

## **Students**

### **First Aid/Emergency Medical Care**

#### **Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention**

The Board of Education (Board) recognizes the importance of ensuring the safety of students participating in the District's intramural and interscholastic athletic programs. The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance for the prevention and recognition of sudden cardiac arrest in student athletes.

For purposes of this policy, "intramural or interscholastic athletics" shall include any activity sponsored by the District or a District school, as defined in C.G.S. 10-15f, or an organization sanctioned by the District that involves any athletic contest, practice, scrimmage, competition, demonstration, display or club activity.

#### **Sudden Cardiac Awareness Program**

For the school year beginning July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, the District shall use the sudden cardiac arrest awareness education program promulgated by the Connecticut State Board of Education (SBE). The program, to be available on the SBE's website, will include:

1. the warning signs and symptoms associated with a sudden cardiac arrest,
2. the risks associated with continuing to engage in intramural or interscholastic athletics after exhibiting such warning signs and symptoms,
3. the means of obtaining proper medical treatment for a person suspected of experiencing a sudden cardiac arrest, and
4. the proper method of allowing a student who has experienced a sudden cardiac arrest to return to intramural or interscholastic athletics.

The school may hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season for all student athletes engaged in intramural and interscholastic athletics regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest. In addition to the student athletes, such meetings may include parents/guardians, coaches, other appropriate school officials, physicians, physician assistants, athletic trainers, and advanced practice registered nurses. *(It is anticipated that the SBE approved sudden cardiac awareness program will be available online.)*

#### **Training**

For the school year commencing July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, any person who holds or is issued a coaching permit by the State Board of Education and is a coach of intramural or interscholastic athletics shall annually review the SBE promulgated program prior to beginning the coaching assignment for the season of such intramural or interscholastic athletics.

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### **First Aid/Emergency Medical Care**

#### **Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention** (continued)

**Note:** The SBE may revoke the coaching permit, as provided by law, of any coach who (1) does not annually review the program, (2) fails to immediately remove a student showing signs of sudden cardiac arrest, or (3) allows such student to resume participating without receiving appropriate medical clearance.

#### **Consent Form Requirement**

Each school year, beginning July 1, 2015, prior to participation in an athletic activity, parent/guardians of students participating in intramural or interscholastic athletics shall sign and return to the District the SBE developed and approved informed consent form on sudden cardiac arrest. The form shall include a summary of the (1) program and (2) applicable Board policies on sudden cardiac arrests.

#### **Removal from Play**

A student who, as determined by the coach of any intramural or interscholastic athletics, game official, certified athletic trainer, licensed physician, or other official designated by the District, exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a sudden cardiac arrest shall be removed by the coach from participating in any intramural or interscholastic athletics.

Any student known to have exhibited signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest prior to or following an athletic activity shall be prevented from participating in athletic activities.

#### **Return to Play**

Prior to participation, the coach shall not return a student who previously exhibited warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest to participate in any intramural or interscholastic athletics until the student receives written clearance to participate in athletics from a licensed health care professional (*a licensed physician, a physician assistant, or an advanced practice registered nurse*).

#### **Penalties**

A coach found in violation of the provisions of this policy related to the removal from play and return to play shall be permanently suspended from coaching any intramural or interscholastic athletic activity.

(cf. 5141 – Student Health Services)

(cf. 5141.27 – Use of Automatic External Defibrillators)

(cf. 5141.3 – Health Assessments and Immunizations)

(cf. 5142 – Safety)

(cf. 6145.2 – Interscholastic/Intramural Athletics)

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### **Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention**

Legal Reference      Connecticut General Statutes

PA 14-93 An Act Concerning Sudden Cardiac Arrest Prevention.

10-145b(i) Teaching certificates.

10-235 Indemnification of teachers, board members, employees and certain volunteers and students in damage suits; expenses of litigation.

10-212d Availability of automatic external defibrillators in schools. Emergency action response plans for life-threatening emergencies.

Policy adopted:      June 18, 2018

REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 14  
Bethlehem and Woodbury, Connecticut

## **Athlete/Parent/Guardian Sudden Cardiac Arrest Symptoms and Warning Signs Information Sheet**

### **What is sudden cardiac arrest?**

Sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) is when the heart stops beating, suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs. SCA is NOT a heart attack. A heart attack may cause SCA, but they are not the same. A heart attack is caused by a blockage that stops the flow of blood to the heart. SCA is a malfunction in the heart's electrical system, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

### **How common is sudden cardiac arrest in the United States?**

There are about 300,000 cardiac arrests outside hospitals each year. About 2,000 patients under 25 die of SCA each year.

### **Are there warning signs?**

Although SCA happens unexpectedly, some people may have signs or symptoms, such as:

- dizziness
- lightheadedness
- shortness of breath
- difficulty breathing
- racing or fluttering heartbeat (palpitations)
- syncope (fainting)
- fatigue (extreme tiredness)
- weakness
- nausea
- vomiting
- chest pains

These symptoms can be unclear and confusing in athletes. Often, people confuse these warning signs with physical exhaustion. SCA can be prevented if the underlying causes can be diagnosed and treated.

### **What are the risks of practicing or playing after experiencing these symptoms?**

There are risks associated with continuing to practice or play after experiencing these symptoms. When the heart stops, so does the blood that flows to the brain and other vital organs. Death or permanent brain damage can occur in just a few minutes. Most people who have SCA die from it.

**P.A. 14-93 – An Act Concerning Sudden Cardiac Arrest:** The Act is intended to keep student-athletes safe while practicing or playing in intramural and/or interscholastic athletics.

It requires coaches of intramural and interscholastic athletics to:

1. obtain the written consent of a student's parent or legal guardian before allowing a student to participate in such athletic activities;
2. annually review the sudden cardiac arrest awareness program before beginning their coaching assignments;
3. immediately remove from athletic activities a student who shows the warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest; and
4. bar such a student from resuming participation in athletic activities unless the student has received written clearance from a Connecticut-licensed doctor, physician assistant, or advanced practice registered nurse.

In addition, for the school year starting July 1, 2015 and each year afterwards, the State Board of Education (SBE) must make available to local districts a sudden cardiac arrest awareness education program.

The program, published on SBE's website, includes the:

1. warning signs and symptoms associated with sudden cardiac arrest, including fainting, difficulty breathing, chest pain, dizziness, an abnormal racing heart rate, or other symptoms;
2. risks associated with continuing to engage in intramural or interscholastic athletics after displaying these signs and symptoms;
3. means of obtaining proper medical treatment for someone suspected of experiencing sudden cardiac arrest; and
4. proper method of allowing a student who has experienced sudden cardiac arrest to return to intramural or interscholastic athletics.

### **Required Consent of Parents/Guardians**

State statute requires the school district must obtain the written consent of a student's parent or legal guardian before a student is allowed to participate in intramural or interscholastic activities.