

6Hx19-1.48**PHSC FAMILY REUNIFICATION****ACTION GUIDE****Pasco-Hernando State College**

Controlled Release, Accountability, and Family Assistance

Operational Guide

This document provides a structured reunification process after an emergency. It does not replace incident command, criminal investigation, public information, or recovery policies.

1. Purpose

The purpose of this guide is to establish an organized, secure, and trauma-informed process for reunifying students, employees, visitors, and families after an emergency that disrupts normal release or campus operations.

The primary objectives are accountability, safety, clear communication, controlled movement, family support, and documentation.

2. Scope

This guide applies to all PHSC campuses, centers, instructional sites, college-sponsored events, and off-site locations where PHSC may need to coordinate accountability or reunification after an emergency.

This plan is adopted in cooperation with local law enforcement agencies and local government consistent with applicable Florida law. It incorporates operational concepts from the I Love U Guys Foundation Standard Reunification Method (SRM) V3, adapted for a public higher-education environment in which most students are adults. It shall be reviewed at least annually and updated as necessary based on changes in law, campus operations, lessons learned, exercises, after-action findings, or partner-agency coordination.

3. Activation Triggers

Reunification may be activated when normal release is unsafe, chaotic, incomplete, or likely to interfere with emergency response operations.

- Active assailant or violence incident.
- Bomb threat or suspicious device.
- Fire, explosion, hazardous materials incident, or severe weather damage.
- Missing or endangered person event.
- Mass casualty incident.
- Infrastructure failure requiring relocation.
- Campus closure, evacuation, lockdown, or sheltering event requiring controlled release.

4. Authority to Activate

The following may activate the reunification process based on incident conditions and operational need:

- President or designee.
- Chief of Campus Safety & Security or designee.
- Incident Commander / Unified Command.
- Campus Administrator in Charge.
- After-hours designee or emergency authority when immediate action is required.

5. Command Structure

Reunification operations shall use ICS/NIMS principles and integrate with the overall incident command structure. Reunification shall not operate independently from incident command.

- Incident Commander / Unified Command.
- Operations Section Chief.
- Reunification Group Supervisor.
- Safety/Security Branch or Law Enforcement Liaison.
- Impacted Campus Team Lead.
- Reunification Site Team Lead.
- Student/Community Assembly and Accountability Unit.
- Greeter and Check-In Unit.
- Verification and Accountability Unit.
- Reunifier / Escort and Release Unit.
- Transportation Unit.
- Medical / Hospital Liaison.
- Counseling, Victim Services, and Family Assistance Unit.
- Public Information Officer.
- Logistics / Reunification Operations Kit support.
- Local law enforcement and local government liaison(s), as assigned by Incident Command.

6. Reunification Process

Phase 1: Stabilize the Incident

Life safety, scene security, fire/rescue operations, law enforcement operations, and medical response take priority. Reunification begins only when it can be conducted safely and without interfering with emergency operations.

Phase 2: Select the Reunification Site

The reunification site should be selected by Incident Command based on safety, access, capacity, privacy, and operational conditions.

- Safe distance from the incident.
- Traffic access and parking capacity.
- ADA access and accommodations.
- Restrooms, utilities, shade, shelter, and basic support needs.

- Ability to separate families, media, public, and operational areas.
- Ability to control entry and preserve security.
- Provide a separate, private area for families of known victims when operationally feasible.

Phase 3: Notify the Community

Official reunification instructions should be issued through approved College communication channels. Messaging should be clear, consistent, and action-oriented.

- Text, email, phone, or mass notification systems.
- Website banner or emergency page.
- Social media, when approved.
- Recorded hotline, when available.
- Media release coordinated through the Public Information Officer.

Only one official messaging lane should release reunification instructions to reduce confusion and rumor spread.

Phase 4: Establish Controlled Release

The reunification site shall use a controlled, one-directional process modeled on SRM principles while respecting the legal status and privacy rights of adult college students.

1. Greeting and Direction: Greeters meet arriving family members or requesting parties, explain the process, direct traffic and pedestrian flow, and provide forms or instructions when used.
2. Check-In: Checkers receive the requesting party, confirm what person they are seeking, and ensure required information is complete.
3. Verification: Staff verify identity and, when applicable, relationship or authorized release status. For minors, release authority must be confirmed before reunification.
4. Accountability: Accountability personnel determine the known status and location of the student, employee, visitor, or other person using the best available authoritative records and incident information.
5. Reunification: A Reunifier or designated escort retrieves or coordinates movement of the person from the controlled assembly area. Family members and requesting parties should not enter the assembly area unless specifically authorized by Incident Command.
6. Release / Connection: The parties are brought together in a controlled area, appropriate documentation is completed, and they are directed to the exit, transportation, family assistance, or another appropriate destination.
7. Support: Counseling, medical, victim advocacy, access and functional needs, language assistance, chaplain, or other family-support resources are provided as conditions require.

Phase 5: Document the Release

Documentation should be simple, accurate, and protected. Records should support accountability, later review, and any criminal or administrative follow-up.

- Person released or connected.
- Person released to, when applicable.
- Time of release or connection.

- Identification or verification method used.
- Unaccounted persons.
- Medical transports.
- Refusals, unusual circumstances, or special considerations.

7. Adult and Minor Reunification Tracks

PHSC shall distinguish between adult accountability/reunification and controlled release of minors. This distinction is necessary because most PHSC students are adults and are not released to a parent or guardian in the same manner as K-12 students.

7.1 Adult Students and Employees

For adult students and employees, the College shall focus on accountability, status confirmation, safe connection with designated family or support persons when appropriate, and protection of confidential information. An adult student or employee is not placed into parental custody solely because a family member requests reunification.

- Provide only information that PHSC is legally and operationally authorized to disclose.
- When practical and appropriate, facilitate a voluntary connection between the adult and the requesting family or support person.
- Document the person's disposition or status to the extent necessary for incident accountability.

7.2 Dual Enrollment Students and Other Minors

For minors, PHSC shall use a controlled-release process consistent with available enrollment, emergency-contact, and authorized-release information.

- Verify the identity of the requesting adult.
- Confirm authorized release status before releasing a minor.
- Maintain the minor in a controlled assembly area until release is authorized.
- Use a Reunifier or designated staff member to bring the minor to the controlled reunification area.
- Document the release, including the person receiving the minor and the time of release.
- Do not release a minor to an unauthorized individual. Exceptions or disputes shall be elevated to the Reunification Group Supervisor and, when necessary, law enforcement.

8. Accountability and Assembly Area

A secure Accountability and Assembly Area shall be established when people are being held pending transportation, status determination, or reunification. The area should be physically separated from family check-in, media, public access, and routine traffic whenever practicable.

- Control entry and exit.
- Maintain the best available roster or accountability record.
- Keep persons awaiting reunification out of direct public view when practical.
- Provide separate supervision or controls for minors as needed.
- Maintain access for persons with disabilities and other access and functional needs.

- Coordinate movement to transportation, medical care, interviews, family assistance, or the reunification area.

9. Two-Team Off-Site Reunification Model

When reunification occurs away from the impacted campus, PHSC should organize two coordinated operational teams.

9.1 Impacted Campus Team

Maintains accountability at the impacted location; organizes the assembly area; prepares persons for movement; coordinates transportation; transmits accurate roster and status information; supports law enforcement and fire/rescue operations; and maintains an incident log.

9.2 Reunification Site Team

Establishes the receiving site; manages greeters, check-in, verification, accountability, reunifiers, security, traffic, family assistance, medical support, PIO functions, and controlled exit flow.

Information transfer between the two teams shall use an established communications method and shall be coordinated through Incident Command / Unified Command.

10. Special Status, Hospital, and Family Assistance Procedures

Reunification procedures shall distinguish among persons who are uninjured/accounted for, medically transported, missing or unaccounted for, or deceased/suspected deceased.

- Uninjured / Accounted For: Process through the standard accountability and reunification pathway.
- Medical Transport: Route family inquiries through a designated medical or hospital liaison when available. Do not provide unverified destination or patient-status information.
- Missing / Unaccounted For: Escalate to Incident Command and law enforcement. Staff shall not speculate regarding status or location.
- Deceased / Suspected Deceased: Do not communicate casualty information through the routine check-in line. Move affected families to a private family-assistance setting and coordinate notifications through law enforcement, medical examiner, victim services, or other officials with legal authority and responsibility.
- Law Enforcement Interviews: Establish a separate interview or investigative area when requested by law enforcement so witnesses, victims, and family operations do not interfere with one another.

11. Reunification Operations Kit and Role Identification

PHSC should maintain deployable reunification supplies at appropriate locations. The objective is to establish a functioning site rapidly without relying on improvised materials.

Recommended kit components include:

- Printed job action sheets.

- Role badges, vests, or lanyards.
- Directional and functional signage.
- Accountability and reunification forms.
- Clipboards and writing supplies.
- Barrier tape and traffic-control vests.
- Radios or communications equipment and portable chargers.
- Flashlights and megaphone.
- Campus and reunification-site maps.
- Emergency contact lists and staff rosters.
- Available minor-release information.
- ICS forms and master event log.
- Basic PPE.
- Accessibility and communication resources.

PHSC may use Foundation SRM forms or locally developed equivalents adapted to higher education, provided the local process preserves controlled check-in, verification, accountability, reunification, and documentation.

12. Security Operations

Security at the reunification site is essential. The site should be protected from unauthorized access, media intrusion, crowd pressure, and traffic hazards.

- Establish a controlled perimeter.
- Use credentialed staff access points.
- Separate media from the reunification area.
- Set traffic control points and parking flow.
- Preserve any crime scene or evidence as directed by law enforcement.
- Maintain crowd management and de-escalation posture.

13. Access and Functional Needs

Reunification must account for access and functional needs, minors, medical dependency, language assistance, and emotional crisis support.

- ADA access and mobility support.
- Communication support for hearing, vision, language, or cognitive needs.
- Medical needs and medication considerations.
- Dual enrollment minors and other minors on campus.
- International students or individuals without local family support.
- Mental health, chaplain, victim advocate, or family assistance support when available.

14. Public Information

The Public Information Officer shall coordinate public messaging, media staging, rumor control, and updates to families and the broader College community.

Messages should tell people where to go, where not to go, what to bring, what to expect, and where official updates will be posted.

15. Transition to Recovery

Once immediate reunification operations stabilize, the College may transition to family assistance, counseling support, academic continuity, employee support, and after-action review.

- Establish a family assistance center for prolonged events.
- Coordinate counseling and support services.
- Provide academic and operational continuity updates.
- Conduct an after-action review and corrective action process within 10 days when feasible.

16. Campus Annexes

Campus-specific annexes may be maintained separately and should include primary and alternate reunification site options, traffic flow, staging areas, ADA considerations, staffing assignments, partner-agency coordination points, communications, and sensitive security information.

- West Campus: Spring Hill Campus
- Spring Hill Campus: West Campus
- North Campus / Brooksville: To be designated in campus annex.
- East Campus / Dade City: To be designated in campus annex.
- Porter Campus: IPAC
- Instructional Performing Arts Center (IPAC): Porter Campus

17. Statutory Coordination, Annual Review, Training, and Exercises

PHSC shall maintain this plan in coordination with appropriate local law enforcement agencies and local government partners. The Chief of Campus Safety & Security or designee shall coordinate the annual review and document updates needed to maintain operational readiness and statutory compliance.

- Review this plan at least annually and update it as necessary.
- Coordinate the annual review with appropriate local law enforcement and local government partners.
- Review campus-specific annexes, reunification site options, traffic flow, accessibility needs, communications procedures, and staffing assignments for continued suitability.
- Incorporate relevant lessons learned from drills, exercises, actual incidents, after-action reviews, and changes in law or College operations.
- Maintain documentation of the annual review, participating agencies or representatives, significant revisions, and the date of approval or reaffirmation.
- Provide role-specific orientation and periodic exercises to personnel assigned reunification responsibilities. PHSC should use a crawl-walk-run progression: site walkthroughs, tabletop discussion, and functional practice of the actual check-in, verification, accountability, transportation, and reunification process. This operational preparedness measure is separate from the statutory annual-review requirement.

Appendix A: PHSC Reunification Job Action Summary

Reunification Group Supervisor: Direct the overall reunification operation; coordinate with Incident Command; assign functional leads; resolve exceptions; maintain safety and accountability.

Greeter: Meet arriving families/requesting parties; explain the process; direct them to the correct line or support area; identify immediate medical, language, accessibility, or emotional needs.

Checker: Receive the requesting party; review required information; verify identification; ensure the request is complete before it moves to accountability.

Accountability Staff: Check the authoritative roster/status source; determine whether the person is at the assembly area, transported, released, missing/unaccounted for, or otherwise known; route exceptions to a supervisor.

Reunifier: Retrieve or coordinate movement of the person from the controlled assembly area; do not allow requesting parties into the assembly area unless authorized; complete the controlled connection/release.

Assembly / Accountability Area Staff: Maintain order, supervision, status tracking, controlled access, and preparation for transportation or reunification.

Transportation: Coordinate buses, vans, accessible transportation, loading areas, routes, passenger manifests, and movement between the impacted site and reunification site.

Security / Law Enforcement Liaison: Maintain perimeter and access control; traffic and crowd management; media separation; responder access; evidence/crime-scene protection; and coordination with law enforcement.

Medical / Hospital Liaison: Track known medical transports when information is available; coordinate authorized family routing and hospital information through Incident Command and partner agencies.

Family Assistance / Mental Health: Provide private support for affected families; coordinate counseling, victim advocacy, chaplain, language, disability, and other support resources.

Public Information Officer: Maintain one official messaging lane; publish location, route, identification expectations, what families should do, and where official updates will be posted.

Logistics / ROK Support: Deploy signs, forms, role identifiers, communications equipment, supplies, maps, and other materials needed to establish the site.

Appendix B: Reunification Quick Reference

Step	Immediate Action
1. Stabilize	Secure the incident first. Do not begin reunification where it interferes with lifesaving response.
2. Select Site	Choose a safe, accessible, controlled site with parking, privacy, and support capacity.
3. Notify	Send one clear official message with location, route, required ID, and instructions.
4. Verify	Confirm identity and authorized release status when appropriate.
5. Account	Confirm the person's known status and location using the best available authoritative information.
6. Reunify	Use a Reunifier/escort to connect or release the person in a controlled manner.
7. Support	Provide counseling, medical, ADA, language, victim services, and family assistance support as needed.