

Muscogee County School District

Dear Parent/ Guardian,

In an effort to be proactive, the Muscogee County School District is providing the following information to ensure a formalized and controlled means of releasing students to their parent/guardian should a significant situation occur at school. The process of controlled release is called a reunification and may be necessary due to weather, a power outage, hazmat, or if a crisis occurs at the school. The reunification is a protocol that makes this process more predictable and less chaotic for all involved. 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. Depending on the situation, students and staff may be transported by bus to a reunification site.

Parents will be notified by our Connect Ed announcement system, media, radio and social media. Please make sure that we have your correct phone numbers. If you want your cell phone to be the primary phone number we call, please list this number as the first number on the emergency form that you need to complete at the beginning of each year. Please do not go to your child's school until a message is sent. This is to assure that you have the correct location of reunification. Students will not be released prior to the reunification site set up and guardianship can be verified.

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.

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. Please make every attempt to pick up your child as soon as possible.

There may 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.

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.

For parents, there are a couple of steps. If a parent is driving, greater awareness of traffic and emergency vehicles is advised. Parents should park where indicated and stay calm. 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 may be asked to fill out a reunification card and/or asked to present ID. The 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.

During check in, identification and custody rights are confirmed. The card/s is/are 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/s 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 or other location for further information.

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

If you have any question please contact us. We will be happy to help you understand this process.