

FAMILY REUNIFICATION

**EMERGENCY PROCEDURES
FOR FAMILIES & STUDENTS**



MORAL AND LEGAL RESPONSIBILITIES



On a daily basis, parents/guardians entrust schools with the safety, health and well-being of their children. Once a student steps on campus, the school is morally and legally responsible for that child until they are picked up by parent/guardian, authorized individual, or returned home by bus.

This responsibility remains, even when disaster strikes and circumstances require schools to keep students beyond the normal school day.

FAMILY & STUDENT REUNIFICATION

Objectives

- Participants will understand the policies for student release in an emergency
- Participants will be able to apply the procedures for releasing students
- Participants will identify locations for check-in and pick-up areas
- Participants will understand the forms necessary to successfully reunite parents/guardians with students

PRACTICE SCENARIO

Scenario

There's been an earthquake. Parents are arriving to pick up kids and you have not set up a reunion process. A parent comes on campus, takes the child without going through the process and leaves. Several hours later, the other parent arrives to pick up the child. You can't find the child and there is no documentation of where the child is.

What do you think...

- The student release team members are feeling?
- The family members are feeling?
- The students are feeling?



PRACTICE SCENARIO

Scenario

A staff member reports to the main office that there is a strong odor in the hallway near the lunchroom and it's making her eyes water. The office gets a second call from a classroom with the same concerns. The Fire Department is called and they inform the principal that the building is uninhabitable and has to be closed for the remainder of the day to clear out fumes caused by an accident in the science lab.

What do you do?

- Principal or principal designee inform Safety & Security Office (or similar office, if applicable)
- Principal or principal designee inform staff and activation reunification plan
- Principal or principal designee inform parents via school messenger (or other system that the school uses to communicate with parents)
- Move students to reunification site as outlined in their Site Emergency Plan

BEFORE A DISASTER OR EMERGENCY



Seattle
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REDUCING THE STRESS BEFORE THE EMERGENCY

Teach families and students the policies and procedures for releasing students.

Help parents/guardians understand what to expect on the day of the emergency.

When ready, involve family members and students in practice drills.

Have copies of the policies and procedures pre-printed to give to parent/guardians while waiting to reunite their child.



FAMILY REUNIFICATION PROCEDURES

- **At the beginning of the school year**, have parents/guardians complete the "Emergency Information and Student Release" form
- **At the beginning of the school year**, copy "Runner Form" and have it ready for the reunion process for each student and family. Have parents/guardians or people authorized to pick up the child complete the top part of the "Student Release/Runner Form" while waiting in line
- File forms in alphabetical order in a portable box
- Identify the members of the family reunification team
- Identify a group of students (secondary school level) or adult volunteers to train as runners for the reunion process
- Identify the location of the check-in area and the pick-up area
- Identify the team leaders for the student supervision team so they can be trained in the procedures
- Identify the necessary supplies to support the process
- Provide training for the team members and runners

PRACTICE PROCEDURES

- Talk through the procedures
- Use teddy bears as students to practice releasing students from classrooms
- Invite a small group of parents/guardians to assist with a practice drill at the end of a school day
- Practice procedures as part of an all-school drill



STEP-BY-STEP RESPONSE

1

ACT QUICKLY
TO KEEP
STUDENTS
AND STAFF
SAFE

2

ACCOUNT FOR
ALL THE
STUDENTS AND
STAFF

3

ASSESS THE
SITUATION

4

ASSIGN TEAMS

5

ACTION

ACTION

Action is following your plan.

- After students are accounted for, staff will hand off their class to assigned teachers or teams.
- Afterwards, staff will assume their assigned roles and gather supplies and equipment as needed.
- Begin releasing students according to Student/Family Reunification Plan.

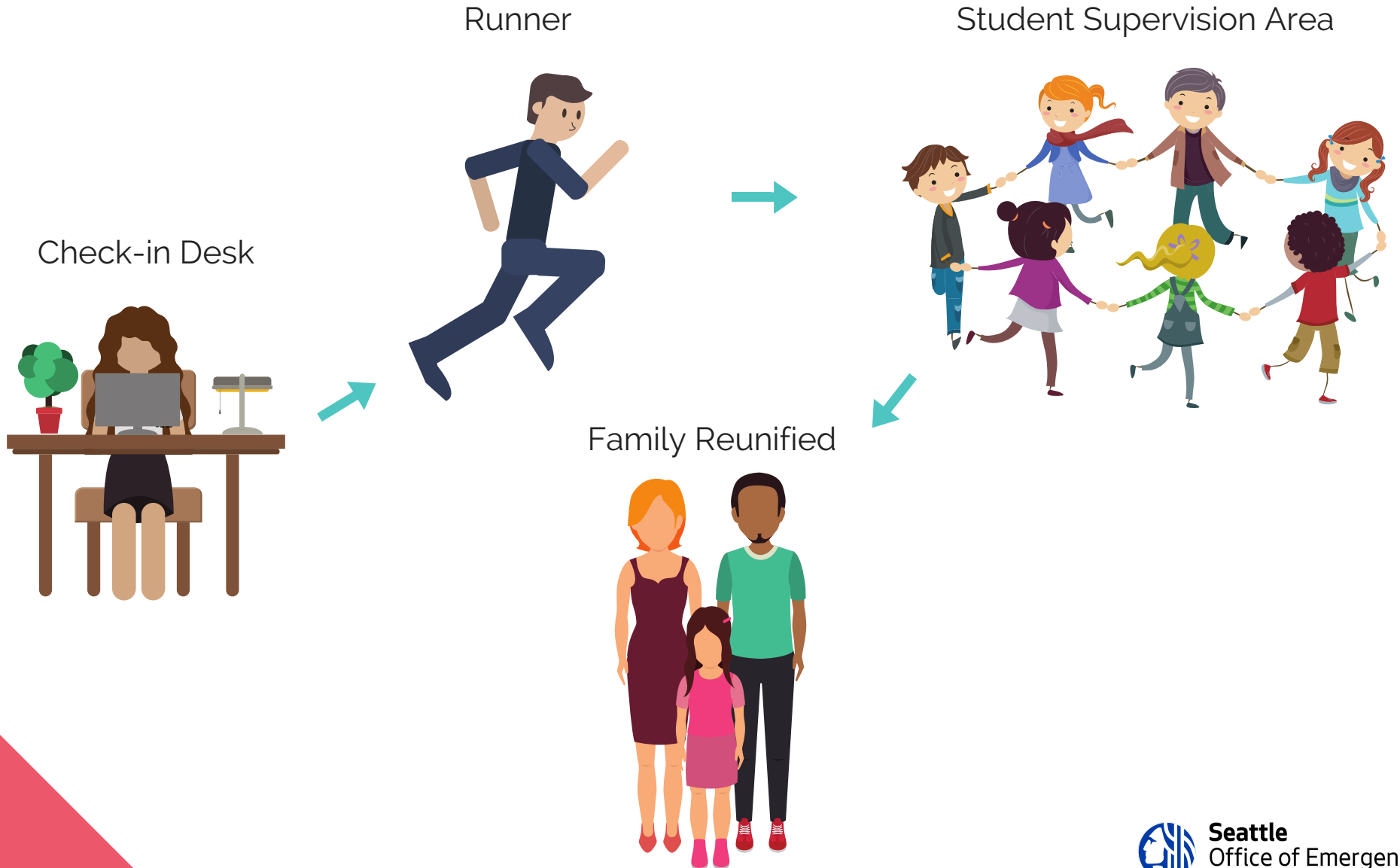




KNOWLEDGE CAN REDUCE STRESS

What are some ways you can inform the families that are waiting to be reunited with their children about the status of the school and the procedures for releasing their children?

FAMILY / STUDENT REUNION PROCEDURES



FAMILY / STUDENT REUNION PROCEDURES

PARENTS OR GUARDIANS Report to "Check-In" area

PARENTS OR GUARDIANS Request student to be released and show identification.

STAFF Check **Emergency Information and Release Form** to ensure the person is authorized and completes the top portion of the **Student Release/Runner Form**

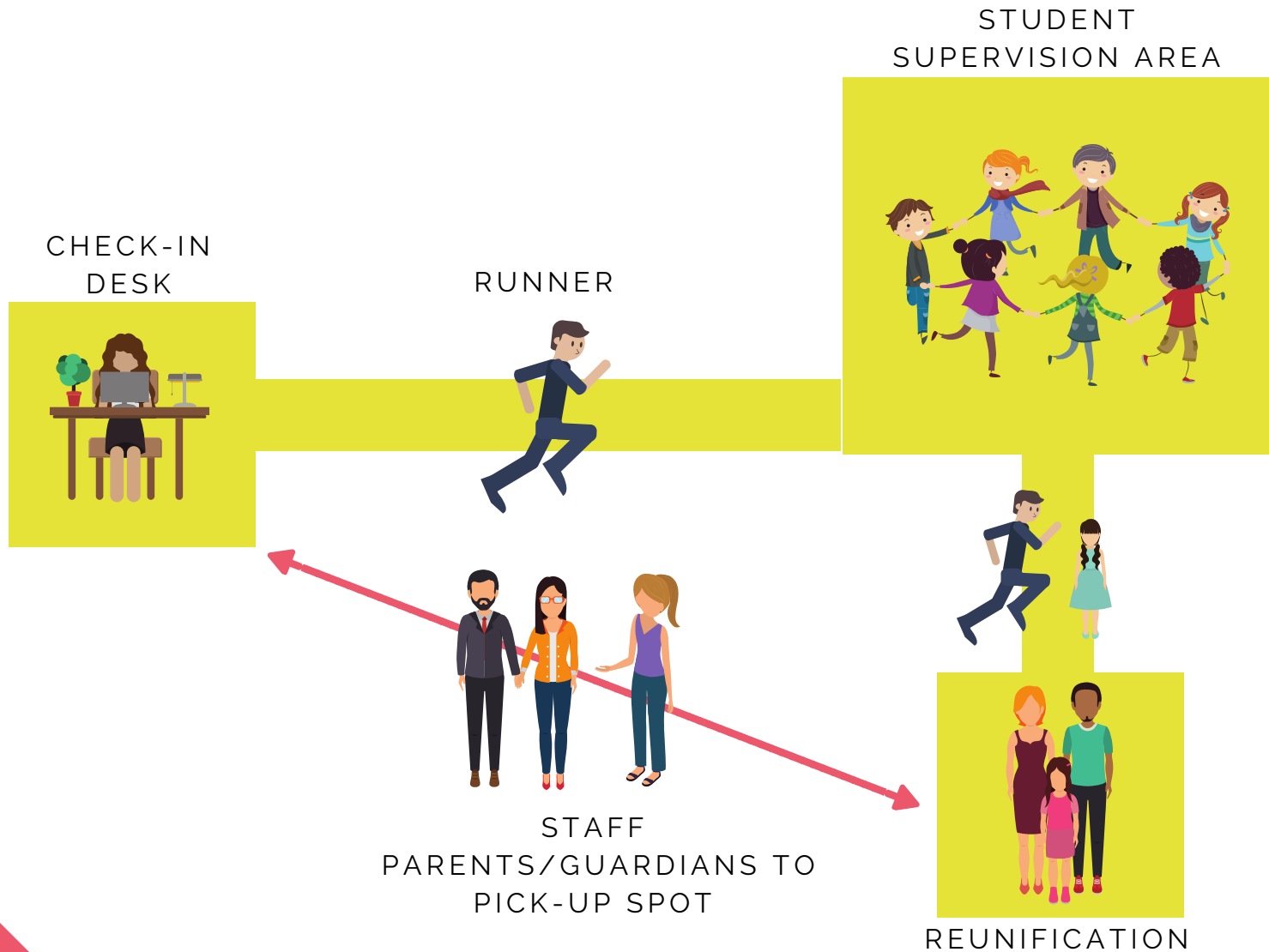
FAMILY / STUDENT REUNION PROCEDURES

STAFF Document the request on the Check-In Log

STAFF Give **Runner Form** to the runner to take to the student supervision area

STAFF Directs parent/guardian to the Pick-Up area and reminds them to keep their ID out for the next station

REUNIFICATION PROCESS VISUAL



AT STUDENT SUPERVISION AREA

STUDENT
SUPERVISION
TEAM
MEMBER



Completes **Section 2** and initials the appropriate box

STUDENT
AND RUNNER



Go to the reunion area

RUNNER



***IF THE STUDENT IS ABSENT/IN FIRST AID/MISSING/UNKNOWN STATUS** the form is delivered to Check-In desk.



WHO & HOW WILL PARENTS BE TOLD THE STATUS OF THEIR CHILDREN?

It is preferable if city agencies relay this information to parents, however, depending on the situation, this information may be relayed by school administration and/or staff.

AT THE REUNION AREA

**REUNION
AREA STAFF**



Check parent/guardian's staff ID again

**PARENT/
GUARDIAN**



Signs the bottom of the form and gives destination, date, and time

STUDENT



Released to parent/guardian

RUNNER



Takes the completed form back to the Check-In area where staff make sure the completed **Runner Form** and the **Emergency Release Information Form** are attached and files the forms back in the alphabetized forms box

MAPPING OUT YOUR FAMILY REUNIFICATION SITES

Be prepared to have the following sites
identified:

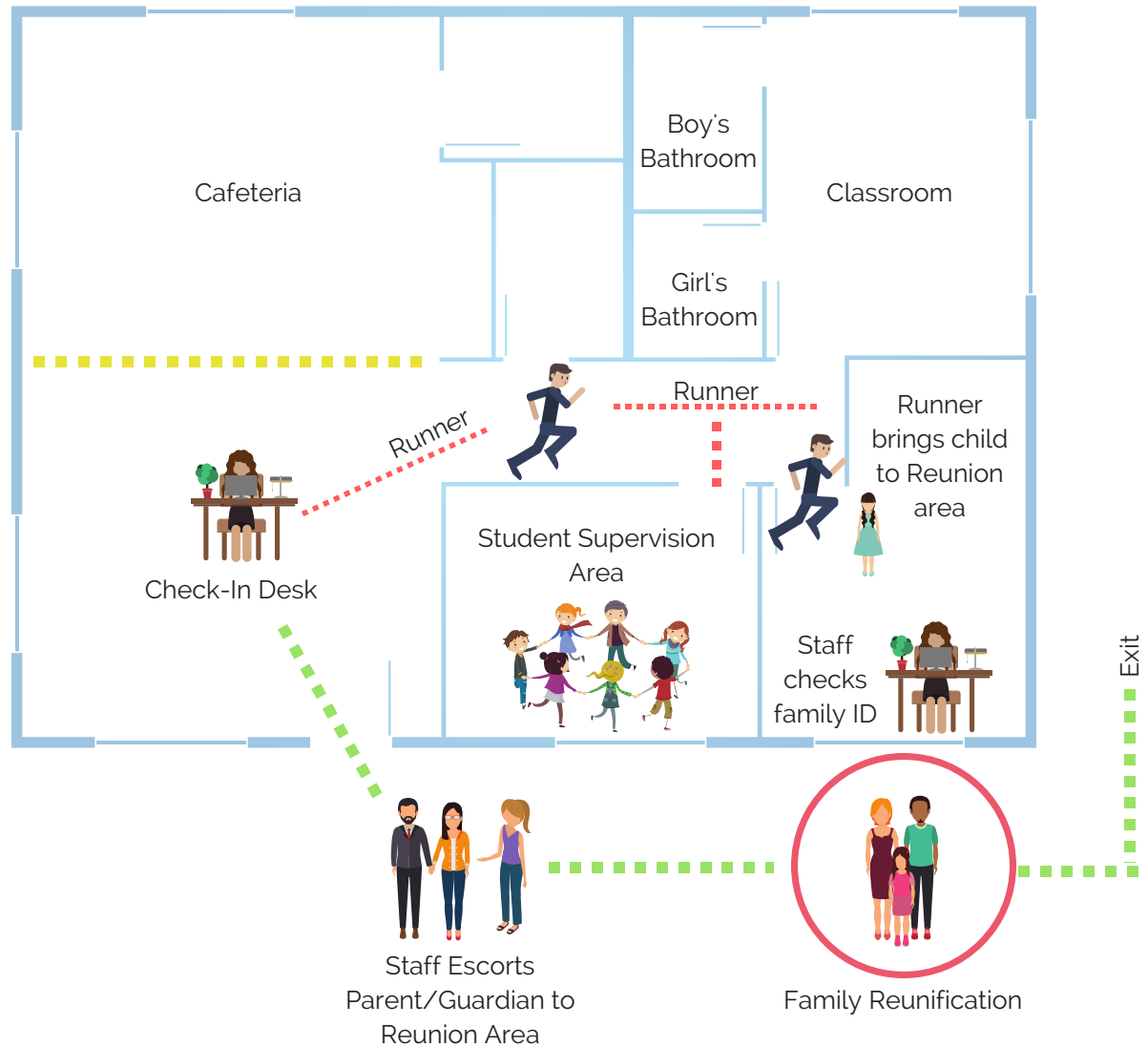
- Indoor location at your school (ex. for an earthquake)
- Outdoor location at your school (ex. for an earthquake)
- In close proximity to the school (ex. active shooter)
- Further away from school (ex. HAZMAT spill)



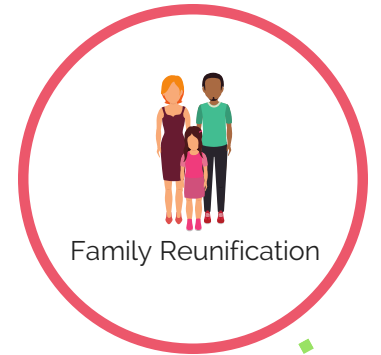
INDOOR

FAMILY-STUDENT REUNIFICATION PLAN

1. Parent arrives at Check-In desk
2. Runners retrieve student
3. Parents go outside of building to reunion area
4. Student and parent are reunited at designated area

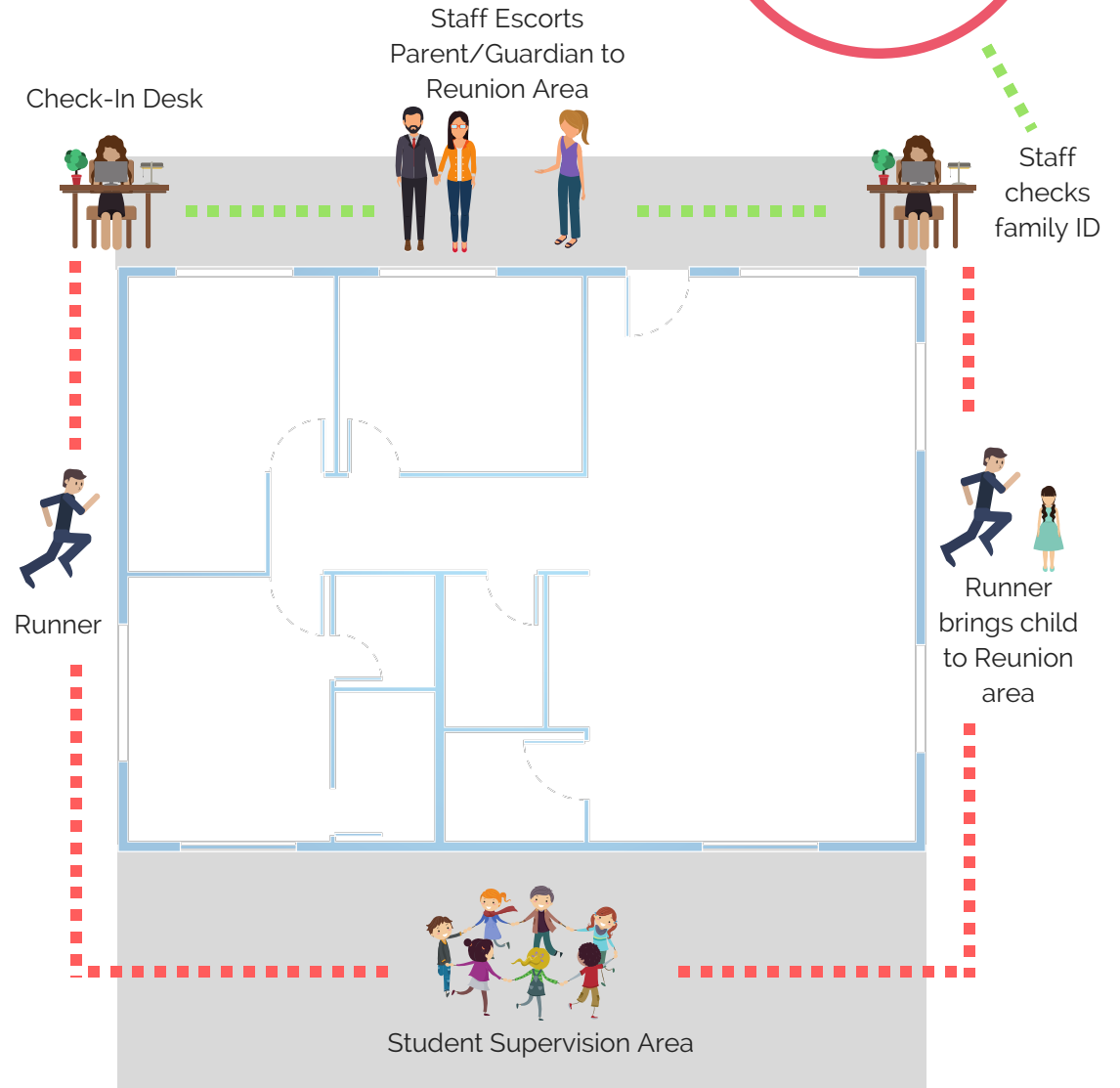


OUTDOOR



FAMILY-STUDENT REUNIFICATION PLAN

1. Parent arrives at Check-In desk
2. Runners retrieve student
3. Parents go outside of building to reunion area
4. Student and parent are reunited at designated area



PRACTICE YOUR REUNIFICATION PLAN



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

Summary

- Family and student reunion is a vital component of each Emergency Management Plan.
- Families, students, and staff need to be informed of the procedures prior to the disaster.
- The family and student reunion team needs several opportunities to practice the procedures prior to a real event.

Remember...

You could have an outstanding Emergency Management Plan, designed to save hundreds of lives. However, if your family and student reunion process does not function smoothly and with confidence, the perception of families, media, and the community will be that there is chaos on campus.

THANK YOU



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