

Student Accounting and Release Planning Checklist

Steps for Crisis Response Planning and Preparedness:

- Identify *Student Accounting and Release Team Leader* and *Student Accounting and Student Release specialists* to manage the Accounting for All Persons Annex. Ensure they are available, they understand their roles, and they are willing and able to carry out and/or assign duties described below.
- Establish student and staff accounting procedures. These procedures use current attendance rosters and include instructions on what to do if students and staff members are present or missing, safe and healthy, injured, or deceased.
- With the help of the *crisis intervention and student care professionals*, establish a protocol for informing caregivers that their children are missing, injured, or deceased. This protocol requires the identification of a secure, private notification area (i.e., a notification room).
- Establish a student release protocol that uses emergency cards and establishes areas for identity verification, caregiver waiting, and student– caregiver reunion. Caregiver waiting and reunion areas may be in the same location, but they should be separate from the areas that hold students prior to reunion. Caregivers of missing, injured, or deceased students must be given their own waiting areas (i.e., a notification room).
- In the student release protocol, recognize the importance of reuniting preschool and primary school children with their caregivers first.
- Working with the *Crisis Intervention and Student Care Specialists*, identify strategies for working with caregivers in the waiting area to ensure that they understand the procedures (and the possible delays in reuniting with their children) as well as the importance of their reactions, upon reunification, in shaping children’s traumatic stress reactions. Explain to the caregivers of older students why it will take longer for them to be reunited with their child (i.e., younger students have a greater need to be reunited with their primary caregivers).
- In periodic reviews of crisis preparedness, verify that the student accounting and release protocol has been disseminated to caregivers. Dissemination options include a letter to caregivers from the principal, articles in a school newsletter, placement in a student–parent handbook, and a link on the school website that can be easily activated if a crisis occurs. Such notifications should stress the importance of caregivers’ reactions in shaping students’ perceptions of the event.

Steps During Crisis Response:

- Identify the individuals designated to manage student accounting and release procedures and ensure that he or she is briefed by the incident commander (IC), the Operations Section Chief, and the Planning Section Chief on the situation, initial objectives, and priorities. Assemble the *Student Accounting and Release Team Leader* and *Student Accounting and Student Release Specialists* to help facilitate the process.
- Direct the *Student Accounting Specialist* to obtain class rosters to determine the status (i.e., safe and healthy, injured, or deceased) and location of all students and school staff members.
- Direct the *Student Accounting Specialist* to prepare an initial summary of student and staff information. Inform the IC of all deceased, injured, or missing students or staff members. Provide a copy of the information summary to the student accounting and release team leader.
- Keeping in mind that the coroner is the only authority who can legally declare a person deceased, obtain the school IC's approval for caregiver notification. Work with the *Crisis Intervention Specialists* and the *Student Release Specialist* to ensure that the caregivers of missing, injured, or deceased students are moved to a private location (i.e., notification room) that is separate from the caregiver waiting and reunion areas. Use school district or law enforcement personnel for face-to-face notification in cases of death, serious injury, or missing persons.
- Coordinate with the school security or search and rescue unit leader to search for missing students or staff members.
- After consulting with the *Student Accounting* and *Student Release Specialists*, make a recommendation for releasing students to the IC. If students are released, ensure that a record is maintained showing the person to whom the student has been released, the time of departure, and other essential information.
- After consulting with the *Crisis Intervention and Student Care Specialists*, recommend procedures for how caregivers will be informed about the status of students. Dissemination options include posting lists with the names of students who are accounted for and are safe and notifying caregivers individually if the students are missing, injured, or deceased.
- Direct the *Student Release Specialist* to begin to release students to caregivers.
- Maintain a log noting information received and actions taken.

Note. Adapted from *School Crisis Prevention and Intervention: The PREP_aRE Model* (2009, 2016- 2nd Ed). Copyright 2009 & 2016 by the National Association of School Psychologists.