

STANDARD RESPONSE PROTOCOL
“I LOVE U GUYS“ FOUNDATION

REUNIFICATION OF PARENTS & STUDENTS DURING AN
EMERGENCY

Colorado has experienced a number of high profile acts of school violence. Along with such acts, when students and staff are placed in danger, there comes accountability on the part of a school district and the **involved** community to manage the physical safety of students, staff, and of incoming parents. Emergency events may initiate the need of reunification of students and parents **in** a school or district.

STANDARD REUNIFICATION METHOD

Circumstances **that** occur at a school site **may** require parents to pick up their students in a formalized, controlled release. Because a controlled release is not a typical end of school day event, a reunification may occur at a different location than the school **that the students** attend. If this location is another school, then those students may also be subject to a controlled release as well.

A predetermined practiced reunification method ensures the process will not further complicate what is probably already a chaotic, anxiety-filled scene.

School districts throughout Colorado are well trained, have practiced, and in some instances have implemented safety protocols in collaboration with law enforcement **and** fire and city agencies. First responders will initiate an Incident Command System (ICS) during a crisis. The ICS is a response method that determines the role of everyone responding to a crisis and defines shared expectations of behavior. This shared behavior to a school crisis also includes the students who also are exposed to the training.

WHAT PARENTS SHOULD KNOW

In the event of a school emergency the school and first responders are well trained to protect your child.

NOTIFICATION PROCEDURES

In the event of a reunification, parent/guardian notification is a necessary first step. Many school districts have mass notification systems to call or text information to the parent population. It is imperative that accurate, factual information is delivered, and **it is the responsibility of parents/guardians to keep school emergency contact numbers up to date throughout the school year.**

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

If a parent or guardian is notified that a controlled release and reunification is needed, there are some expectations that parents or guardians should be aware of. First bring identification. Second, be patient. Reunification is a process that protects both the safety of the student and provides for an accountable change of custody from the school to a recognized custodial parent or guardian.

WHAT IF A PARENT CAN'T PICK-UP THEIR STUDENT?

When a parent can't immediately go to the reunification site, students will only be released to individuals previously identified as a student's emergency contact. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian that emergency contacts are kept up to date,** otherwise the school will hold students until a parent/guardian can pick up their student.

WHAT IF THE STUDENT DROVE TO SCHOOL?

There may be instances where a student may not be allowed to remove a vehicle from the parking lot. In this case, parents are advised to recover the student. In some circumstances, high school students may be released with their vehicles.

SAFETY OF THE PARENTS / BRING ID TO CHECK IN

If a parent is driving to the school, greater awareness of traffic and emergency vehicles is advised. Parents should park where indicated by law enforcement and not abandon vehicles. An abandoned car obstructs responding emergency vehicles.

Parents are asked to go to the Reunification "Check In" area and form lines based on pre-established procedures. During check in, identification and custody rights are confirmed. From the "Check In" area parents are directed to the "Reunification" area. Parents should be aware they may be invited into a building **to obtain** further information.

INTERVIEWS AND COUNSELING

In some instances it is not beneficial to immediately release students who have witnessed a traumatic incident. **Additionally, if a law enforcement investigation is underway, interviews may be required.** Mental health concerns may also dictate a controlled release so that crisis counseling can be made available.

PLEASE REMEMBER

Parents – when responding to an emergency situation at your child's school – know that your child is well taken care of by first responders, drive safely, follow the instructions of law enforcement when arriving at the school site, have your ID ready, **and be patient.**

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