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Dear Parents and Guardians:

I wanted to take this opportunity to share with you a recent training in which our staff participated on December 4, 2019. On that date, a *Reunification Drill* took place during which parents, who were portrayed by teachers, were required to pick up their students in a formalized, controlled release from school. Reunification may be necessary for a number of reasons such as a power outage, weather, hazmat, or if a crisis occurs at a school. Having a reunification protocol in place makes this process more predictable and less chaotic for all involved. Because a reunification is not a typical end-of-school day event, students may be directed to a different location away from the school that they normally attend.

Under the guidance and direction of the *I Love You Guys Foundation*, our staff has undergone an initial training in how to reunite children with their parents and guardians. The attached document contains vital information for caregivers that will assist in a coordinated effort to reunite students with their parents/guardians. Building principals will share information about their specific schools in the future.

The following are areas in the document to which you should pay close attention:

- **What If a Parent Can't Pick Up Their Student?** If a parent/guardian is unable to pick up their student, the designated person must have a signed parental/guardian permission note, text message, or phone call for the student to be released into their custody.
- **What If The Student Drove to School?**
- **Bring ID to Check In**

Reunification drills are an additional layer to the *ALICE Training* in which all staff in the district have participated. These drills will continue to be practiced with students and staff throughout the school year. Agawam Public Schools will continue to improve safety procedures in partnership with the Agawam Police Department and appreciates the collaboration of that department, under the direction of Chief Eric Gillis, to keep our students, staff, and schools safe.

Sincerely,

Steven P. Lemanski
Superintendent of Schools

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Attachment

"Put Children First"



STANDARD™ REUNIFICATION METHOD

STUDENT/PARENT REUNIFICATION

Circumstances may occur at the school that require parents to pick up their students in a formalized, controlled release. This process is called a Reunification and may be necessary due to weather, a power outage, hazmat or if a crisis occurs at the school. The Standard Reunification Method is a protocol that makes this process more predictable and less chaotic for all involved.

Because a reunification is not a typical end of school day event, a reunification may occur at a different location than the school a student attends. If this location is another school, then those students may be subject to a controlled release as well.

NOTIFICATION

Parents may be notified in a number of ways. The school or district may use its broadcast phone or text message system. In some cases, students may be asked to send a text message to their parents. A reunification text message from a student may look something like this: *"The school has closed, please pick me up at 3:25 at the main entrance. Bring your ID."*

PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

If a parent or guardian is notified that a reunification is needed, there are some expectations that parents or guardians should be aware of. First, bring identification. That will streamline things during reunification. 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. 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 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 on their own.

**** With direct parental/guardian permission.
(either a signed note, text message, or phone call)**

Reunification Information PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
Have photo identification out and ready to show school district personnel.

Student Name _____

Student Grade _____ Student Cell Phone Number _____

Name of person picking up student _____

Signature _____

Phone number of person picking up student _____

Relationship to student being picked up _____
Photo identification matches name of person picking up student? Y or N _____

Parent's Name _____
Parent's Phone _____
Student's Name _____
Student's Grade _____
Student's ID Number _____

School personnel completes upon release of student

FACE INITIALS OTHER

HOW IT WORKS

For students, the school asks that students be orderly and quiet while waiting. Students may be asked to text a message to their parents or guardians. Students are also asked not to send other text messages either in or out of the school or reunification area. Keeping the cellular network usage at a minimum may be important during a reunification.

REUNIFICATION CARDS

For parents, there are a couple of steps. 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 asked to go to the Reunification "Check In" area and form lines based on the first letter of their student's last name. While in line, parents are asked to fill out a reunification card. This card is perforated and will be separated during the process. Some of the same information is repeated on both the top and separated bottom of the card. Parents are asked to complete all parts of the card.

In the case of multiple students being reunified, a separate card for each student needs to be completed.

BRING ID TO CHECK IN

During check in, identification and custody rights are confirmed. The card is separated and the bottom half given back to the parent.

From the "Check In" area parents are directed to the "Reunification" area. There, a runner will take the bottom half of the card and take it to the Student Assembly Area to recover the student or students.

Parents should be aware that in some cases, they may be invited into the building for further information.

INTERVIEWS AND COUNSELING

In some cases, parents may be advised that a law enforcement investigation is underway and may be advised that interviews are necessary. In extreme cases, parents may be pulled aside for emergency or medical information.

