or traveling abroad. Certain types of incidents listed below must be reported immediately to the School Officer in Charge (SOC) or their designee.

The SOC or their designee will establish communications with whatever emergency service providers are attending to the individuals involved and may also dispatch one or more representatives from Pomfret School directly to an incident scene.

The following incidents involving faculty, staff, or students **MUST** be reported immediately:

- Motor vehicle accidents involving school vehicles resulting in injury, damage, or traffic violations
- Damage to the property of others
- Violations of any applicable crimes, codes, or motor vehicle codes
- Lost or missing persons
- Fights, assaults, or sexual assault
- Corruption of minors, violations of human rights, or discrimination of any type
- Threats, intimidation, bullying
- Being a witness to a crime, accident, or catastrophe
- Any incidents which could affect or appear to be a risk to the physical or mental wellbeing of any individual should also be reported immediately to the School Officer in Charge or their designee as soon as possible.

PART 6

Communicating with the Media

In the event of an emergency or incident relating to the School, all Pomfret employees, students, and service contractors are REQUIRED to direct questions or requests for statements, interviews, or comments to Head of School Tim Richards or Dir. of Strategic Marketing and Communications Garry Dow. Both are designated spokespersons for the School. Pomfret also retains the services of McDowell Communications Group, led by Duby McDowell. In the wake of a crisis, Pomfret will likely identify Duby as the primary liaison between the media and the School.

Rules of Thumb

1. No emergency or incident-related communication with news media should be offered or represented as the opinion of the school, or as someone in the position of employee, student, or service contract worker of Pomfret School
2. No emergency or incident-related communications implying an affiliation with Pomfret School (including text, photographs, and recordings) shall be posted on any personal or public social media site or shared with news media of any kind by employees, students, or service contract workers.
3. Communications with law enforcement and other emergency service personnel should be provided without delay. In the event you are asked to provide a statement to these professionals as an employee or representative of Pomfret School, you MUST notify the Director of Strategic Marketing and Communications and the Head of School as soon as possible, or immediately after cooperating with the emergency service provider.

Press Location

For emergencies which impact the safety of the entire campus, the Marketing and Communications Office has been identified as a location for the press to respond and receive information from the school and town agencies. This staging point will be staffed by school administrators and emergency services representatives and provide real-time information.

This manual and organization shall be subordinate to federal, state or local plans during a disaster declaration by those authorities. This Crisis Response Plan is consistent with established practices relating to coordination of emergency response with federal, state and local emergency management systems. This manual is based on several resources and written standards including the “Guide for Developing High Quality School Emergency Plans” and CT General Statutes 10-222d, 10-222n, 10-231 and 10a-156a. These statutes apply directly to public schools, but provide a “best practice” for ensuring an implementation of a crisis plan in all schools.