



Oak Park Unified School District Comprehensive Communication Plan

Our Motto

Educating Compassionate and Creative Global Citizens

Our Mission - Our Purpose

To provide students with a strong foundation for learning which meets the challenge of the present and of the future through a balanced education which includes academic achievement, personal growth, and social responsibility.

Our Vision - Where We're Going

Oak Park Unified School District will be a leader in public education, inspiring an inclusive learning community to provide innovation and excellence in academics, the arts, athletics, and activities, with a focus on the whole child.

Introduction

This communications plan is designed to establish strategic, comprehensive, and integrated communications consistent with Board Policy "[1100 Communications with the public](#)" for effective communication with all educational partners. It aligns with the district's mission, vision, LCAP, budget, goals, and board policies.

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External Audiences

- Residents without children attending OPUSD
- Community leaders
- Real estate agents
- Media
- Alumni and Alumni Association
- Government officials
- Law enforcement agencies
- Civic groups
- Prospective residents and parents
- Ventura County Office of Education and school districts

Communication Strategies

Making certain the District's communications plan is strategic begins with a well-conceived, well-articulated mission statement. Every communication tactic and the message we develop shall serve to connect with staff, students, parents, news media, or the community at large.

Clarify District Flow Of Information

- Develop a communication plan for the district.
- Establish communication guidelines and expectations for administrators and staff.
- Communicate key messages internally first.
- Communicate the rationale behind important decisions.
- Identify and frame issues to ensure clear, consistent messaging.

Communication Efforts Should Be Tied To District LCAP, Goals And Moral Imperatives

- Communication should focus on teaching and learning and inform the public of progress toward student achievement goals.
- Communication should involve a structured, ongoing process to engage the district staff, students, and families and promote an open dialogue on educational issues and goals.
- Processes and procedures should be established to incorporate a communication component into planning for all district initiatives, programs, and activities.

Internal Communication Must Be A Priority

- Timely and consistent internal communication creates knowledgeable, articulate employees who can respond confidently to questions and requests.
- Staff can become true “ambassadors for achievement” when they receive regular updates on key district issues and are provided with the tools and training needed to support them in their communication roles.
- Provide regular updates regarding facilities, programs, staffing, and other important matters.
- Express appreciation for staff efforts.

Become A “Listening” Organization

- Effective communication efforts involve listening in equal proportion, or more, to disseminating information.
- Engage educational partners before making decisions that impact students and staff and incorporate opportunities for educational partners to engage in dialogue with district and school leaders and the Board on a variety of issues.

Provide Ongoing Training And Support For Administrators In Effective Communication With Staff And Families

- Provide communication training sessions to District and school site administrators.
- Provide ongoing training sessions as part of principal's meetings on how to train teachers and staff to communicate their school's message.
- Provide training on the appropriate use of communication channels, timing, and frequency of messages sent from schools.

Keep District And School Website Content Fresh By Adding New Stories/Updates Regularly

- Keep content fresh, interesting, and relevant.
- Emphasize the school district's mission.
- Use more interactive, dynamic content along with multi-media to engage users as the website develops.
- Create separate parent and staff resource sections on the website.
- Continue to develop and support individual school websites.
- Keep staff apprised of website updates and enhancements and provide training as needed.

Develop A Branding Program To Establish OPUSD As A Quality School System.

- Establish official logos for District and School sites. Provide guidance on the appropriate use of the District and school logo.
- Require the use of approved official logos for brand consistency.
- Develop guidelines for offering school tours.
- Develop information/marketing materials for multiple purposes.
- Update and revise District Brochure.
- Increase usage of Video communications alongside email messages to engage a wider audience.

Communicate With Community Groups And Residents

- Include groups in mailings and provide opportunities for them to sign up for community distribution.
- Attend community meetings as needed to provide information.
- Provide district communications materials to key leaders.
- Seek business partnerships through contacts in local groups.

Promote The Successes Of OPUSD Staff

- Produce a quarterly newsletter or presentation focusing on a student, staff member, program, school, department, etc. This is to be shown on the District website, shared with local newspapers, and/or at Board meetings.
- Highlight staff with articles in district communications pieces, outside media, and through recognition at events and Board meetings.

Train Front Line Staff Emphasizing Constructive Communication

- Actively listen to understand the message beyond the words.
- Engage frontline staff in the conversation, and make sure they have access to information immediately.

Engage The Media

- Note the type of stories aired or published alongside the publishers and sources.
- Develop relationships with editors and education reporters.

Assessment and Accountability

Because different measurements work best in different situations, a tracking system will be developed to measure communication effectiveness.

- Focus groups – Identify focus groups to evaluate communication methods.
- Surveys - Electronic surveys will be used to ascertain people's opinions and to collect quantitative information.
- Email receipt requests - Look at delivery and usage stats on ParentSquare and the website to measure the number of hits for each story and/or page.

The Communications Plan will be reviewed annually or as deemed necessary by the Superintendent, Board of Education, or Communications Coordinator.

Communication Planning Guide

Consider the following chart for recommendations on when to use what channels depending on the type of information being delivered:

| Type of information | Website | Dedicated Email | Weekly Newsletter | Smart Alert | Social Media | Video |
|------------------------|---------|-----------------|-------------------|-------------|--------------|-------|
| Emergency Alerts | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ | |
| Public Relations | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Event Promotion | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Special Announcement | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Important Reminders | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| Forms/Permission Slips | ✓ | | ✓ | | | |
| Event RSVP | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |
| PTO Information | ✓ | | ✓ | | ✓ | |

ParentSquare Best Practices

- Important to avoid message fatigue and overloading parents with communications.
- School sites should plan and coordinate communications for the week between the office, principals, PTO, teachers, and counselors.
- Use the PTO weekly news to communicate reminders, messages, and upcoming events for the school
- PE coaches, Counselors, Office, Principals, Athletics, Band, OPEF should use a message schedule calendar to coordinate messaging for the week. Planning ahead is the key.
- Inform and remind parents to select digest mode so that they receive a daily digest at 6:00 pm. Message posters should use the “send at user preferred time” setting to send posts that are not time-sensitive. Schedule posts to go out no earlier than 8:00 am and no later than 5:45 pm so that the digest mode.



OPUSD utilizes a variety of tools to communicate with students and parents, community partners, and other key educational partners to ensure our messages are clear and our audiences are connected to all that's going on in the District. We hope you will connect with us through these channels:



ParentSquare

ParentSquare is a safe and secure platform for all school-to-home communication. OPUSD uses the ParentSquare platform for the district, school, and teacher communications, primarily with email, text, and app notifications. ParentSquare automatically generates an account for each parent/guardian, using their preferred email address and phone number. Download the app or log into the [ParentSquare web portal](#).

What Can Families Do With Parentsquare?

- Receive messages from the district and school via email, text, or app notification
- Choose to receive information as it comes or all at once at 6 p.m. daily (by enabling the digest mode in settings)
- Direct message teachers, staff, and other parents
- Participate in group messages
- Sign up for parent-teacher conferences
- Sign forms & permission slips
- And more, all from your phone or web portal!

How to Make Sure You Stay Connected

- ☒ Activate your account & login.
- ☒ Make sure the school has your correct email AND mobile phone number.
- ☒ Set your notification preferences in ParentSquare.



 ParentSquare

If you are a current parent, you should have received an invitation to activate your account. You can also access it from [parentsquare.com](#) or by downloading the free app on Android or iOS. We hope that every family joins us on this platform. You will be able to receive information in a daily digest or email instantly. Be sure to set your preferences so that you can also receive the digest, app, and/or text notifications.

Please take a moment to review the following helpful resources in ParentSquare

- [Click here for ParentSquare FAQs](#)
- [3-minute Video Overview of ParentSquare](#)
- [ParentSquare Tips for Parents](#)



OPUSD Monthly Newsletter

Every month, a newsletter will be sent via ParentSquare with all of the latest district news, updates, meeting summaries, and upcoming events. If you want to share a story of interest, please email the Communications Coordinator, Ragini Aggarwal, at raggarwal@opusd.org.

Smart Alerts - Emergency Notification

In the event of a school-wide or district-wide urgent situation (i.e., school delays/cancellations, evacuation, lockdown, relocation, emergency dismissal), information will be shared using the ParentSquare Smart Alert System. Phone calls, text messages, and emails will be sent to the number/email designated by parents or guardians through the annual Registration/Re-Enrollment process. The district will only use all three (Text, Phone, and Email Smart Alert) when it is essential to send an urgent notification to families.



Oak Park Unified



Student Information System - Q Connect

Q is OPUSD's student information management system and is the official system of record for student information which includes Student Enrollment, Scheduling, Attendance, Grade Reporting, Transcripts, Behavior, Health, Test History, Services, and Programs, English Learner, and Special Education programs. Q is composed of the following applications:

- [Q Parent Portal](#) - Where parents can submit annual registration forms and view their child's academic progress online. Parents may obtain their login information from their student's school.
- [Q Student Portal](#) is a website for students to view their progress and attendance online and for secondary school students to request courses for their next term. Students may obtain their login information from their school.
- Please check out the Q Resource Guide [HERE](#).

Q also interfaces with Google Classroom, Paper Online Tutoring, and ParentSquare. The Q Student Information System is provided to OPUSD by the Ventura County Office of Education and developed by [Aequitas Solutions](#).



Website - www.opusd.org

Blackboard is the district and school website. Use the calendar on the homepage to see upcoming events. ParentSquare news feed is published on the District website for extended family and community members who do not have students currently enrolled in OPUSD. The district site also includes information about the Board of Education, policies, and department information for staff, parents, students, and the community. The school site can be accessed from the main district website or at the following links:

www.opusd.org/OPHS

www.opusd.org/OVHS

www.opusd.org/OPIS

www.opusd.org/MCMS

www.opusd.org/BES

www.opusd.org/OHES

www.opusd.org/ROES

www.opusd.org/OPNS

Social Media

Social Media is another communication tool that OPUSD administrators, coaches, and teachers may use to communicate to students, parents, and the community. OPUSD, along with its schools, has various social networking and media sites, including Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. Follow us on our official social media accounts below:



| Organization | Twitter | Instagram | Facebook |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Oak Park USD | @oakparkusd | @oakparkusd | @oakparkusd |
| Oak Park High School | @OPHSEagles | @OPHSEagles | In progress |
| Oak View High School | @OakViewHS | @OakViewHS | In progress |
| Oak Park Independent School | @OPISKnights | @OPISKnights | In progress |
| Medea Creek Middle School | @MCMS_Panthers | @MCMS_Panthers | In progress |
| Brookside Elementary School | @BESTigersOPUSD | @BESTigersOPUSD | In progress |
| Oak Hills Elementary School | @OHESCoyotes | @OHESCoyotes | In progress |
| Red Oak Elementary School | @RedOakRattlers | @RedOakRattlers | In progress |
| Oak Park Neighborhood School | @OPNS | @OPNS | In progress |
| Superintendent | @OakParkSupt | | |
| Nutrition Services | @Yestofreshfood | @Yestofreshfood | |
| Oak Park High Athletics | @OPathletics | | |
| Club Oak Park | @ClubOakPark | @ClubOakPark | @ClubOakPark |



Important Events, School And District Calendar

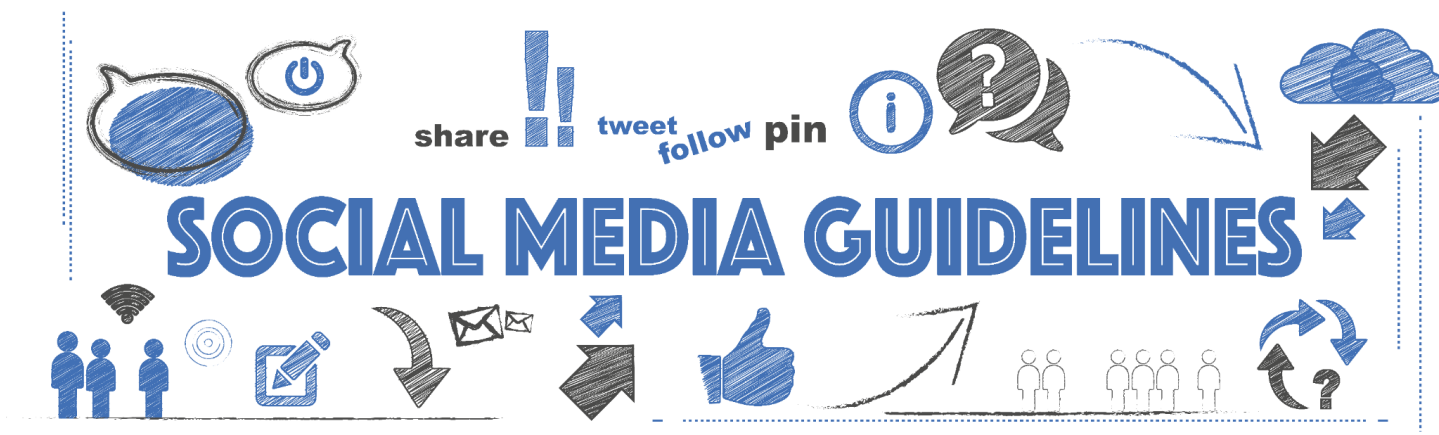
Student Teacher Calendar - School calendar, indicating all days off and early dismissals, is posted on the district and school websites (under Calendar) and can be easily printed for your reference, or you can use the District's interactive calendar on the website.

Important Dates Calendar - This is a live document posted on the district and school websites (under Calendar) noting important dates in the year. These dates include Back to School Night, Open House, Culmination/Graduation dates, Board of Education Meeting

Dates, Conference Dates, School holidays, and Minimum days. This calendar is updated regularly with upcoming District events. You can access this calendar via this direct link: www.opusd.org/ImportantDates.

Board Of Education Information - OPUSD Board of Education meets every third Tuesday of the month. The meeting calendar, Agenda, Minutes, and summaries are posted on the [District website](#). The meetings are open to parents, staff, students, and community members. The meetings are usually held at Oak Park High School, Presentation Room, G9.





OPUSD recognizes the importance of social media and encourages the appropriate use of social media for communication, in order to reach our students, parents, staff, and community members.

What Is Social Media?

User-created online content is designed in a collaborative environment where users share opinions, knowledge, and information.

- **Social Networks:** Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn
- **Media Sharing Networks:** Instagram, Snapchat, YouTube, TikTok
- **Discussion Forums:** Reddit, Quora, Facebook Groups
- **Group Messaging:** WhatsApp, Discord, GroupMe, Slack, Facebook Messenger
- **Bookmarking And Content Curation Networks:** Pinterest, Flipboard, Tumblr, Wakelet

Social Media Statistics For 2021

- There are currently 3.78 billion social media users worldwide.
- Facebook is the most popular social media platform.
- Among US adults, 84% of those aged 18–29, 81% of those aged 30–49, 73% of those aged 60–64, and 45% of those aged 65 and above are active social media users.
- Users spend an average of 2 hours and 25 minutes per day on social media.
- 500 million daily active Instagram stories are uploaded worldwide.
- 91% of all social media users access social channels via mobile devices.

Official District Social Media Platforms

The purpose of the OPUSD social media accounts is to increase engagement, communication, and collaboration with parents/guardians, staff, and community members. The following are some of the ways in which the district and school sites will utilize social media:

- Disseminate information regarding district and school programs
- Provide resources for parents/guardians, staff, and community members
- Support student learning and staff professional development
- Promote district and school-site events, activities, and accomplishments
- Celebrate and share teaching and learning in the classrooms

The communications coordinator shall authorize the development of any official district social media platform. Teachers and coaches shall obtain approval from the principal before creating an official classroom or team social media platform.

District Approved Official Social Media Accounts

OPUSD social media pages are produced and maintained by the district, and school-site accounts are maintained by their administrative staff.

| Organization | Twitter | Instagram | Facebook |
|------------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|--------------|
| Oak Park USD | @oakparkusd | @oakparkusd | @oakparkusd |
| Oak Park High School | @OPHSEagles | @OPHSEagles | |
| Oak View High School | @OakViewHS | @OakViewHS | |
| Oak Park Independent School | @OPISKnights | @OPISKnights | |
| Medea Creek Middle School | @MCMS_Panthers | @MCMS_Panthers | |
| Brookside Elementary School | @BESTigersOPUSD | @BESTigersOPUSD | |
| Oak Hills Elementary School | @OHESCoyotes | @OHESCoyotes | |
| Red Oak Elementary School | @RedOakRattlers | @RedOakRattlers | |
| Oak Park Neighborhood School | @OPNS | @OPNS | |
| Superintendent | @OakParkSupt | | |
| Nutrition Services | @Yestofreshfood | @Yestofreshfood | |
| Oak Park High Athletics | @OPathletics | | |
| Club Oak Park | @ClubOakPark | @ClubOakPark | @ClubOakPark |

- Sites that have not been authorized by the principal or the communications coordinator yet contain content related to the district or comments on district operations (such as a site created by a PTO, booster club, or other school-connected organization or a student's or employee's personal site) are not considered official district social media platforms.
- The District does not endorse the organizations sponsoring linked websites, nor does the district endorse or recommend the goods/services they offer.
- The District does not control or guarantee the accuracy, relevance, timeliness, or completeness of the information contained on a linked external website.
- The District is not responsible for the content of external online platforms.
- Comments posted by a member of the public on social media pages are the opinions of the commentator or poster only, and publication of a comment does not imply endorsement of, or agreement by, the district, nor do such comments necessarily reflect the opinions or policies of the district.
- By posting comments or other work on district social media pages, a post becomes a public record, and the poster grants access to the content by the OPUSD and anyone viewing OPUSD social media pages.
- Never set up a school site social media account using a personal, District, or personally created (Gmail, etc.) email address.
- If you are interested in creating an official social media account please email raggarwal@opusd.org.

Guidelines For Content

The communications coordinator and school site principal shall ensure that official district social media platforms provide information regarding district programs, activities, operations, and district goals. Official district social media platforms shall contain content that is appropriate for all audiences.

Social Media Best Practices For Employees

Respect The Intellectual Property/Copyright Of Others

It is important to abide by intellectual property laws, including patent, copyright, trademark, and fair use. When quoting someone else's work, always credit the original author/source. Link to others' work rather than to reproduce it. In general, if another user has a property right over the information, please provide appropriate credits.

Comply With The Terms Of Service Of Third-party Entities

Most social networking sites have their own rules, policies, and procedures, and you will likely be required to accept their terms of service before you can begin to use them. Familiarize yourself with these rules so that you can be sure you can comply with them.

Respect Your Audience, OPUSD, And Your Coworkers

Members of the OPUSD community reflect a diverse set of customs, values, and points of view. When speaking on behalf of your school or the District, do so respectfully and with good judgment. When representing yourself in social media, be clear that the views and opinions expressed are yours alone and do not represent the official views of the school or the District.

Think Carefully When You "Friend," "Like," Or "Follow"

Is it an appropriate relationship? Is there a chance for misinterpretation from your audience?

Keep Private Information Confidential

It is perfectly acceptable to talk about your work or have a dialogue with the community. However, it is not okay to disclose personal, confidential, or proprietary information concerning the District or any staff, student, or parent in any form of media.

Use Of Student Images And Work On Social Media (As Per [Staff Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#))




In order to safeguard student privacy, staff shall not post photos and/or student work along with the names of students on school or district websites unless they have received explicit written permission from both students and parents to do so. Check the site's Media Release OPT-OUT Form for families that have opted out.

Staff may either post student photos and student work without names or post student names without photos (unless a parent has submitted a Media Release OPT-OUT Form to the school office indicating that they do not wish their child's photo to be published at all). Prior to publishing student images, staff shall consult the school's Media Release Opt-out list to determine whether students shown in the image have not submitted an OPT-OUT Form.

Use of Hashtags and Mentions

- A #hashtag is a way to organize social media posts and categorize them by a topical word or phrase. When you post and want your message to be part of a larger conversation beyond your followers, add a relevant hashtag at the end of your message. This will allow you to reach anyone who searches that same hashtag. Some OPUSD Hashtags: #OPShares, #TeamOPUSD, #OPOpeningDay

- A @tag signifies to someone that you're talking about them, giving them a head's up about something, and/or would like them to respond.
- The use of # and @ tags is not universal across platforms or with different social media management tools. To add even more complexity, they also don't work the same across different devices (e.g., desktop vs. mobile apps).
- Don't hashtag spam—if your tweet doesn't add to that hashtag's topic, discussion, or user base, don't add the hashtag.
- Use more than one hashtag if it applies to more than one topic, but choose wisely. If you want that hashtag's community to value your input, take care to keep that Twitter stream nice, tidy, and free from "visual debris."
- Here are some nuances to keep in mind for some of the most frequently used channels and tools:

| | |
|--|---|
|  Twitter | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can use both @ and # tags in original tweets, replies, and comments for retweets. • A list of accounts will populate when you use the @ tag, and popular hashtags will populate when you use the # tag. When the account or topic you want to use appears, select it from the drop-down list. |
|  Facebook | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can @ tag individuals and organizations in both individual updates and page updates, as well as in comments on each. A list of accounts will populate when you use the @ tag. When the account you want to use appears, select it from the drop-down list. • # tags work in both updates and comments; however, there is no drop-down from which to select a topic. You will have to know the exact hashtags you want to use in advance. • You can add both @ and # tags when you're creating a scheduled post for a page. |
|  Instagram | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can @ tag individuals and organizations in both shares and comments. A list of accounts you follow will populate when you use the @ tag. When the account you want to use appears, select it from the drop-down list. If you don't yet follow an account you want to tag, you will either need to follow it first or look up the precise user name before tagging them. • # tags work in both shares and comments; however, the drop-down functionality seems to vary by mobile device. If you're using a hashtag for the first time, you may have to look it up in advance to find the right one. Once you have used a hashtag, it should auto-populate for future use. |

Which Social Media Should You Use?

Facebook – A Networking Resource

OPUSD and schools have Facebook pages students, staff, and parents can subscribe to. Subscribers can be notified about events and other school information.

Some ideas for school Facebook posts:

- Sharing photos of events
- Using the event calendar for key events
- Sharing news and stories about our school and district
- Sharing other community stories
- Sharing teaching and learning in classrooms

Twitter – A Personalized News Feed

Twitter is a great medium for sharing news about your school and sharing streams related to our school and District mission. One of the big advantages of Twitter is that students, media, and an increasing number of younger parents and staff depend on it. Whether it's for news, entertainment, professional development, connecting, or general information gathering, it's a very popular medium suited for real-time updates.

Some ideas for school Twitter posts:

- Sharing news and stories
- Sharing knowledge for parents and staff
- Targeting staff for professional development
- Emergency information
- Scores and updates
- Connecting with media and thought leaders
- Sharing teaching and learning in classrooms
- Amplifying educator voice

Instagram – A Story In Pictures

Instagram is all about sharing the school's story simply through images. Like Twitter and Facebook, hashtags can be used to group your Instagram content by creating 'content hubs' around targeted content or targeted audiences.

Some ideas for school Instagram posts:

- Photos of athletic teams practicing
- Photos and videos of new teachers and staff
- Video clips of pep rallies
- School cancellations and any emergency notification
- Behind-the-scenes dress rehearsal for a school play
- Upcoming events reminders
- Video greetings from staff members
- Sharing teaching and learning in classrooms

Tips For Great Photos

Photos and images can enhance your communications and capture the attention of your readers.

- Be familiar with student media release permissions.
 - Please check the school's media release opt-out list before posting a student's photo on social media.
 - Helpful Video: Pause Before You Post - View at this link - <https://youtu.be/Zbl5wcnojdI>
- Set the camera resolution to take high-quality photos.
- Take photos outside in natural light when possible; use flash indoors.
- Keep the lens clear of caps, thumbs, straps, and other obstructions.
- Set your white balance.
- Compose shots thoughtfully – get rid of distracting backgrounds and clutter.
- Try interesting angles.
- FOCUS. Poor focusing is one of the most common reasons photos are unusable.








Keeping OPUSD's brand name in front of the public in an appealing and consistent manner is the cornerstone of our promotional efforts. It is imperative that we convey the OPUSD name clearly, consistently, and prominently. These guidelines have been designed to provide detailed standardized usage guidelines for our graphic brand assets. By following these guidelines, a uniform recognition and awareness of the brand will be created.

Approved District Logos

OPUSD logo is an essential piece of our identity. Please follow the guidelines below for use of the logo. The images below are the approved logos of the OPUSD. This official logo should be used on all district documents and electronic communication, such as stationery, forms, promotional materials, website, etc.

If you want to utilize any of the logo files found within the document below, or are in need of guidance about how to adhere to our brand guidelines, please contact Communications Coordinator, Ragini Aggarwal, raggarwal@opusd.org.

| | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|
|  |  |  |  |  |
| <p>Official Oak Park USD logo. Used on letterheads, District websites, business cards.</p> | <p>Permitted logo on presentations, documents.</p> | <p>Permitted logo on presentations, documents.</p> | <p>Logo Shield - Please do not use the shield by itself without the name of the District.</p> | <p>Logo in black or white color. Variation of the official Oak Park USD logo.</p> |

Approved District Motto/Tagline

The District motto/tagline is *Educating Compassionate and Creative Global Citizens*

The logo can also be used with the motto/tagline, and in some cases, the shield with the name and motto can be used by itself to represent the district. Our motto/tagline is aspirational and it expresses what we all strive for — A learning environment filled with a climate of care. When displayed in type-written format, it is italicized — *Educating Compassionate and Creative Global Citizens*.

Approved District Colors

| COLOR | HEX CODE |
|-------|----------|
| | #052d4f |
| | #1c3664 |
| | #1c3664 |
| | #07467d |
| | #1f4f83 |
| | #4366a5 |
| | #4583c4 |
| | #4d85be |
| | #4d93cf |
| | #719bcd |

District Letterhead

Letters on OPUSD letterhead imply an official message from the writer and the District. Because they are official documents, a standard format has been developed for letterhead. The letterhead components incorporate the official District colors. The body of any communications should be printed in black ink and size 12 font whenever possible. Letterhead and other stationery are available only to district employees who are authorized to send official letters on behalf of the District. For a copy of the District letterhead please reach out to Ragini Aggarwal, Communications Coordinator at raggarwal@opusd.org.

District Apparel/Spiritwear

If the approved OPUSD logo is being used on apparel:

- It should be placed on the chest and/or on the sleeve if used on a polo shirt, t-shirt, sweatshirt, etc.
- The logo should be placed on the front if used on a hat

Official District and School Presentation Templates

Although their use is not mandatory, the templates help campus communicators create professional presentations that consistently represent the campus to internal and external audiences.

NOTE: Templates are only available to OPUSD staff members. If you are using a template that is in Google Drive, simply make a copy of it to edit and adapt it before getting to work. We will add the other school templates soon.

- [Oak Park USD Template](#)
- [Oak Park High School Template](#)
- [Medea Creek Middle School Template](#)



OPUSD's crisis communication plan is designed to guide staff in communicating with educational partners, including parents/guardians, staff, students, law enforcement, and media, in emergency and crisis situations. In an emergency, the safety and well-being of students, staff, and volunteers are the first priorities of the schools and the District. Additionally, the provision of factual information is of critical importance. Communications with educational partners must be accurate, timely, effective, and consistent.

This protocol provides direction for communication at the site of an incident as well as within the school and through the District in general. It outlines who should provide the necessary and appropriate information, to whom it should be directed, and how it is disseminated.

What Would Necessitate Crisis Communication?

- Emergencies - such as fires, bomb threats, natural disasters, or major crimes.
- Other situations that demand a public response.

Goal

A crisis communication plan establishes guidelines for dealing with a variety of situations and ensures that District, school administrators, and staff are familiar with those procedures and their role in the event of a crisis.

Objectives Of The Plan

- To be the most trusted source.
- To factually assess the situation.
- To confirm the safety of students and staff on campus.
- To inform the Communications Coordinator and Director of Student Support and School Safety.
- To work with the Communications Coordinator to determine whether a communication response is warranted.
- To implement immediate action if a response is warranted:
 - Identify educational partners that should be informed about the situation.
 - Identify the person handling communication, whether at the site or district level.
 - Clearly communicate facts about the crisis.
 - Minimize rumors and restore order and confidence.

Procedures

Assessment At The School Site

- The individual who encounters potential crisis should immediately contact their principal or the assistant principal/school office manager if the principal is unavailable.
- These individuals will immediately notify the Communications Coordinator and Director of Student Support and School Safety, who will then inform the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent or designee will determine whether to convene a Crisis Communication Team.

Assessment At The District

- The individual who encounters the potential crisis should immediately contact their supervisor.
- The supervisor should inform the Communications Coordinator and Director of Student Support and School Safety, who will then inform the Superintendent.
- The Superintendent or designee will determine whether to convene a Crisis Communication Team.

Assembling A Crisis Communications Team

The composition of the crisis team should include:

- Superintendent of Schools
- Deputy Superintendents
- Director of Student Support and School Safety
- Director in the affected area or department
- Communications Coordinator

Response

The Crisis Communication Team, after assessing the nature and scope of the situation, should develop a plan of action including, as needed, the following:

- **Designate A Spokesperson:** In most cases, the spokesperson should be the person possessing the most direct knowledge of the crisis (for example, the school principal in the event of a school incident). In cases of a significant crisis, the Superintendent or designee shall take the lead in conveying the administration's response to the crisis. The goal of the spokesperson is to show that the District has control of the situation, calm public concern, and communicate actions being taken and the status of the situation.
- **Draft And Distribute A Fact Sheet:** The fact sheet should contain a summary statement of the situation, including all known details to be released to the media and key media talking points. This fact sheet should be analyzed with respect to the public's right to know and concerns for privacy and security in consultation with emergency personnel. The fact sheet should be distributed to all key District officials. The Crisis Communication Team should decide whether or not to make the fact sheet available to the media or simply used by spokespersons as talking points.
- **Notify Key Constituencies:** Determine key constituencies that need to be informed of the crisis. It is important to keep the administration, board of education, staff, and students informed of appropriate details and actions taken by the District during an emergency.
- **Assign Crisis Communications Team Members To Communicate The Facts** (contained in the fact sheet). Among those that may be notified, depending on the situation, are:
 - Board of Education – May be reached via phone or e-mail. Phone lists are maintained through the superintendent's office.
 - Law enforcement agencies via phone.
 - Administration, faculty, and staff – The Office of Communications will provide information to administrators other than those selected to serve on the Crisis Team via e-mail or phone.

- The Communications Coordinator can deliver broadcast e-mail messages to other District employees.
- Students – Principals can communicate with students through school intercom systems and class teachers.
- Parents of students – A hotline or a dedicated line can be established by the Communication Coordinator. ParentSquare notifications, Smart Alerts, should be used.
- The Communications Coordinator will post necessary information on the District Web site and social media.
- Local community – If the situation has an impact on local residents posting should be made on nextdoor and social media.
- Media – The Communications Coordinator may prepare news releases for distribution to local media. All media inquiries should be directed to the Communications Coordinator.
- Other organizations – If the Government entities, associations, unions, or other organizations need to be informed, the appropriate contact person and method should be determined by the Crisis Communications Team.
- **Establish A Crisis Command Center:** Determine whether the magnitude of the crisis merits establishing a Crisis Command Center (for police and District officials) and/or a Media Briefing Center (for larger gatherings of the media for briefings or press conferences).
- **Alert The Media:** Determine whether a news conference and or news release is an appropriate means of conveying information to faculty, staff, students, the news media, and the community. The Communications Coordinator, in consultation with the Superintendent and Director of Student Support and School Safety, will determine the logistics of the news conference, including when, where, and how the media will be contacted, which media will be contacted, who will supervise the news conference, who will appear, etc.
- **Determine Photography Needs:** Decide the need to assign videographers and photographers to take pictures of the scene. This may prove helpful in responding to media inquiries as well as documenting events. Determine the need to supply video footage from files. Determine whether it is appropriate to allow location shooting by TV and newspaper photographers. Determine when, where and who will accompany the media.
- **Establish Internal Communications:** Determine an internal communications strategy to be used if the crisis affects District students and/or employees, working closely with the Human Resources Department and the Communications Coordinator.
- **Provide Means For Handling Incoming Calls:** The main switchboard in the District Office, the main office in an affected school, and any other office that may expect an increase in calls should be notified regarding the key facts of the crisis (fact sheet) and where to refer calls pertaining to the crisis. Determine if additional staffing is required to handle incoming calls.
- **Determine Meeting Schedule:** Determine a meeting schedule for the Crisis Communications Team for the duration of the crisis.

Ongoing Procedures During Crisis

- Set up information files on the crisis to be maintained by the Communications Coordinator. Material related to the crisis, including clippings, statements, letters, memos, and any other documents, should be forwarded to the Communications Coordinator and filed in chronological order.
- Monitor the situation daily and frequently update staff and appropriate administrators.
- Take notes during the crisis to be reviewed and used to improve future crisis response.
- Follow a regular, established meeting schedule for the Crisis Communications Team.

Crisis Followup

Following any crisis, appropriate action must take place to ensure that members of the District community, and others as necessary, receive needed information and assistance to bring closure to the crisis as well as relief from the effects of the event. Attention should be placed on identifying and implementing measures to improve the action plan used during the crisis.

In the event of a major crisis, a meeting should be scheduled and coordinated by the Superintendent or Communications Coordinator to provide details of the incident and events to all interested members of the District. The timeliness of this meeting is critical, and every effort should be made to see that it occurs immediately at the close of the crisis. Representatives from the District Administration and the affected school or department should attend and be prepared to answer questions and share pertinent information.

The Crisis Communications Team should meet within 7 days following a crisis and review all actions taken as a result of the crisis. Any needed changes or updates to this plan should be noted.

Updates

This plan will be updated at least annually. The District Crisis Communications Team should be assembled periodically to discuss the plan and any updates, including a tabletop exercise. The Director of Student Support and School Safety will serve as team leader and convene these meetings. Results of the meetings and revisions of the plan should be documented.

What Can Parents/Guardians Do To Help Keep Students Safe?

Every year during annual registration, you should update your student's emergency contact information.

The information below is intended to provide you with safety tips for parents in order to assist us with keeping our students safe. To receive up-to-date information, please follow our social media accounts. Additionally, please visit our district's website to view timely and the most up-to-date information.

- Make sure your student's emergency contact information is up-to-date and comprehensive.
- Make sure the list of adults listed on the emergency contact information to pick up your child is up-to-date and that those adults know to always carry their ID with them.
- Make sure the school has information about any special needs your child may have.
- Check established communication channels regularly: email, phone, social media, website.
- Encourage your students to take drills seriously, to listen carefully, and follow directions.
- During emergencies, families are urged to avoid coming to the school until after notification that it is safe to do so. When regular dismissal times or procedures are altered due to an emergency, schools will have a student sign-out process in place for the safety of all concerned.

Referenced Sources

- [California School Public Relations Association Resources](#)
- [National School Public Relations Association Resources](#)
- [Campus Suite Blog. School Communications tips, trends, and news](#)
- [OPUSD Staff Technology Acceptable Use Policy](#)
- [10 Social Media Statistics You Need to Know in 2021, by Maryam Mohsin](#)
- [BP 1110 Communications with the Public](#)
- [Pause Before you Post - Video](#)

Questions? Please contact Ragini Aggarwal, OPUSD Communications Coordinator, at raggarwal@opusd.org.