



RICE UNIVERSITY

Office of Ethics, Compliance and Enterprise Risk

Parent Reunification Plan

As of December 2023

Circumstances may occur on campus that require parents to pick up their youth in a formalized, controlled release. This process is called a Reunification and may be necessary due to weather, a power outage, hazardous material spill or if a crisis occurs on campus. 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 day event, a reunification may occur at a different location than where the program occurs daily.

Notification

Parents may be notified in a number of ways. The campus may use its text message system or the program may use its communication system. In extenuating circumstances, youth may be instructed to send a text message to their parents. Please encourage parents/guardians to register for Rice Alert by texting MINORS to 888777.

Program Sponsor Expectations

The program sponsor must ensure that every youth and program staff member is accounted for and gets to the reunification site safely. The program sponsor must remember to bring the Emergency Action Plan binder to the reunification site. This binder must include parent/guardian information for each youth present. This information is vital to the reunification process. The program sponsor will ensure all program staff and youth cooperate and listen to communication and instructions from the Incident Management Team.

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 the reunification process. Second, be patient. Reunification is a process that protects both the safety of the youth and provides for an accountable change of custody from the university to a recognized custodial parent or guardian. Parents will be notified of the reunification location and how to enter and exit the campus and where to park. Please follow these guidelines when they are provided.
- If a parent is driving to campus, note there may be an increase in traffic and emergency vehicles on campus. 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 child's last name.
- During check in, identification and custody rights are confirmed.

Youth Expectations

For children, the program asks that youth be orderly and quiet while waiting. In extenuating circumstances, youth may be instructed to text a message to their parents/guardians. Youth are also asked not to send other text messages either in or out of the campus or reunification area. Keeping the cellular network usage at a minimum may be important during a reunification.

What if a parent can't pick up their child?

When a parent can not immediately go to the reunification site, youth will only be released to individuals previously identified as a youth's emergency contact. Otherwise, the program will hold youth until parents can pick up their youth.

What if the youth drove to campus?

There may be instances where a youth may not be allowed to remove a vehicle from the parking lot. In this case, parents are advised to recover the youth. In some circumstances, high school aged youth may be released on their own, if permission has already been received from parent/guardian and is documented by program staff.