

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): Student Release and Reunification Protocols During Emergencies

This SOP details the **student release and reunification protocols during emergencies**, covering procedures for safe and efficient student identification, communication with parents and guardians, controlled release points, verification of authorized individuals, coordination with emergency responders, record-keeping of released students, and staff roles and responsibilities. The goal is to ensure the safety and security of students by facilitating a timely and organized reunification process during emergency situations.

1. Purpose

To establish clear and organized procedures for the safe release and reunification of students with parents/guardians during and after emergencies, minimizing risk and confusion.

2. Scope

This SOP applies to all staff, students, and families of the school community and shall be activated in the event of emergencies requiring student release and reunification.

3. Definitions

- **Student Release:** The orderly process of allowing students to leave school custody to authorized adults during emergencies.
- **Reunification Site:** Designated area where students and authorized individuals are brought together for pickup.
- **Authorized Individual:** Person(s) listed on student emergency contact forms permitted to take custody of the student.

4. Procedures

1. **Activate Reunification Protocol**
 - Principal or designee assesses situation and determines need for reunification.
 - Notify staff, emergency services, and initiate internal reunification procedures.
2. **Student Identification and Assembly**
 - Teachers ensure accurate attendance; escort students to designated holding area.
 - Staff keep students calm and organized in assigned groups.
3. **Communication with Parents/Guardians**
 - Use school communication systems (text, call, email) to inform parents/guardians of reunification site and process.
 - Provide clear instructions and identification requirements.
4. **Controlled Release Point**
 - Establish and clearly mark controlled entry/exit points at the reunification site.
 - Assign security/staff to monitor access and direct foot traffic.
5. **Verification of Authorized Individuals**
 - Check photo ID and student emergency contact records before releasing student.
 - Refuse release to unauthorized individuals.
6. **Record-Keeping**
 - Document each student's release including time, date, and the name/ID of the individual.
 - Retain records for review by administration and emergency responders.
7. **Coordination with Emergency Responders**
 - Liaise with police, fire, and EMS to ensure a safe reunification process.
 - Follow all directives provided by emergency personnel.

5. Staff Roles and Responsibilities

- **Administration:** Oversee SOP activation, communication, and coordination with responders.
- **Teachers:** Supervise and account for students, escort to holding area, provide assurance.
- **Support Staff:** Assist with verification, record-keeping, and site security.
- **Security Personnel:** Monitor access points and support safety protocols.

6. Review and Training

- Conduct annual SOP drills and staff training on reunification procedures.
- Review and update emergency contact records regularly.
- Debrief and update procedures after any activation of the protocol.

7. Appendix

- Sample Reunification Log Sheet
- Parent/Guardian Reunification Information Handout
- Site Map with Controlled Release Points
- Emergency Contact Update Form