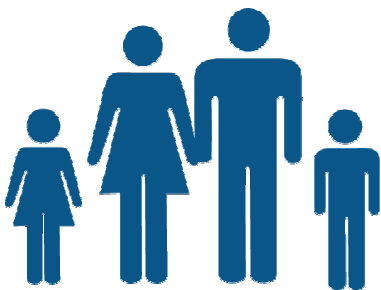




**BRISTOL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

## **REUNIFICATION PLAN**



**A guide to safe, orderly reunification of students and families when event(s) arise at a school or in the neighborhood that require students be physically returned to a parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact.**

### **Parent-Student Reunification Guide**

Circumstances may occur at a school that requires parents to pick up their students in a formalized, controlled release. The process of controlled release is called "Reunification". Family Reunification is the means for safe, orderly and documented reunion of students and families when event(s) at a school or in the neighborhood require that students are physically returned to a parent, guardian, or designated emergency contact. Situations which may require a Family Reunification include, but are not limited to: school evacuation or closing as a result of a hazardous materials release, major fire, natural disaster, field trip emergency, school bus accident, or a situation involving a credible bomb threat, weapons, violence, or active shooter-type incident. The Bristol Public Schools District has procedures in place to help this process be as smooth and efficient as possible. Because a controlled release is not a typical end of school day event, a reunification may occur at a different location than the school a student attends. The goal of Reunification is that all students remain safe while in our care and that all students are reunited with their families.

#### **Notification:**

Parents may be notified in a number of ways. The school or district may use the school messenger automated phone/text/email messaging system, local T.V. and radio stations, district and school websites, official school social media sites, official press releases, etc.

#### **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, you are required to bring identification.** That will streamline the reunification process. **Second, be patient.** Reunification is a process that protects both the safety of the student and provides for an organized exchange of

#### **Parent/Guardian Expectations – con't:**

custody from the school to a recognized custodial parent or guardian.

If a parent is driving to the school, greater awareness of traffic and emergency vehicles is advised. Parents should park where indicated and not abandon vehicles. Parents are required to go to the designated "Family Check-In-Area" and form orderly lines. There may be several lines and tables set up based on the first letter of the student's last name. While in line, parents are asked to fill out a reunification form/card. In the case of multiple students being reunified, a separate form/card for each student needs to be completed.

#### **What if a Parent Can't Pick Up Their Student?**

If you must send someone else to pick up your child, be sure it is someone who is listed on school records as an individual authorized to do so and make sure they are in possession of a photo ID. Otherwise, the school will hold students until parents can pick up their student.

#### **What if the Student Drove to School?**

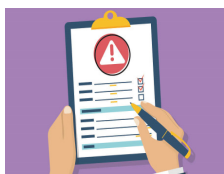
There may be instances where students may not be able or allowed to remove a vehicle from the school parking lot. In this case, parents are advised to recover the student at the designated site.

#### **Reunification Process:**

Remember to Bring photo ID! At the "Family Check-In-Area", identification and custody rights are confirmed. The reunification form/card is completed and then taken by a "Runner" to the "Student Assembly & Supervision Area" to retrieve the student. Parents will then be directed to the "Family Waiting & Reunification Area". The runner and student will meet the parent at the "Family Waiting & Reunification Area", where the parent will have ID checked again and sign the reunification form/card for the release of their student.

### Interviews and Counseling:

In some cases, parents may be directed to an "Individual Assistance & Notification Area", where family members can be escorted to meet with a counselor or site administrator, who will be responsible for notifying families of an emergency or difficult information, medical information, or crisis assistance.



### Ways Parents and Guardians Can Help the Situation during a School Emergency or Crisis

- Be sure your emergency contact information is current and correct; contact your school immediately whenever your work, home or cell number changes.
- If you or any of the emergency contacts are ever asked to pick up a child at the school due to a large scale emergency or crisis, please remember to bring your photo identification card. We are unable to release children to any person who does not have proper ID. We are only allowed to release children to those individuals listed on the emergency card; No Exceptions.
- Be patient. The reunification process between parents and students must be carried out in an orderly manner so we can protect and account for all of our students. When working with hundreds of students, parents and guardians this takes time. We will reunify you with your child as soon as we can, but we also need to screen every adult to ensure they appear on the emergency card.

- Ensure that you are registered to receive text messages on your cell phone through our school messenger emergency notification system.
- In any emergency, please remember that we want to keep phone lines open so our first responders such as fire, law enforcement and emergency medical personnel can use the phone lines to get life-saving resources to the scene(s).
- Do not come to the school during an emergency unless you are asked to do so. You and your car will be blocking emergency personnel from possibly getting life-saving resources to your child. If your child's school is on lockdown, you will not be able to pick-up your child. The school campus will be closed to everyone except emergency responders and authorized personnel.
- If an incident happens at your child's school, follow the instructions of law enforcement and school administrators. We train and exercise for emergencies, so we are better prepared to guide everyone to the most appropriate actions and facilitate a response that does not cause more stress for our children.
- Should an incident happens at your child's school, please know that our staff will first handle the emergency, ensure life safety, and then communicate with you. It is critical to take life saving measures before texting about it.
- Be mindful of your social media presence. Please do not post specific information about your child's school on social media websites. While a majority of people using internet/social media are good, law-abiding individuals, we know that some may want to use the information you post for harm.

Be prepared at home! FEMA asks us to:

**"Get a Kit; Have a Plan; Be Informed"** Your children are more likely to experience an emergency at home than at school or in the community. They need to know what to do and they want to be assured that you, as a family, are prepared. Involve them in getting prepared, and putting together an emergency kit. Make it a fun activity for the whole family. Talk to them about how to evacuate their room if there is a fire and where to drop, cover and hold-on if there is an earthquake.

If you need suggestions on how to talk to children or activities to help them understand what to do during an emergency, here are resources we recommend:

<https://www.ready.gov/kids>

En español en: <https://www.ready.gov/es>



### Teach and Learn with Passion and Purpose

BRISTOL BOARD OF EDUCATION

P.O. Box 450 · 129 Church Street

Bristol, Connecticut 06010

860-584-7000

860-584-7611 - fax