School Regional Reunification Planning Workbook

POLK COUNTY
EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

NATIONAL CENTER FOR
MISSING & EXPLOITED
CHILDREN

June 2019

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Introduction

About Reunification

There are a variety of emergency situations that may require the activation of family reunification plans such as a fire, natural disaster, hazardous material release, violence, or active shooter incidents. Under any circumstance, the process may prove challenging and emotions will run high. Because of this, the need for developing a plan and providing a coordinated response prior to the chaos of an emergency is essential. Having a defined process and established, visibly planned structure of signage and directions reflects a sense of organization and professionalism in an emergency. This, in turn, may provide calm and order in what surely will be an extraordinarily stressful event.

In addition to providing coordination between reunification partners, the plan also assures that children are returned to the proper parent or legal guardian. No child should be released to an individual unknown to them, or who may cause them additional harm. This workbook contains components to assuring children are reunified with the appropriate adult following an emergency.

About this Workbook

This workbook is designed for use in development of a capabilities-based reunification plan for schools. It includes information relevant to activities taking place at the reunification site following an emergency. Separate evacuation and transportation plans may be necessary to support these efforts. This plan can function as a stand-alone, or as part of an annex or appendix to an existing emergency operations plan. The language should be adjusted to reflect the appropriate plan structure. Organizations supporting reunification efforts should develop procedures specific to their roles and responsibilities identified in this plan.

The workbook section and subsection headings support the model format of the plan. General guidance is presented at the beginning of each section, which outlines the intent of the section. Thereafter, each section and subsection contain a list of questions that are not intended to be all-inclusive of possible considerations that must be addressed; rather, they are provided as a seed to support the planning process. Planning groups are encouraged to go beyond the listed questions as they develop their plan. Some of the questions may not be applicable, and some may appear repetitive. These types of questions are included to ensure thorough consideration of critical issues or components.

This workbook also includes some sample language and supporting information to further assist with development of the plan. Sample language is provided in italics. Planning teams may use the content directly, modify it as needed, or create new content tailored to the services available in their community.

The goal of this workbook is to provide a guide that will help develop plans similar in structure, scope, and operations among schools within a district or districts within a region. If plans within a region are developed in a similar manner, it may facilitate a more seamless area-wide response and the sharing of resources.

In addition, the establishment of a multi-disciplinary group or team to complete the plan will help enhance coordination and communication among responders and service providers long before the need arises during an incident. While the workbook provides guidance regarding the intended content of the plan, the scope and detail presented is up to the discretion of the school planning team.

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Purpose

1. Why is there a need for a reunification plan?

2. Who will the plan serve?

Sample Language:

The purpose of this plan to is develop a process of reunification that ensures the safe, orderly, and documented reunion of students and families in the event of an emergency evacuation or school closing. This plan provides guidance to school personnel and members of the Reunification Team.

Scope

The Reunification Plan may be activated for some grade levels and not others, based on the needs of those impacted. It may be necessary to scale or modify this plan as the response to the incident progresses.

1. What types of incidents trigger activation of the Reunification Plan?

2. Who has the authority to activate this plan?

Sample Language:

The Reunification Plan outlines the roles and responsibilities of the Reunification Team, identifies the recommended layout of a reunification site, provides guidance on site selection, and provides specific information on the responsibilities, equipment, and tasks associated with each reunification team member role. This plan may be activated following a school evacuation requiring supervision of students, accountability of students following an event, and/or confirmation of reunification with a parent or guardian.

References to oversight, management, and implementation of this plan can be found in the school (or district) Emergency Operations Plan.

Assumptions

The Planning Assumptions identify what is assumed to be fact in order to execute the plan. The assumptions indicate areas where adjustments to the plan may have to be made as the facts of the incident become known. The assumptions also provide the opportunity to communicate the intent of senior officials. A list is of sample assumptions is provided as an example only. Each district or school should determine their specific assumptions.

1. How will students be transported or transferred to the reunification site? Has a transportation plan been established?

2. How are reunification plan implementation and processes impacted by the age of the students? Do expectations of student participation based on age impact potential outcomes?

3. What is the anticipated participation of parents?

4. Who will address attempts by unauthorized individuals to reunify with children?

5. How will the nature of the emergency impact the success of the reunification process?

Sample Assumptions:

- *A plan has been developed and training has occurred for evacuation of students and school personnel.*
- *A plan for transporting students to the reunification site has been developed.*
- *A plan for evacuating students has been developed.*
- *Some parents or guardians may be reluctant to fully cooperate with the family reunification process.*
- *Parents or guardians may be emotional when arriving at the school.*
- *While some emergencies are slow to develop, others occur without warning. The rate at which the emergency occurs may impact the ability to coordinate personnel, equipment or other resources to support reunification operations.*
- *In some emergencies, the district policy may allow older students to reunify with families on their own. Under these circumstances, students will be encouraged to notify parents or guardians as soon as possible.*
- *Persons other than those listed on the student's emergency release card will try to pick up students during an emergency.*
- *The responsibilities for teachers and school staff will remain as described in the District or School Basic Plan.*
- *Law Enforcement will request access to the reunification site upon activation of this plan.*

Color Codes

This plan adopts a color-coded system of moving parents through the reunification process. Parents will STOP at the red check-in desk, WAIT in the yellow waiting area, and GO through the release gate once reunification is complete. The intent is to create a visual component and increase awareness regarding progression through the process. All documentation for staff roles and responsibilities correspond to the affiliated color code as do directional signs and instructions.

Team members will wear colored vests that signify their current team assignment. Team members should sign into their team upon arrival.

If reassigned to another team, the member should indicate the team check-out time and reassignment on the team sign-in/out sheet. Team members should change to a vest color consistent with the reassigned team and complete the reassigned team sign-in sheet. This process will allow the reunification team leader to shift staff to areas experiencing heavy traffic as needed. No staff member should change teams without the approval of leadership.

Reunification Site Selection

If the school is experiencing an emergency, reunification should take place at an alternative site. The process of selecting a site should be done well in advance of an emergency to allow representatives from the site to participate in planning, training, and exercises. Also, it may be necessary to establish a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the owners or managers of the site. An MOU is meant to assist and define the relationship between agencies or organizations in emergencies. In some instances, the county emergency management agency may select multiple sites in the county to be used by multiple schools or districts. In this instance, the emergency management agency would determine which location will be used in an emergency. Possible sites might include another school, church, or community center.

Schools should plan on identifying an evacuation and reunification site at or near each school. The following must be taken into consideration when selecting these sites:

- Adequate road capacity leading to the site as well as accessible ingress and egress.
- Adequate parking.
- The site should be large enough to accommodate the number of students and arriving parents.
- The site should be accessible by those with access and functional needs.
- Assure a means to locate the parent-guardian check-in away from the command center.
- There should be a means to place students away (out-of-sight if possible) from the family waiting area to ensure order and accountability is maintained.
- Adequate staffing to initially direct parents, answer questions, and maintain calm while the site is prepared to carry out reunification efforts.
- Organizers should provide adequate distance between the media, families, and incident command. Provide a designated space for media that limits the ability to capture images and maintains privacy.
- Contain areas for providing mental health services, notifications, law enforcement activities, and first aid.

A reunification site should have clear and separate areas for each component of the process. This includes:

- **Parent/Guardian Check-in** - Families will check-in when they first arrive at the reunification location. They will complete the Student Information Card and provide appropriate identification so that reunification team members may verify their authority to take the student. Parents or guardians should be informed that the reunification process is intended to protect both the safety of the student and provide for an accountable transfer of the student from the custody of the school to a recognized custodial parent or guardian.
- **Student Waiting Area** - Students will be asked to wait in a separate area until a parent or guardian arrives to pick them up. Students will be asked to maintain order and encouraged to text their parents or guardians. Students will be directed not send non- essential text messages in order to keep the cellular network usage at a minimum to free networks in support of emergency notifications. Students will also be asked not to post to social media as this may cause confusion and increased trauma.
- **Parent/Guardian Waiting Area** - Families will wait while their student is being retrieved from the Student Waiting Area. Some parents may be invited into another area for further information.

- **Release Gate -** Students are escorted to the Release Gate to be reunited with their families.
- **Command Center -** The Reunification Command Center should be located out of site of parents or guardians. The Reunification Team Leader is located here and communicates with other members of the reunification team and Incident Command.
- **Media Area -** the media is located in an area that assures privacy for students and their families during the reunification process. The Public Information Officer (PIO) will provide approved, accurate information to the public in a timely manner from this location.
- **First Aid Station -** A location should be included to provide first aid as needed for non-life threatening/minor injuries.

The diagram provided is an example of how an ideal reunification site might appear. While your site may not be ideal, every effort should be made to establish separation between areas. This will be extremely helpful in carrying out the tasks necessary in each area. The Command Center should be located nearby while the Media Area ideally should be distant enough to ensure privacy during this process.
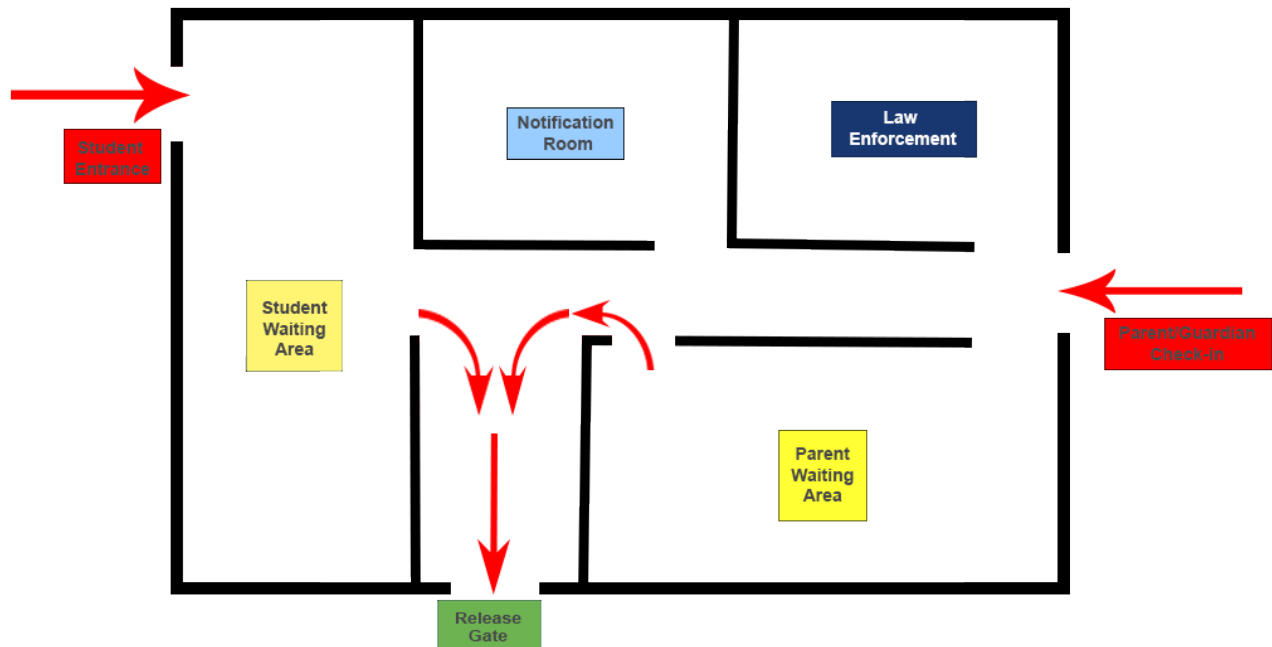
1. Does your site(s) require a memorandum of understanding?

2. Will the site provide staff to support reunification efforts? If yes, how will they be trained to assist?

3. Has staff been informed regarding reunification site location?

4. How will site-specific training be provided?

Plan Activation

The decision to activate the reunification plan can be based on a variety of factors including the safety of children, the nature of the emergency, or the complexity of the incident. How the plan is activated, who oversees the process, and how responsibilities are allocated is left to the discretion of the school and response partners.

1. Who is responsible for activating the reunification plan?

2. Who is responsible for oversight and management of the process?

3. When is the plan activated?

4. What agencies or organizations provide support for reunification efforts?

5. Who is responsible for deploying the Reunification Response Team?

This plan initiates with the arrival of parents or guardians at the reunification site. Students will be moved to the site with their teachers as described in the School Evacuation Plan and the District Transportation Plan. Students will enter the reunification site through a previously determined entrance in accordance with the transportation plan and be moved to the Student Waiting Area as determined by the pre-event planning team. All students will remain together with their teacher at the reunification site. It is recommended that teachers be prepared with activities for their students that will help reduce emergency-based trauma.

Students

Upon activation of this plan, students may be moved to the reunification site by bus, on foot, or by other means of transportation. Students will enter through the designated student entrance and be guided to the Student Waiting Area. Throughout the process, students should remain with their teacher and classmates. Students requiring medical attention should be escorted to the first aid station.

Parents

Parents are notified as described in the Communication Annex and informed regarding the reunification location. They should be reminded to bring a government issued photo ID such as a driver's license and instructed to follow signage upon arrival to begin the check-in process. (See Parent/Guardian Check-in Area for a description of the processes.)

It is likely that parents will arrive at the reunification site prior to the reunification team, school staff, and students. Plans should include provisions to address this situation and consider options that reduce anxiety such as:

- Educating parents regarding the reunification process in advance of an emergency.
- Developing pre-drafted messages for site staff that remind parents of the process and assures them that every effort is being made to initiate reunification processes as quickly as possible.
- Establishing law enforcement or security personnel around the reunification site to increase compliance with the process and encourage cooperation.

Roles and Responsibilities

Roles and responsibilities need to be defined in advance of the need for reunification. It is recommended that all staff participate in Incident Command Structure training (IS-100 at www. training.fema.gov) to better understand the basic principles of emergency response. In addition, each task associated with the reunification process should be defined to the degree possible to remove some of the uncertainty and anxiety inherent to this type of high-stress emergency environment.

1. Who will oversee the reunification effort?
2. Has the district established a reunification command structure?
3. Does the district have a Reunification Rapid Response Team?
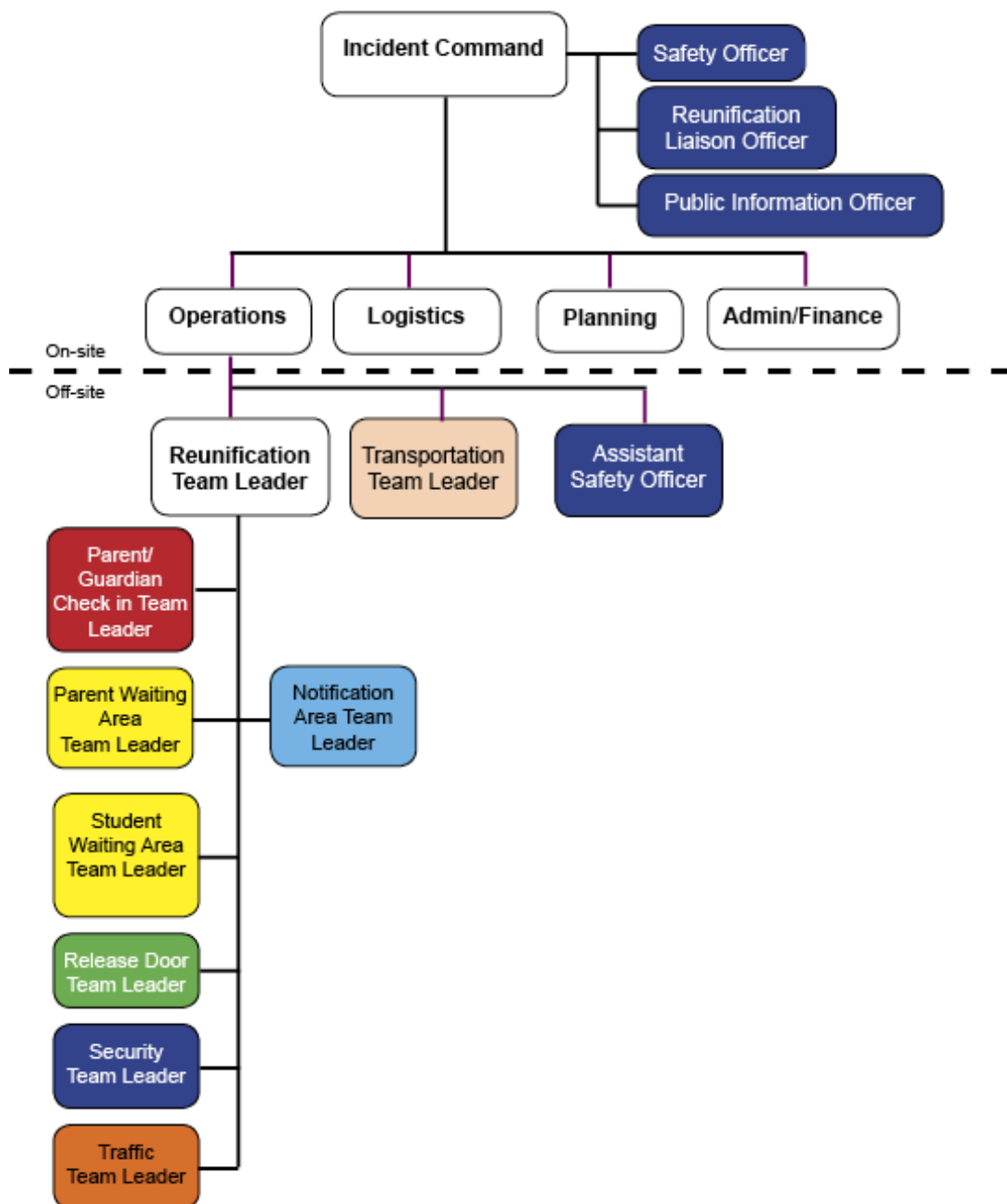
Reunification Response Team

The nature of the emergency may dictate the roles and responsibilities associated with reunification. While the players may change, the tasks associated with each role are fairly constant. It will be important to cross-train individuals and consider establishing a Reunification Response Team (RRT) from outside the impacted school. This team may include staff from a local church or house of worship, business, staff at an off-site reunification location, or staff from the regional Area Education Agency. It is important to include representatives from RRT in the planning, training, and exercise processes.

Roles

- Reunification Liaison Officer
- Safety Officer
- Reunification Team Leader
  - » Reunification Logistics Officer
- Check-in Team Leader
  - » Check-in Support Staff
- Notification Team Leader
  - » Notification Support Staff
- Student Waiting Area Team Leader
  - » Student Waiting Area Support Staff
- Parent Waiting Area Team Leader
  - » Parent Waiting Area Support Staff
- Release Door Team Leader
  - » Release Door Support Staff
- Security Leader
  - » Security Support Staff
- Traffic Leader
  - » Traffic Support Staff

The following roles apply to positions on any type of response team structure (*e.g.,* RRT or Response Team). The task descriptions assume that teachers remain with their students and that non-teaching staff or RRT members perform all reunification tasks.

Reunification Liaison Officer

NAME:

CONTACT INFO:

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Radio to communicate with Incident Commander and Reunification Team Leader
- Pen, notepad
- Map of reunification site with clearly marked room locations

The Reunification Liaison Officer provides a critical link between the Reunification Team Leader, who is managing internal reunification efforts, and Law Enforcement, Fire, and EMS who are working externally to support the reunification efforts in and around the reunification site.

The responsibilities for this position are fulfilled at the Command Site and are conducted under the Unified Command structure.

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Provides communication and coordination link between the Command Site and Reunification Site.
- Responsible for coordinating communication between the Reunification Team Leader and Law Enforcement, Fire, and Emergency Medical Services. Reports any requests directly to the Reunification Team Leader and Unified Command.
- Refer all outside requests for information to the Public Information Officer/ Communications Director.

Assistant Safety Officer

NAME:

CONTACT INFO:

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Radio to communicate with Security Team Leader and Incident Commander
- Map of the reunification site with clearly marked locations
- Pen, notepad

RESPONSIBILITIES

- Ensures that the reunification site is a safe facility for workers and visitors. This role is different from security, which assures the personal safety of workers and visitors from physical harm or harassment.
- Monitors the flow of traffic through the reunification site and reports any areas of back-up or safety concerns to the Reunification Team Leader.
- Monitors for any hazards in and around the reunification site involving potential slips, trips, and falls. Mitigates any problems or contacts the Operations/Logistics Leader for assistance.
- When needed, requests removal of hazards from site facilitator/owner. This may include snow/ice removal, construction hazards, or any equipment or materials that may impede reunification efforts or represent a safety hazard to students, team members, parents, and guardians.
- Confirms the safety of the location and communicates with the Security Team Leader when observing situations requiring intervention by law enforcement or mental health service professionals for crowd control or de-escalation of tensions.

Reunification Team Leader

NAME:

CONTACT INFO:

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Radio to communicate with all team leaders and Incident Commander
- Table, notepad, pens
- Internet access, if available

RESPONSIBILITIES

Before

- Assist in identification of a reunification site.
- Assist in identifying members of the Reunification Rapid Response Team.
- Uphold requirements for training and exercises necessary to support this plan. Assure cross training of staff on positions identified in this plan.

During

- Direct all reunification activities and monitor the process.
- Assure all necessary roles and responsibilities are maintained and carried out.
- Report information/updates to the Incident Commander.
- Act as a point of contact for other response agencies supporting reunification efforts.
- Oversee information sharing, status changes, and updates with all team leaders.
- Coordinate all requests for additional information.
- Reposition staff as needed in support of each reunification area.

After

- Provide an After-Action Report (AAR) to identify successes and challenges
- Modify or update the reunification plan in support of items identified in the AAR.

Parent/Guardian Check-In Area

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Two to six tables (depending upon the number of students and expected parents or guardians)
- Power supply and Internet access
- Student Information Cards
- Clip Boards
- Scissors
- Pens or pencils
- Student Reunification List/Emergency Pick-up List
- Radio for communication with other team leaders
- Signage identifying "Parent/Guardian Check-In"

STAFF

- Greeters
- Checkers
- Accountant
- Runners

RESPONSIBILITIES

Check-in Team Leader

- Direct team activities.
- Interact with the Incident Commander to identify problems and report updates.
- Refer all outside requests for information to the Public Information Officer/Communications Director.

Check-in Team Members

- Greet parents, guardians, or designees.
- Provide interpretation services, if needed including translated documents prior to an incident.
- Request completion of the Student Information Card.
- Briefly explain the reunification process.
- Request formal identification from parents, guardians, or designees.
- Verify that the requesting adult is authorized to take custody of the requested student(s).
- Direct parents, guardians, or designees to the waiting area or notification room as appropriate.
- Provide reassurance to parents, guardians, or designees.
- Dispatch runners to bring students to the release gate.
- Maintain order.

Check-in Process

As parents, guardians or designees arrive, there should be clear signage directing them where they should go to begin the reunification process. For larger locations, it may be necessary to place greeters in the parking area or in the front of the building to direct those arriving.

1. **Greeters** - welcome parents and request completion of a student information card. A card must be completed for each student that is being unified. The card confirms the identity of the parent and provides a record of a completed reunification. Greeters should briefly explain the process to parents and assure them the procedures are designed to ensure the safety and proper reunification of their child. Upon completion of the card, direct parents to the Checkers table.

   Student Information Card (Please print clearly)
   Please complete all sections except where indicated as "For Official Use Only"
   Be prepared to show photo ID

   Student Name _____

   Student Grade _____ Student Cell Phone Number _____

   Name of person picking up student _____

   Relationship to student _____

   Phone number of person picking up student _____

   For official use only:
   Photo ID confirmed?   Yes   No   Authorized _____

   Student Name _____

   Student Grade _____

   Student date of birth _____

2. **Checkers** - receive the Student Information Card from the parent and confirm that the information is complete. Verify the parent, guardian, or designees ID from a valid government ID with the information provided on the card and check the appropriate "yes" or "no" box on the card. Cut the card on the dotted line and give the parent the bottom (small) portion of the card. Place the top portion of the card in the basket for further verification by the accountant. Direct parents to the Parent Waiting Area and thank them for their patience.

3. **Accountant -** cross-references the card with the Student Reunification List from the school. This confirms the parent or guardian has the authority to reunite with the student. If the parent's authorization to pick up the student is confirmed, the Accountant signs the card on the line marked "Authorized". The Accountant determines if the card should be placed in a basket for runners or if the information card should be given to a crisis counselor, if student status information is available. The Accountant should be an individual who is familiar with students and families, such as the school secretary or counselor. If the parent is not authorized to pick up the student, it may be necessary to notify security.

4. **Runners -** retrieve students from the Student Waiting Area from cards verified by the Accountant. Be sure and take cards from the bottom of the stack to help reduce the waiting time for parents. If the student is not present in the Student Waiting Area, the card should be held as students continue to arrive. If it is confirmed that a child is deceased or has been transported to the hospital, the card should be passed to a member of the Notification Team.

● ● ● ● Greeters

Checkers Table

Accountants Table

● ● ● Runners
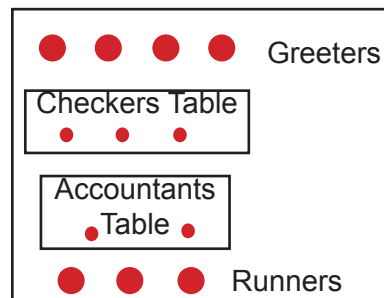
Parent Waiting Area Team

The individuals supporting the Parent/Guardian Waiting Area should be prepared to interact with individuals under extreme stress. Specialized training or experience should be a consideration when assigning individuals to this team.

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Staff members to meet and greet parents, guardians, or designees while they wait for reunification with children.
- Information sheets with FAQs or additional resources for families.
- Information on any Family Assistance Center services.

STAFF

May also include:

- School Administrator or designee
- Clergy or counselor
- Victim Advocates

RESPONSIBILITIES

Parent Waiting Area Team Leader

- Direct team activities
- Communicate with parents, guardians, or designee to address questions and concerns
- Draft pre-event messages
- Maintain order and calm
- Interact with Incident Commander to identify problems and report updates
- Monitor reunification time and provide feedback to the check-in team

Parent Waiting Area Team Member

- Maintain order and calm
- Communicate with parents, guardians, or designee to address questions and concerns
- Escort parents or guardians to the Notification Area, if needed
- Assist in the drafting of pre-event messages
- Monitor reunification time

Parent Waiting Area Process

1. Parents may be waiting in this area for an extended period of time. Staff in this area should be prepared to answer questions and provide information on the reunification process. It is recommended that pre-drafted messages are developed in anticipation of frequently asked questions or concerns that those waiting to be reunified with students may have.

2. If it is confirmed that the student is deceased or transported to a hospital, the Student Identification Card will be passed to a member of the Notification Team. Parents should be escorted to the Notification Room prior to any discussion regarding the status of their child.

3. Parent Waiting Area Team members should be prepared to fulfill any reasonable request made by families awaiting information on their child. Consideration should be made for food, water, or other basic needs as families are waiting.

Many law enforcement agencies, district attorneys, and prosecutors have victim advocates on staff and a cadre of volunteers. They often deploy when there is a crisis. Very often they are trained in Psychological First Aid and can be helpful with crisis counseling, if needed, during a reunification. It is recommended that information regarding these services be coordinated in advance of an emergency.

Notification Area Team

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Private areas with individual rooms
- Power supply and Internet access
- Radio to communicate with Student Holding Area, Release Gate, and Request Gate
- Telephone to communicate with outside agencies and area hospitals

STAFF

- Counselors and/or trained mental health professionals to provide notification and support
- Victim Advocate

RESPONSIBILITIES

Notification Area Team Leader and Team Members

- Greet parents, guardians, or designee.
- Confirm the name and status of the student they are requesting.
- Provide only parents or guardians with accurate information regarding the status of their student(s) NOTE: A neighbor or relative may be authorized to pick up a student, but only parents or guardians should be informed of injuries or death.
- Arrange for assistance in the way of transportation, clergy, or other support.
- Assign an employee to serve as a liaison to the family.

Notification Area Team Members

Notification Team Members provide support to crisis counselors or arrange for any services needed by parents or guardians such as transportation to hospitals or connection to Family Assistance Center services.

Notification Team Members have been specifically trained to aid families of deceased children. Only qualified personnel should be assigned to this team.

Plan may include collaboration with the Office of the Medical Examiner. Insert any necessary references here.

Notification Team Processes

The Notification Team member will provide information on injured and deceased such as:

Injured

- Update the parent regarding the status of their child when appropriate.
- Assist with coordination of communication to determine their child's location.
- If necessary, arrange for transportation to hospital.
- Assure the parent/guardian that everything possible is being done to safeguard their child.
- Assist the parent/guardian with their trauma.
- Make available to the parent/guardian means for communicating with other family members and supporters.
- Shelter the parent/guardian from media.
- Provide access to information regarding additional services.

Deceased

- Staff from the Office of the Medical Examiner, trained law enforcement officers or counselors will be responsible for notifying parents/guardians that their student is deceased.
- Assist the parent/guardian with their trauma
- Assure the parent or guardian that everything possible is being done to safeguard their child's remains.
- Shelter the parent/guardian from media.
- Provide access to information regarding additional services.

Student Waiting Area Team

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Area large enough to shelter students
- Radio for communication with other team leaders
- Staff/Team Members to supervise students and manage teacher requests
- Missing student forms

STAFF

- Teachers
- Team Leader
- Team Assistants

RESPONSIBILITIES

Student Waiting Area Team Leader

- Direct team activities
- Interact with Parent Waiting Area Team Leader
- Interact with the Incident Commander to identify problems and report updates
- Collect all Injury and Missing Persons information from teachers and team members and report immediately to the Reunification Team Leader.

Student Waiting Area Team Members

- Maintaining accountability and control of students.
- Provide reassurance to students.
- Obtain information on missing students.
- Verify release information when a student is requested.
- Assist the Release Door team.
- Provide staff support and reassurance to teachers.
- Provide breaks to teachers as needed.

Student Waiting Area Process

1. Classroom teachers will remain with their students in the waiting area. Each will have a list of the students under their supervision and the name of their parent or guardian. Teachers should immediately take role upon arrival to the Student Waiting Area. Anyone absent at the start of the school day or who left school prior to the incident should be noted.

2. Teachers will report any missing students to the Student Holding Area Team Leader using the Missing Student Form. These students should be immediately reported to Incident Command. Every effort should be made to confirm the status of missing students as quickly as possible.

3. Runners from the Red Team will provide the Student Identification Card to the Student Waiting Area Team Member who will locate the student and confirm their identification with the teacher.

4. Student Waiting Area Team Members will escort the student to the Release Gate for reunification with parents, guardians, or designees from the Parent Waiting Area.

Students may spend an extended time in the waiting area while the reunification process is carried out or while parents are en route to the location. Activities may be provided to assist with maintaining student behavior expectations or in some events, mental health professionals may be present. Students should be allowed to converse with classmates and teachers while awaiting reunification.

Release Door Team

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Two tables
- Pens
- Power supply and Internet access, if available
- Radio to communicate with other team leaders
- Stapler

STAFF

- Release Door Team Leader
- Release Door Team Member
- Security Team Member

RESPONSIBILITIES

Release Door Team Leader

- Direct team activities.
- Interact with Reunification Team Leader to identify problems and report updates.
- Refer all outside requests for information to the Public Information Officer.

Release Door Team Member

- Greet parents, guardians, or designees.
- Provide reassurance to parents, guardians, or designees.
- Verify that the requesting adult is authorized to take custody of the requested student.
- Maintain calm and order.
- Confirm identities of the student as well as the parents or guardian.
- Confirm the presence of the Authorized signature on the Student Information Card. Release student(s) to authorized parent, guardian, or designee. Provide a record of the reunification on the Student Information Card.
- Provide security and ensure privacy as families exit the building.

Release Door Area Process

1. Greet parents, provide reassurance, and thank them for their patience.

2. Confirm the parent, guardian, or designee identification *via* valid government identification.

3. Confirm that the card provided by the parent and the card provided by the Student Waiting Area Assistant are complete and matching. Confirm the Authorized signature and the parent signature.

4. Note the time on the bottom card, initial that the reunification is complete, and staple the two sections of the card together. This step confirms the identity of individual(s) with whom the child was reunified, the time the reunification occurred, and the identity of the team member that completed the reunification process.

5. Place the cards in alphabetical order.

All adults arriving for reunification with students must be directed to the appropriate Check-in doors when necessary. No students should be release to adults at the release door who have not been verified by Check-in Team Members or who have not completed a Student Identification Card. Security Team Members/law enforcement personnel should be present to assure compliance by parents, guardians, or designees.

Parent/Guardian Sign Off

Print your name _____

Signature _____

For official use only:

Pick up time:

Initials:

Reunification Instructions

Thank you for your patience during this reunification process. Every effort is being made to reunite you with your child as quickly as possible. We share your goal of protecting your child and ensuring that their health and safety are our highest priority.

1. Please complete the information on the other side of this card.
2. Be prepared to provide a photo ID. If you do not have a photo ID, it may take longer to complete the reunification process as we verify your identity.
3. Select the appropriate line at the check-in table based on your student's last name.
4. After check-in, you will be directed to the parent waiting area and a staff person will be sent to recover your child. Keep in mind, your child may still be on a bus in transit from the school. Your patience is greatly appreciated.
5. If your child is injured, you may be directed to meet with a counselor. Every effort is being made to obtain information regarding your child as quickly as possible.
6. Please be patient with the reunification staff as we work to reunite you with your child. Your child's safety is our greatest concern.

Security Team

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Radios to communicate with all team leaders and the Command Center

RESPONSIBILITIES

Security Team Leader (May be Law Enforcement)

- Coordinates with or oversees law enforcement activities in support of reunification efforts.
- Maintains calm and order throughout the process.
- Monitors security issues associated with the reunification process.
- Reports any security concerns or challenges to law enforcement that may arise in the reunification process or manages all security concerns that may arise.

Law Enforcement

In addition to managing the crime scene and conducting investigations (not directly related to reunification), law enforcement may serve in the following roles to directly support reunification efforts:

- Additional security for the release door and parent check-in areas
- Traffic control
- Perimeter control
- Maintaining order
- De-escalation of tensions

Security Team Member

1. Monitor and respond to issues that may arise at the Check-in Area, Parent Waiting Area, Release Gate, and Parking lot.

2. Direct media to the appropriate area for press conferences and updates.

3. Maintain crowd control.

4. Assist with de-escalation of tensions.

Security Team Processes

Security Team Processes should be coordinated with Law Enforcement security measures.

Traffic Team (May be Law Enforcement)

EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES

- Radios to communicate with Security and the Command Center
- High visibility vests

RESPONSIBILITIES

Traffic Team Leader

- Establishes a pre-event plan for the movement of traffic entering and exiting the reunification site.
- Coordinates with law enforcement activities to assure an organized and effective flow of traffic entering and exiting the reunification site premises.

Traffic Team Members

- Under the direction of the team leader, assures an organized and effective flow of traffic entering and exiting the reunification site.
- Maintains calm and order throughout the process.
- Monitors security issues associated with the movement of traffic.
- Reports any concerns or challenges to law enforcement that may arise in the reunification process or manages all security concerns that may arise.

Traffic Area Processes

BEFORE

Members of the traffic team should visit all designated reunification sites in advance of an emergency and develop plans for the movement of traffic entering and exiting the premises. Plans should consider the following variables in development of plans:

- Time of day
- Surrounding vicinity traffic patterns
- Special events on the premises and in the surrounding community
- Number of students
- Potential number and types of vehicles needing access (*i.e.,* passenger cars vs. buses, etc.)
- Any geographic issues that may cause potential problems

DURING

1. Monitor and respond to issues that may arise in the parking lot.

2. Direct arriving parents or guardians to parking areas and exits.

3. Direct anyone arriving who is not picking up a student to exit the premises immediately.

4. Provide information on news sources and access to additional information released through the Public Information Officer.

5. Direct media to the appropriate area for press conferences and updates.

6. Maintain crowd control.

7. Assist with de-escalation of tensions.

District Transportation Plan

Refer to District Transportation Plan

Transportation Team Leader Contact Information

Name:

Contact Info:

Appendices

Appendix A: Family Preparedness

Orderly reunification of families is most successful when preparation and planning includes both the school and parents or guardians. There are many steps families can take in advance of an emergency that will ease the process of reunification and potentially reduce the anxiety that occurs in an emergency.

Families should develop an emergency plan together so that both children and parents are aware of what may occur if they are separated in a disaster. The plan should be consistent with the school reunification plan to avoid any confusion. Therefore, select components of the school reunification plan should be shared with parents or guardians in advance of an emergency.

The Family Emergency Playbook provided in the Appendix outlines information all families should have in place before disaster strikes. This includes important emergency contact information such as out-of-state contacts, next of kin, and family medical contacts. The plan should also include information on where parents should turn for accurate, up-to-date information when an emergency occurs while children are at school.

Additional information on family preparedness can be found at ready.gov

1. Will parents and guardians be educated and informed regarding reunification processes in advance of an emergency?

2. What information should families be prepared to provide in advance of activation of the plan? (See Appendix for Emergency Information Card and Family Emergency Playbook.)

Resources

NCMEC Family Emergency Playbook

Ready.gov

This section should reference any information provided to parents in advance of plan activation.

Appendix B: Equipment List

Item	Confirmation ✓
Radios (4)	
Vests: • dark blue • red • yellow • green • orange • white	
Pens or pencils (20)	
Notepads (20)	
Reunification Site Maps (20)	
Extension Cords (5)	
Area Signage: • Parent Check In • Parent Waiting Area • Student Waiting Area • Student Pick Up Area • Exit	
Staplers (3)	
Student Information Cards (1 per student)	
Missing Student Reporting Forms (1 per teacher)	
Family Assistance Information Sheet	
Job Sheets	
Color-coded sign-in/out sheets	
Scissors	
Clipboards	
3 Power reels	
Thumb tacks	
Duct Tape	
Blue Painter's Tape	
Scotch Tape	
Cell Phone Charging Station	
Pop-up Traffic Cones	
Caution Tape	

Appendix C: Student Information Card

Student Information Card (Please print clearly)

Please complete all sections except where indicated as "For Official Use Only"Be prepared to show

Student Name _____

Student Grade _____   Student Cell Phone Number _____

Name of person picking up student _____

Relationship to student _____

Phone number of person picking up student _____

Student Name _____

Student Grade _____

Student date of birth _____

Parent/Guardian Sign Off

Print your name _____

Signature _____

Reunification Instructions

Thank you for your patience during this reunification process. Every effort is being made to reunite you with your child as quickly as possible. We share your goal of protecting your child and ensuring that their health and safety are our highest priority.

1. Please complete the information on the other side of this card.
2. Be prepared to provide a photo ID. If you do not have a photo ID, it may take longer to complete the reunification process as we verify your identity.
3. Select the appropriate line at the check-in table based on your student's last name.
4. After check-in, you will be directed to the parent waiting area and a staff person will be sent to recover your child. Keep in mind, your child may still be on a bus in transit from the school. Your patience is greatly appreciated.
5. If your child is injured, you may be directed to meet with a counselor. Every effort is being made to obtain information regarding your child as quickly as possible.
6. Please be patient with the reunification staff as we work to reunite you with your child. Your child's safety is our greatest concern.

Appendix D: (Following Page) Missing Student Report Form *(Optional)*

INJURED / MISSING STATUS REPORT FORM - BY ROOM

Return this form to Student Waiting Area Team Leader

All Persons Present and Accounted for: Yes ☐   No ☐

Teacher's Name:_____ Room _____

Teaching Assistant's Name:_____

Date: _____   Time:_____AM PM (circle one)

Missing or Unaccounted for:

1.	6.
2.	7.
3.	8.
4.	9.
5.	10.

Minor injuries requiring first aid:

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Absent:

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Others not present (e.g. students who left early, sent elsewhere)

Name Where were they sent?
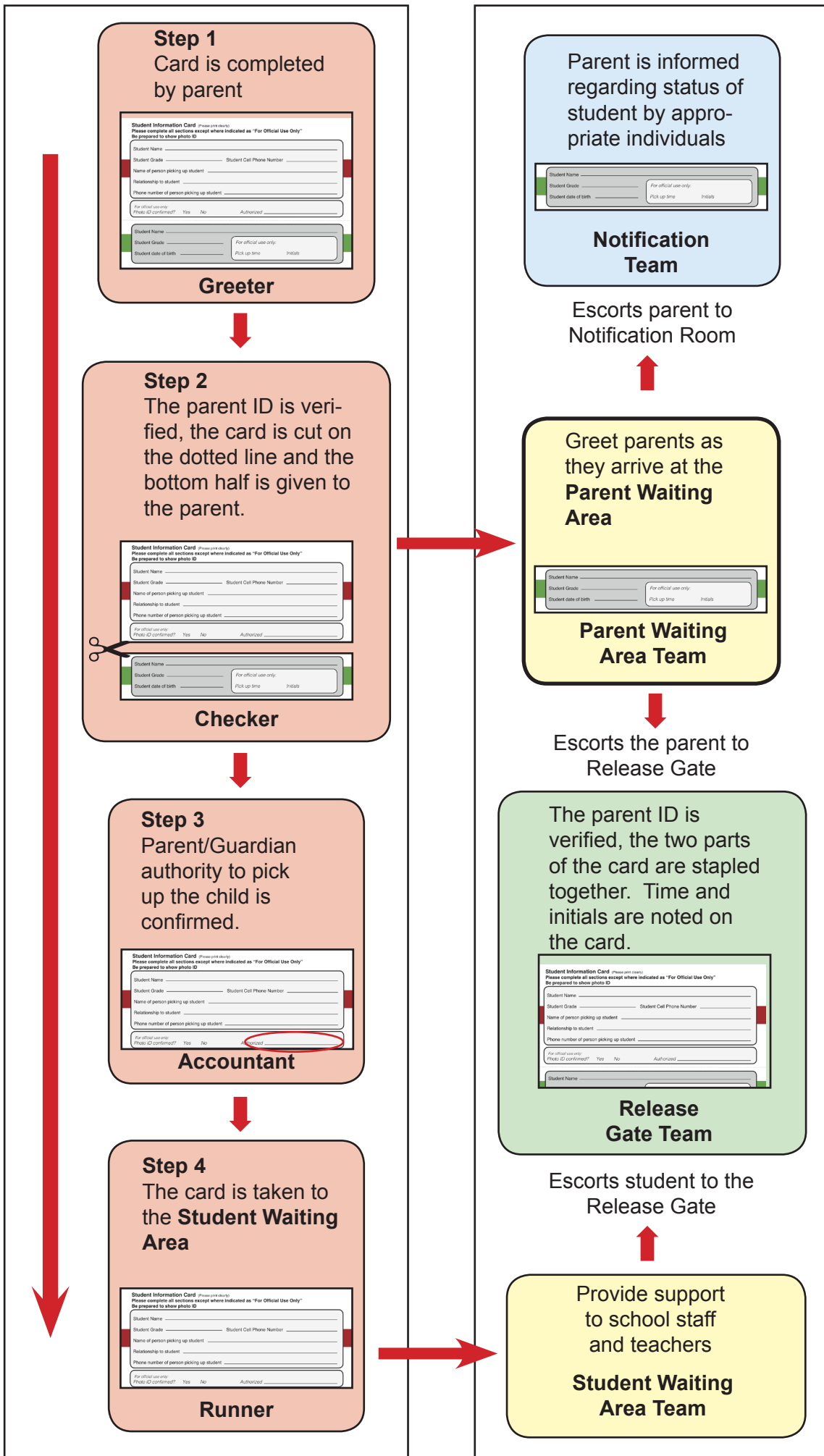
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Additional students PRESENT and accounted for – NOT normally with you:

Name Normal Location (Teacher name or assigned room number)

1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Appendix E: Parent Renification Process

Reunification Process

Step 1
Card is completed by parent

Greeter

Step 2
The parent ID is verified, the card is cut on the dotted line and the bottom half is given to the parent.

Checker

Step 3
Parent/Guardian authority to pick up the child is confirmed.

Accountant

Step 4
The card is taken to the **Student Waiting Area**

Runner

Parent is informed regarding status of student by appropriate individuals

Notification Team

EXIT to additional services →

Escorts parent to Notification Room

Greet parents as they arrive at the **Parent Waiting Area**

Parent Waiting Area Team

Escorts the parent to Release Gate

The parent ID is verified, the two parts of the card are stapled together. Time and initials are noted on the card.

Release Gate Team

EXIT with information on available services →

Escorts student to the Release Gate

Provide support to school staff and teachers

Student Waiting Area Team

35

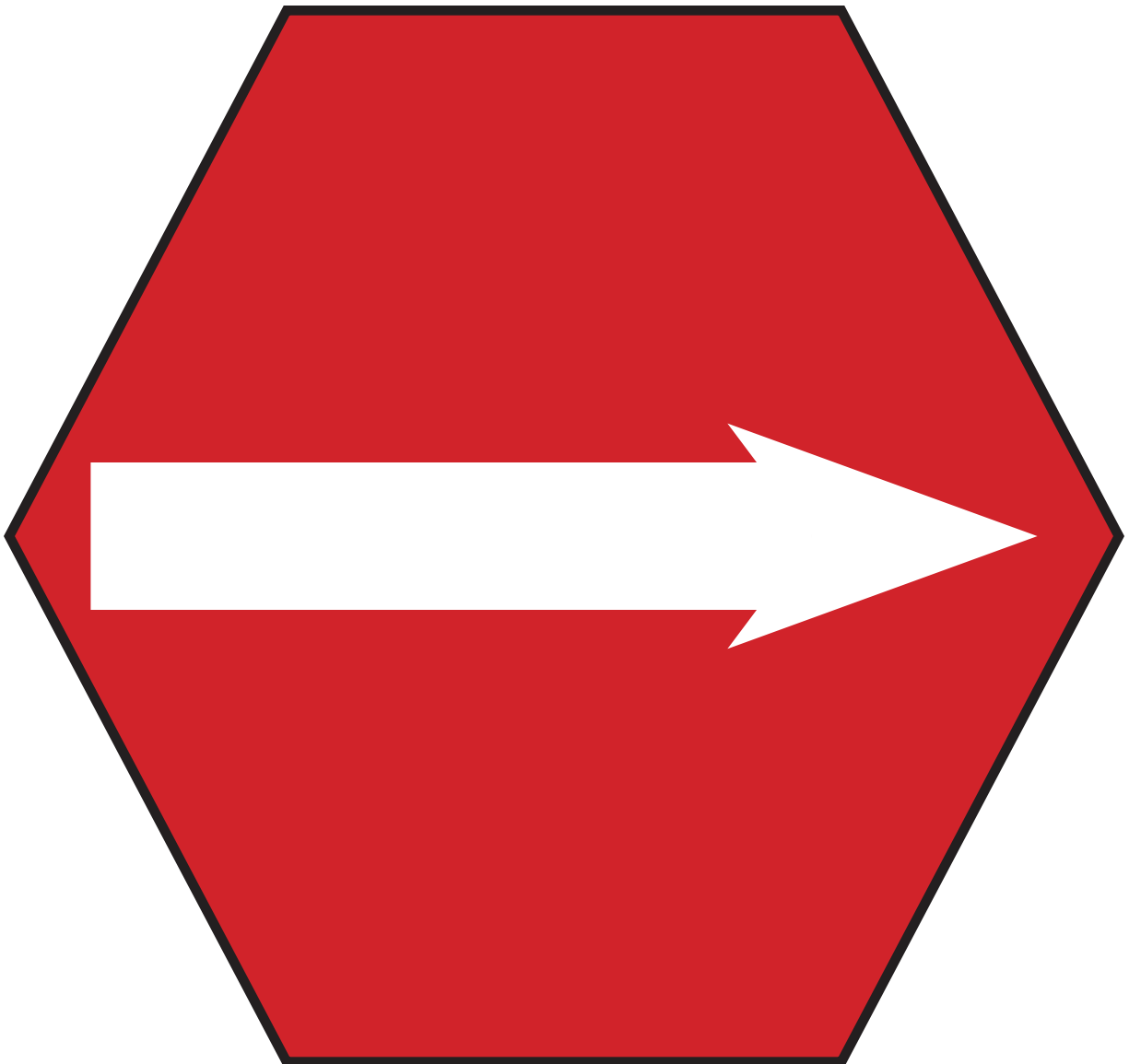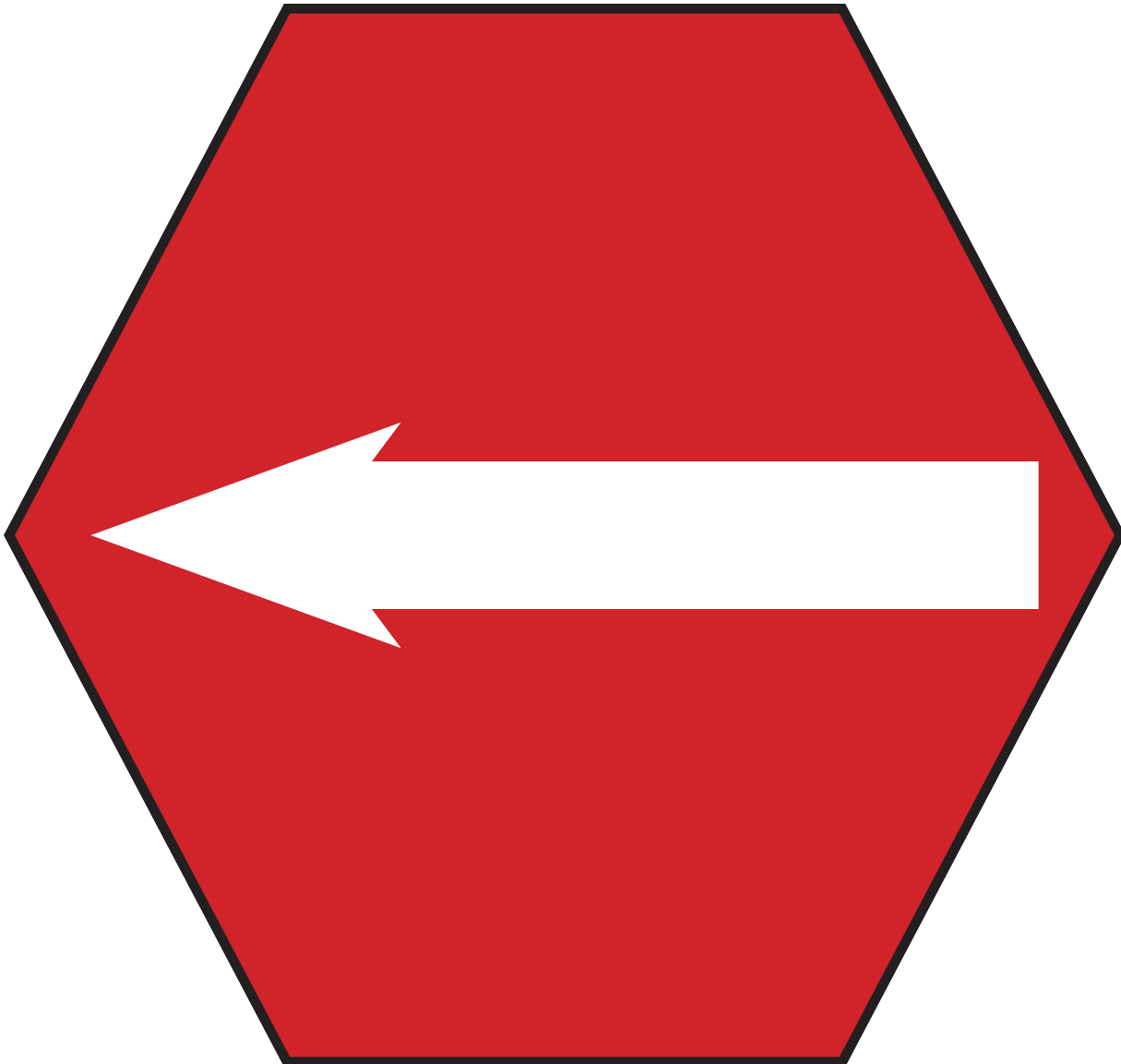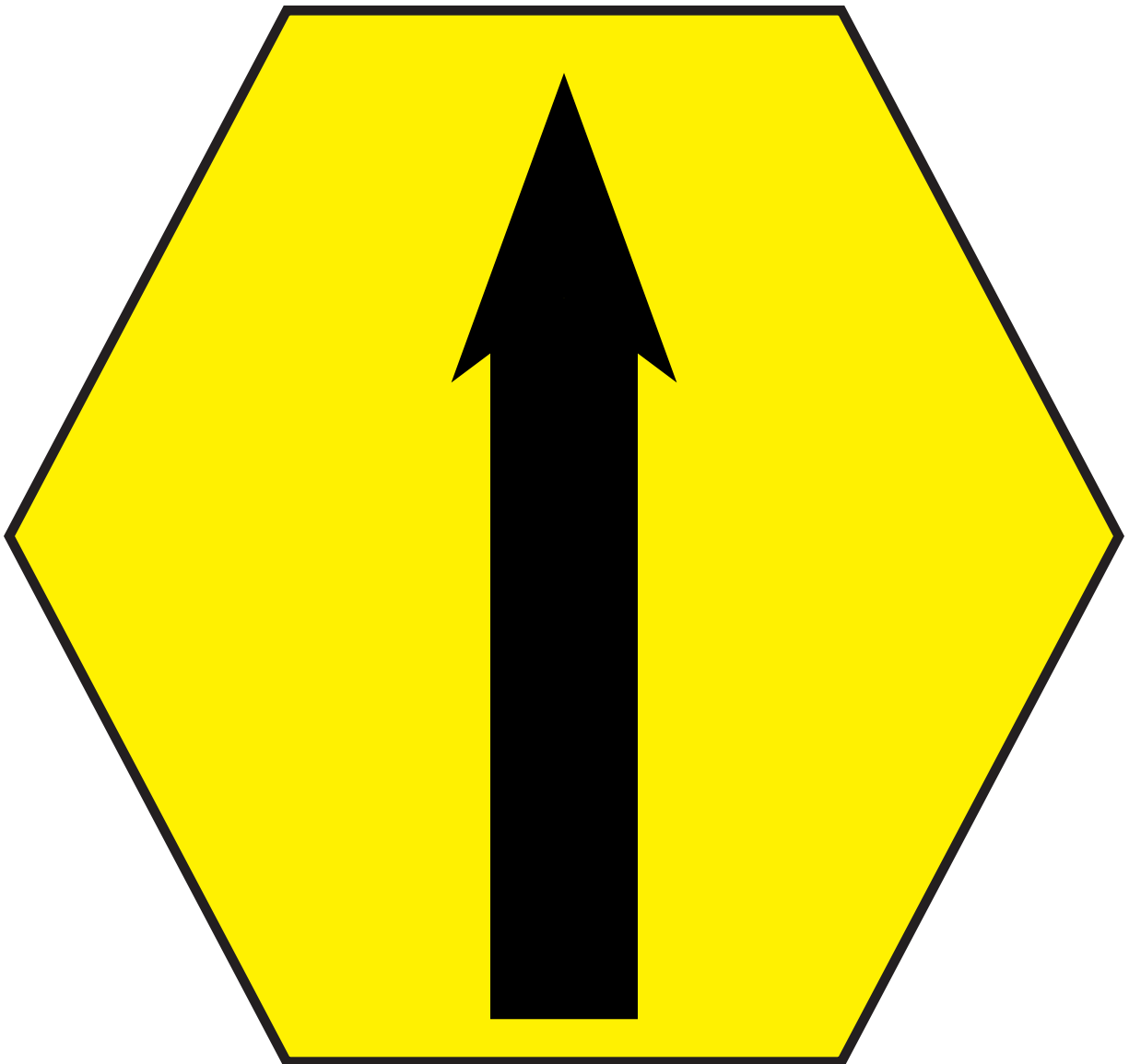# Appendix F: Signage

PARENT CHECK IN
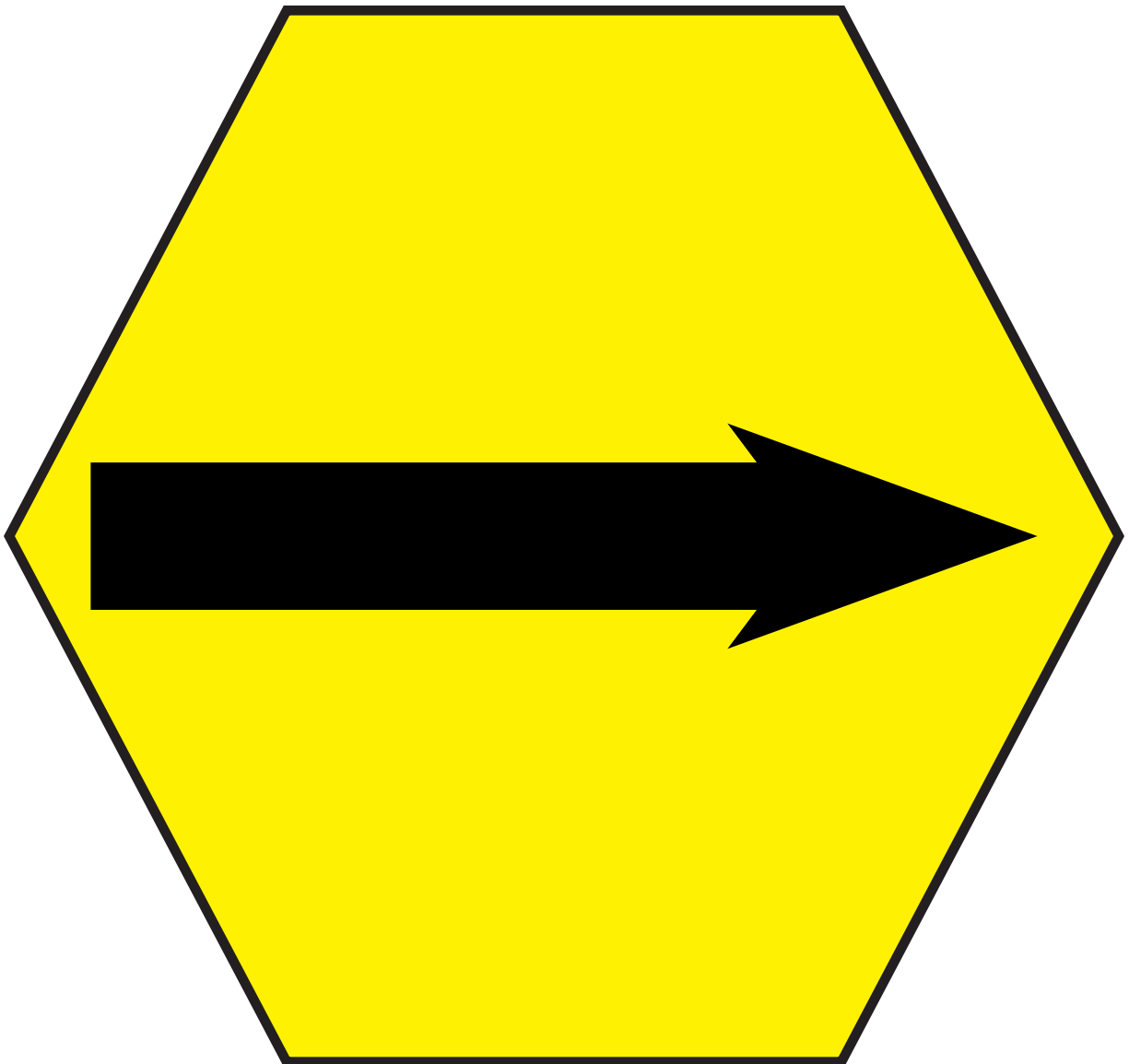
PARENT CHECK IN

PARENT CHECK IN
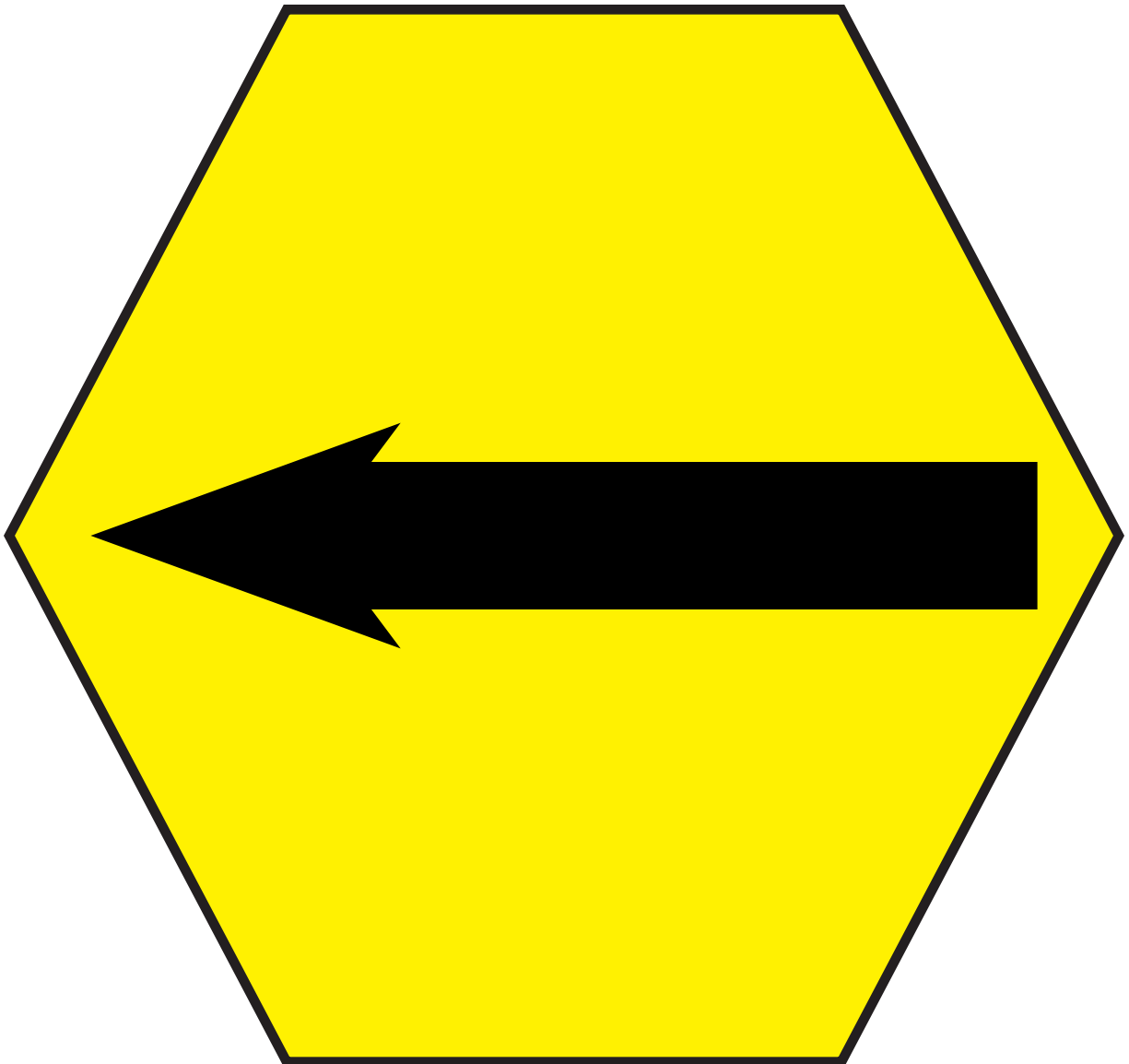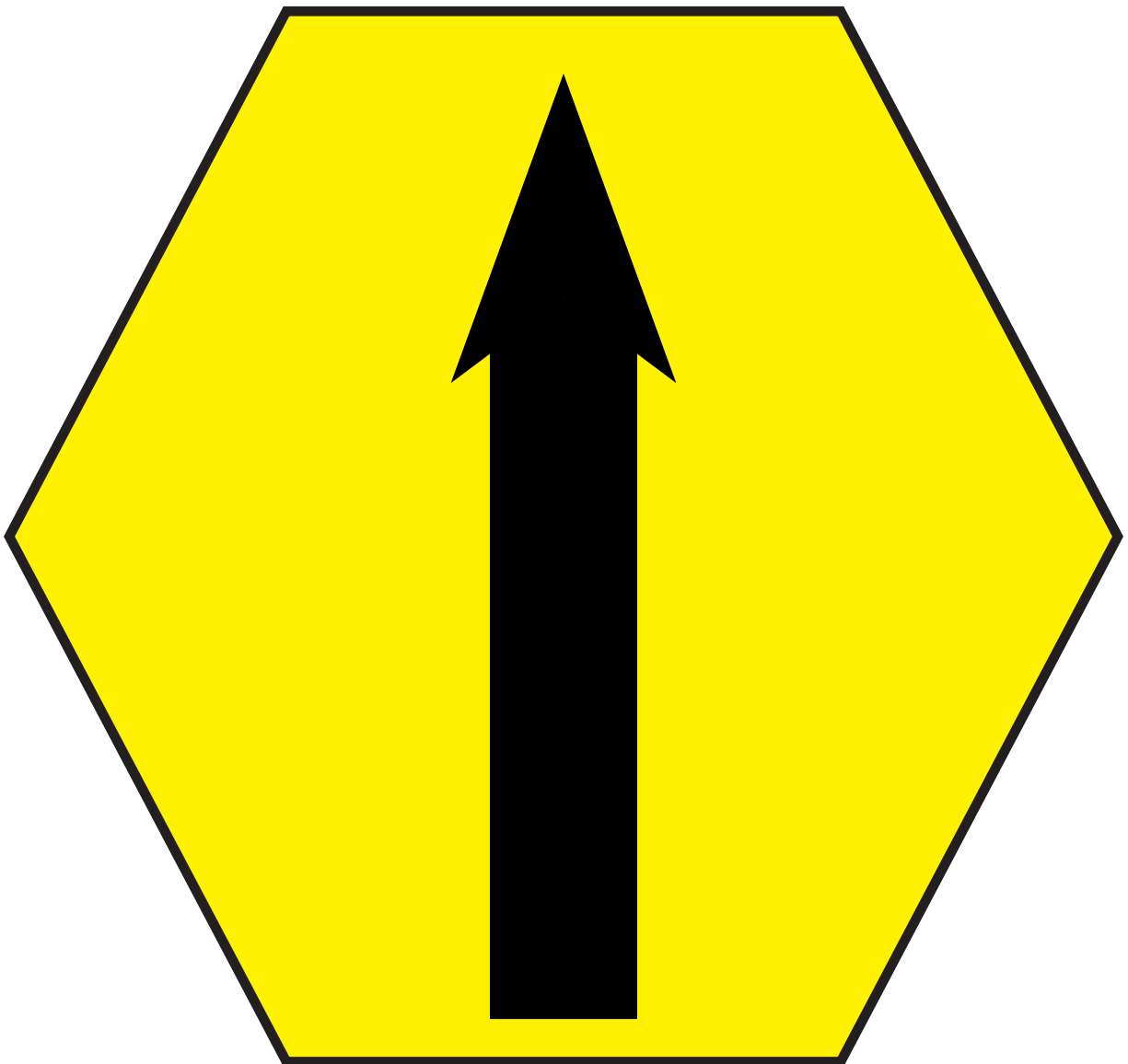
PARENT WAITING AREA

PARENT WAITING AREA
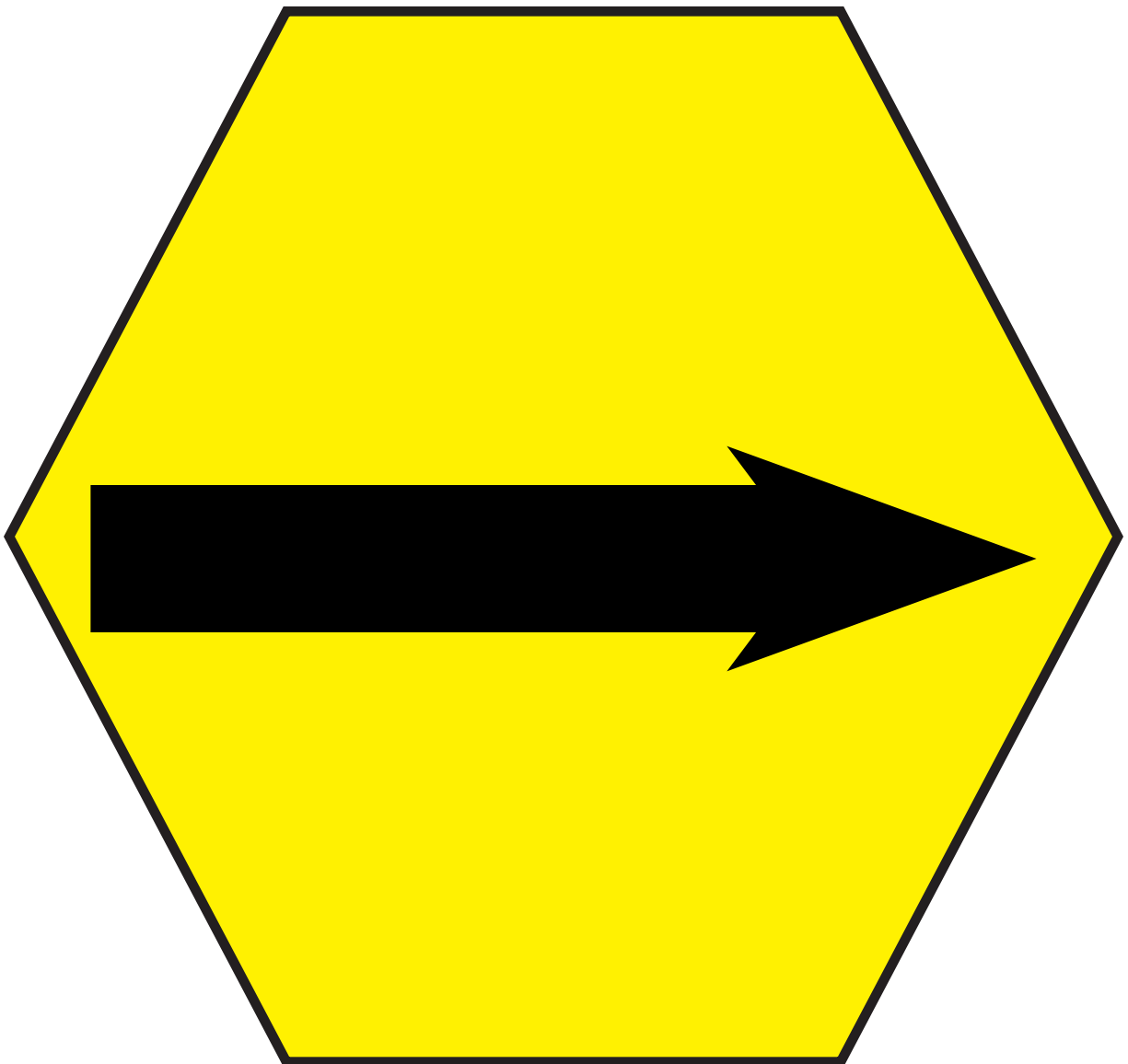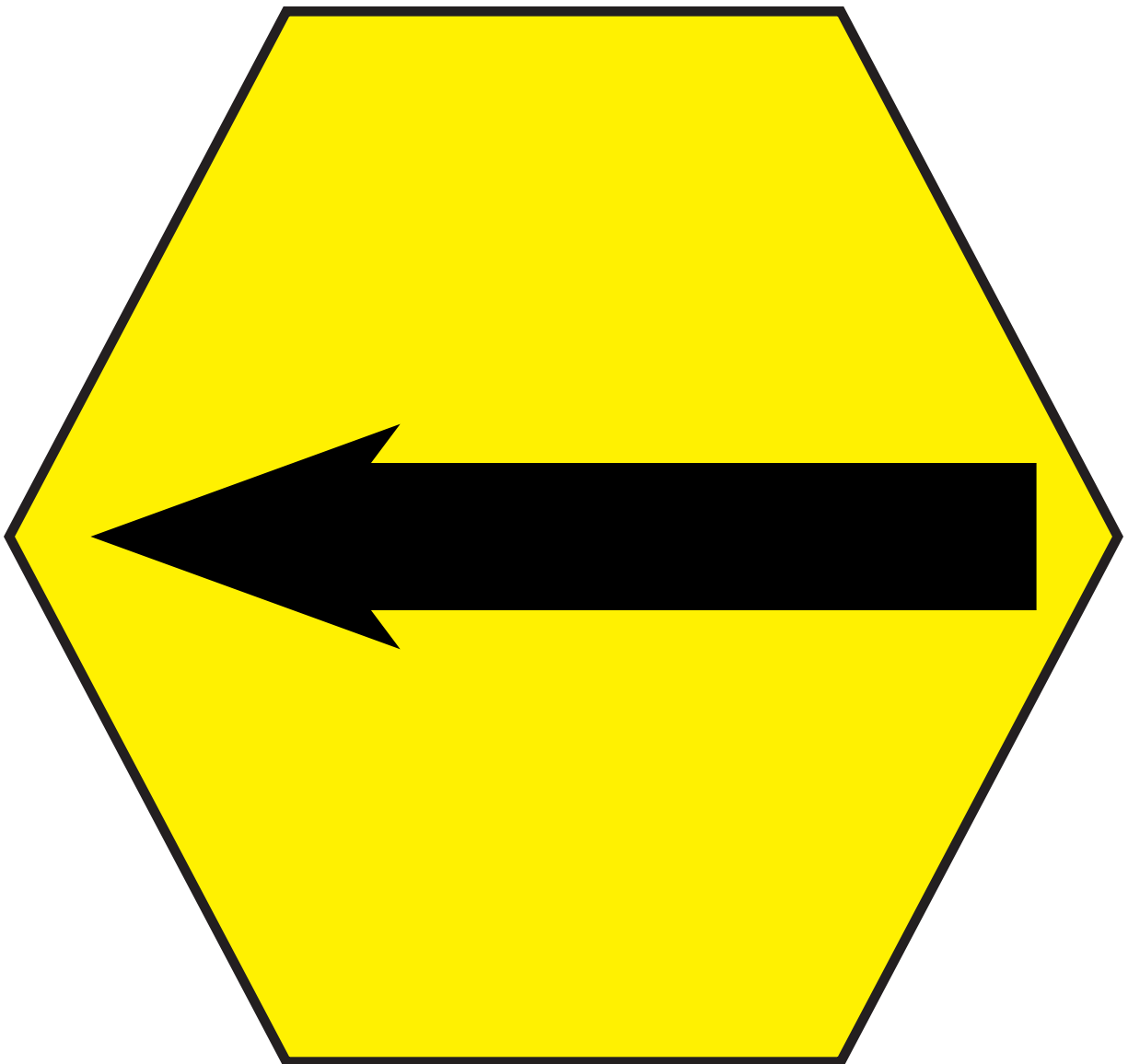
PARENT
WAITING AREA

STUDENT
WAITING AREA

STUDENT WAITING AREA

STUDENT WAITING AREA

STUDENT PICK UP AREA
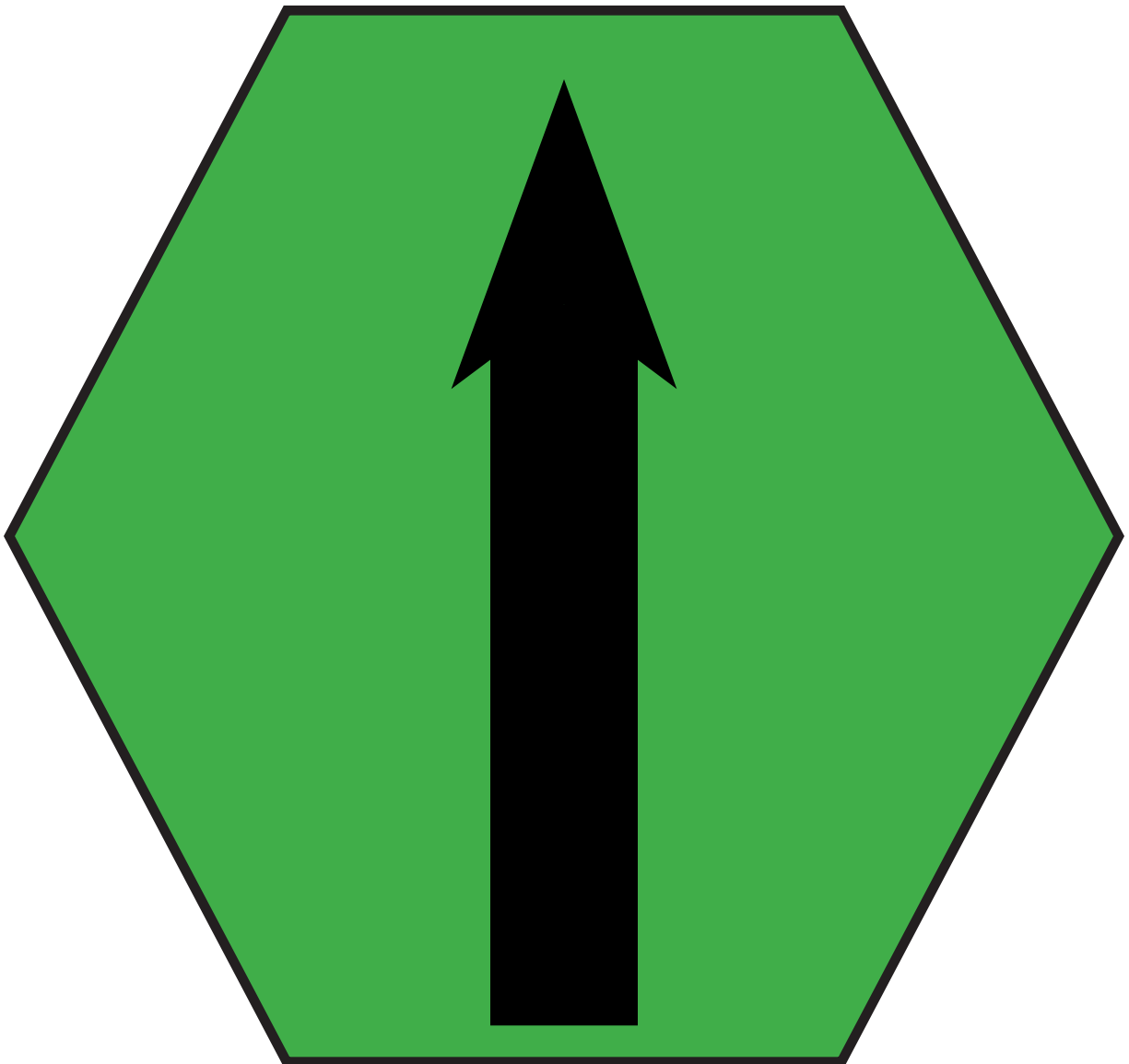
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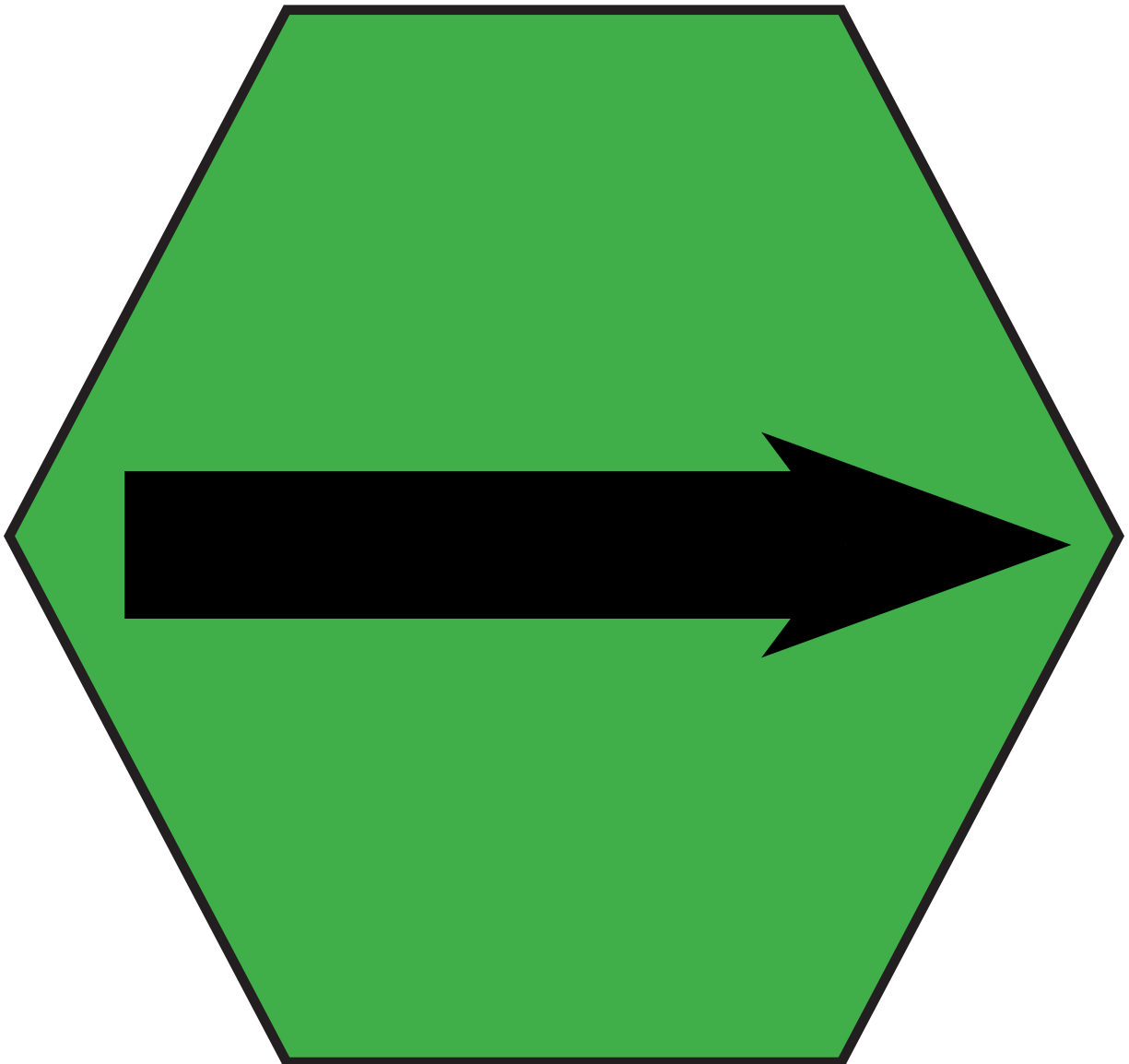
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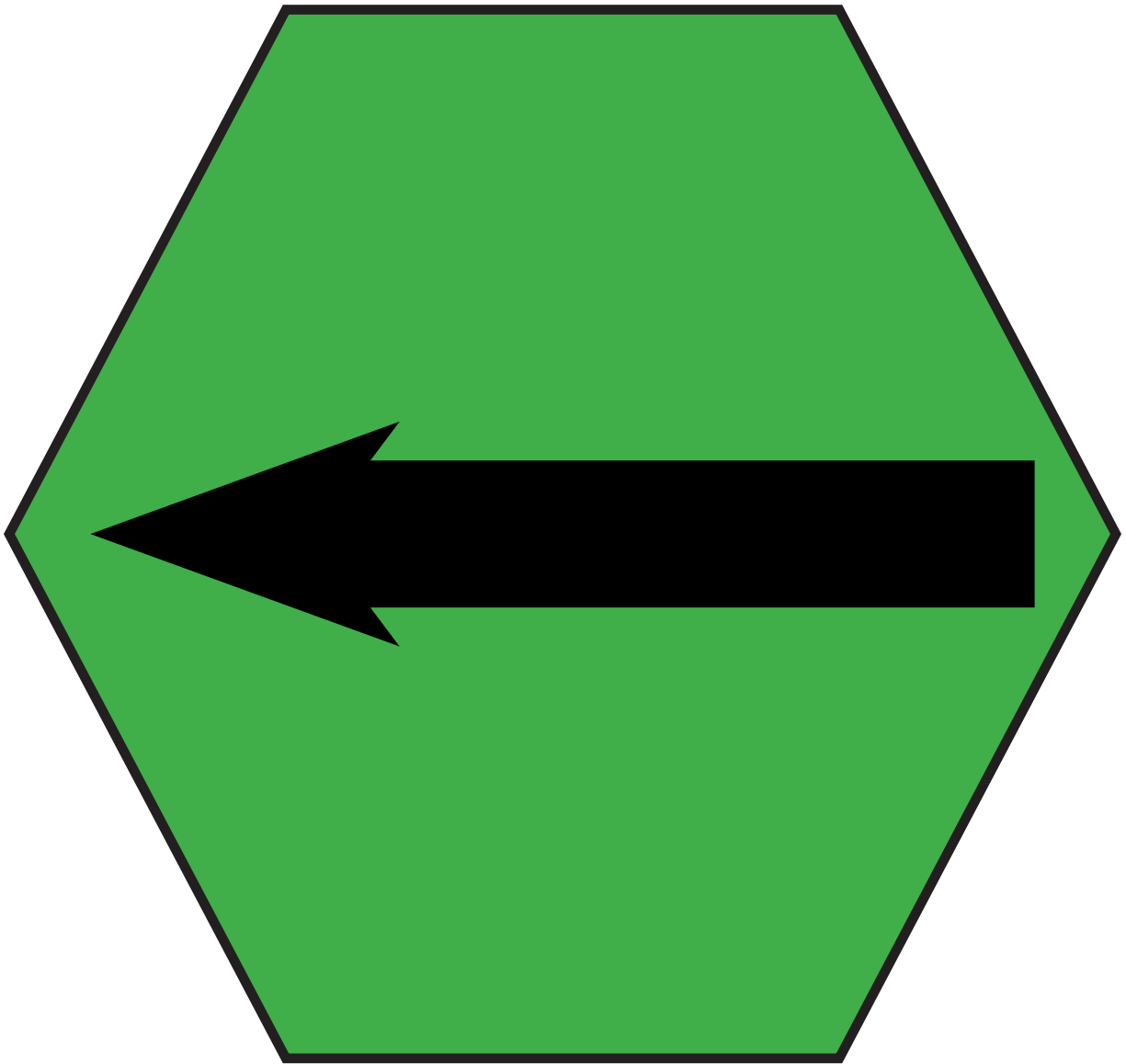
PLEASE HAVE PHOTO ID READY

EXIT
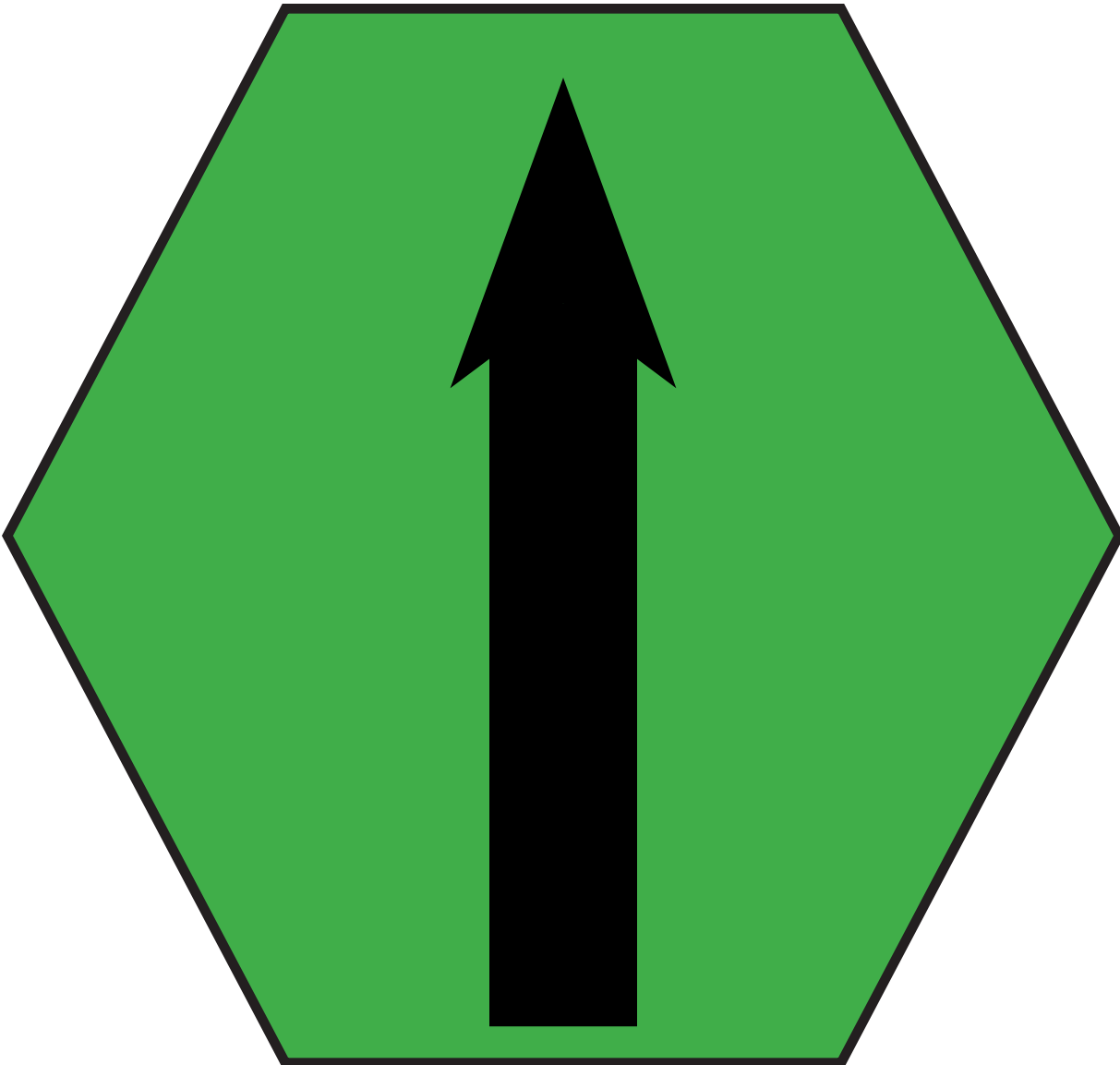
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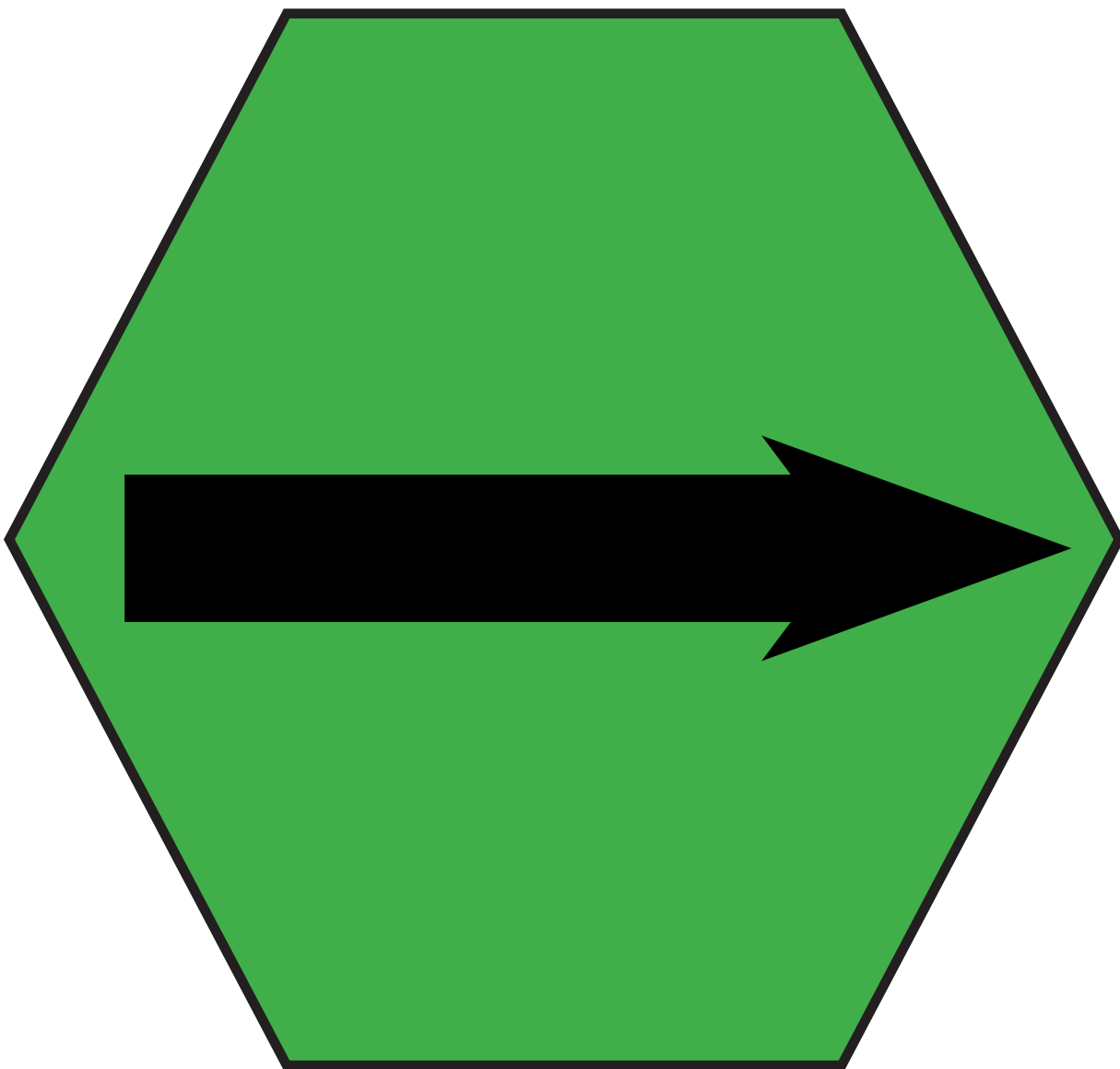
EXIT
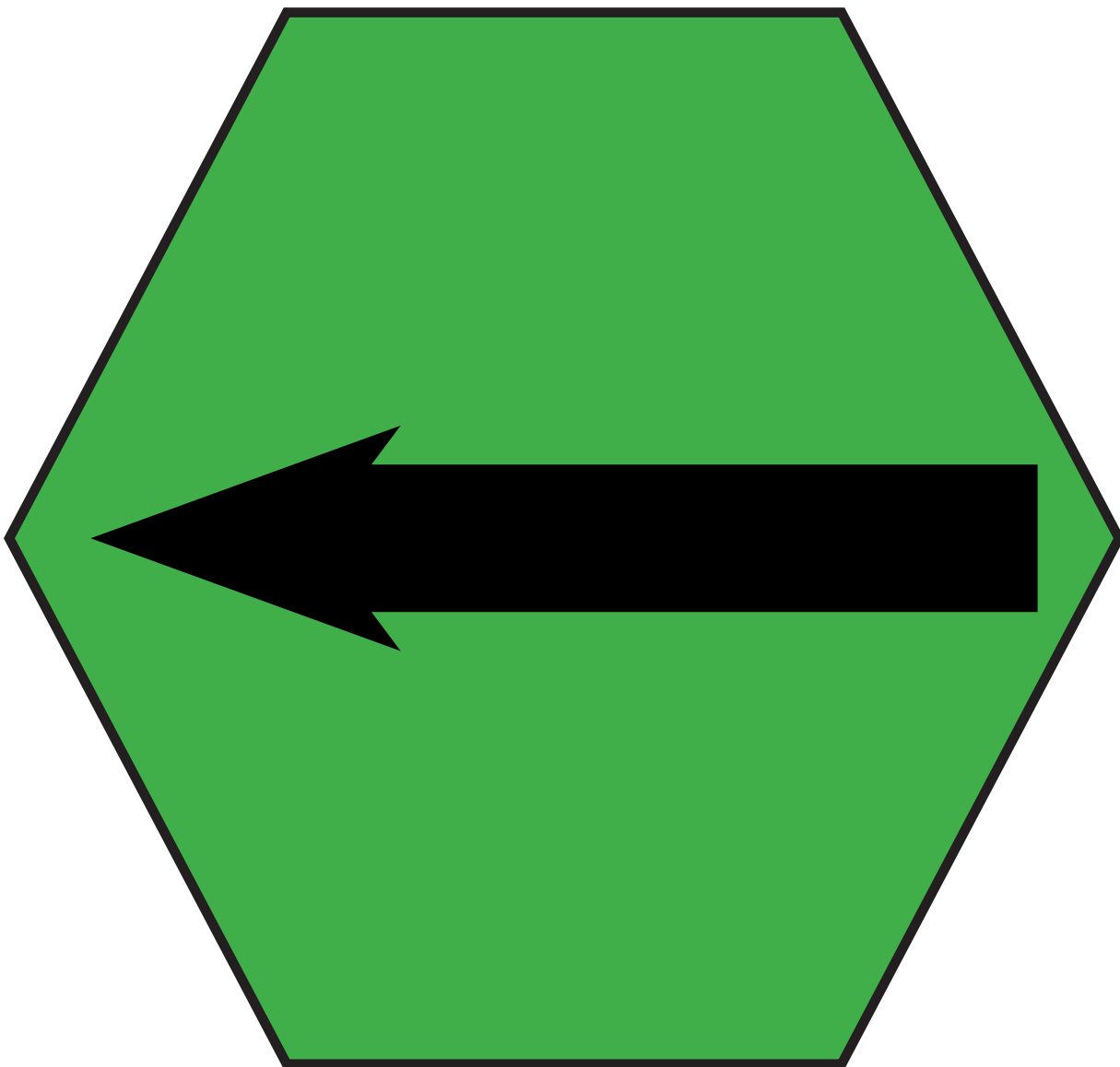
G: Team Sign-in/out Sheets

Position	Name	Cell Phone	Time In	Time Out	Transfered to
Team Leader:					
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