

## Family Reunification: What to do in an Emergency

**Off-Site Family Reunification** – Students are moved off-site when school officials determine students and staff should not re-enter the building until it is rendered safe. Several off-site locations are determined in advance, but are not shared with parents until an incident unfolds. Police and school officials choose the best reunification site at the time of the incident depending on the circumstances of the emergency. Parents will be notified of the family reunification site as soon as it is tactically appropriate to do so. Our main priorities in an off-site evacuation are student safety and accountability. We want to make sure students are released to authorized individuals and a sign-out procedure will be initiated. In the event of an off-site school evacuation, parents will be provided information as to where the reunification site is located. Parents or authorized adults will be required to **show photo identification** in order to pick up a child. The process may take some time because we want to make sure reunification is made with authorized individuals.

### What Should Parents do in the Event of an Emergency?

The most helpful parental responses to a school emergency are to remain calm and wait for accurate information to be sent to the number listed on your child's emergency contact. We understand it is a natural instinct for parents to want to rush to their child. It is important for you to understand that, during such an event, individual schools and emergency responders have made preparations to deal with these incidents. Your cooperation in an emergency is essential to the safe and swift resolution of the incident.

Please do not call the school. It is essential to keep phone lines open so school officials can make outgoing emergency calls. If students are ill or injured, the parents of those students will be notified first.

Please do not go to the school. As we have learned from past school emergencies, one of our greatest challenges is how to manage an onslaught of parents and concerned citizens rushing to the scene to "help." By doing so, parents can inadvertently create traffic jams that may block emergency responders from getting to the scene or leaving if necessary to transport injured staff or students to emergency medical facilities.

- Remain calm, follow procedures, and cooperate with school and public safety officials.
- Remain close to the phone listed as your emergency contact number.
- Tune in to radio or television stations designated to carry HCPS emergency information. See "Emergency Communications" section below.
- Obtain current information about the incident from the district website at [www.henrico.k12.va.us](http://www.henrico.k12.va.us).
- Understand that emergency pickup procedures are different than routine pickup procedures. In the event you are notified to pick up your child at school or at the designated family reunification site, **bring a photo identification card**. If you must send someone else to pick up your child, **be sure it is someone who is listed on school records as an authorized individual and they are in possession of a photo ID. Your child will not be released to anyone who is unauthorized or who**

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### ***cannot provide appropriate identification.***

- Follow emergency procedures. If you are asked to pick up your child, you will be asked to follow the checkout procedure established for emergencies. In the event of on one site Family Reunification, parents will be asked to report to the library with photo identification. Parents will find staff available in the library to take parent's information. Staff members will then go and get your child and bring him/her to you in the library for dismissal.

The reunification system was developed to ensure the safety of students and it is vital that the procedure be followed.

- Remain in designated areas at the family reunification site.
- Be patient. It is essential that the family reunification procedure be carried out in an orderly manner so we can protect and account for all of our students.