



POLICY

RHODE ISLAND SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP)

Purpose:

The purpose of the Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP) is to improve survival outcomes in the event of a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) occurring on school grounds by ensuring a rapid, coordinated, and effective response.

Sudden cardiac arrest is a life-threatening emergency that occurs abruptly and without warning. Survival depends on immediate recognition, prompt activation of emergency medical services, rapid initiation of cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR), and timely defibrillation using an automated external defibrillator (AED).

Schools are uniquely positioned to respond effectively to cardiac emergencies through coordinated planning, staff training, and strategic placement of emergency equipment. Evidence demonstrates that early intervention significantly improves survival and neurologic outcomes.

This policy establishes a structured, school-wide approach to preparedness, response, training, and post-event evaluation in order to protect the health and safety of students, staff, and visitors.

Definitions:

Sudden Cardiac Arrest (SCA):

A life-threatening condition in which the heart suddenly and unexpectedly stops beating effectively, often due to an electrical disturbance such as ventricular fibrillation.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED):

A portable medical device that analyzes heart rhythm and delivers an electrical shock when necessary to restore normal rhythm.

Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP):

A coordinated plan outlining actions to be taken in response to SCA, including personnel roles, equipment use, and communication procedures.

Policy Statement:

The Rhode Island School for the Deaf shall maintain a comprehensive Cardiac Emergency Response Plan to ensure timely recognition and treatment of SCA. The school shall have a medical provider to:

- Maintain accessible and functional AEDs
- Train staff in CPR and AED use
- Conduct regular cardiac emergency drills
- Coordinate with local Emergency Medical Services (EMS)
- Review and update the plan annually

Cardiac Emergency Response Team:

Team Composition

Each school shall maintain a Cardiac Emergency Response Team (CERT), which may include:

- Medical Director (School Doctor) – Provides clinical oversight and ensures medical appropriateness of the plan.
- CERP Coordinator – Oversees implementation, training, compliance, and program evaluation.

- School Nurse – Leads clinical response when available.
- Designated Staff Responders – Trained personnel assigned to emergency roles.

Roles and Responsibilities:

In the event of a suspected SCA, team members shall:

- Ensure scene safety and privacy of the individual
- Recognize signs of SCA (collapse, unresponsiveness, abnormal or absent breathing)
- Activate emergency response (contact 911)
- Initiate CPR immediately
- Retrieve and apply an AED
- Direct EMS personnel to the scene

RISD Emergency Crisis Team will be notified.

AED Placement and Equipment:

AED Accessibility:

AEDs shall be placed to ensure that they can be retrieved, applied, and used within 3 minutes of a cardiac event.

AED Locations:

AEDs shall be maintained in the following locations:

- Elementary Lobby
- Main Lobby
- Gym Lobby
- Portable/Travel AED for athletic events

On-Campus Outdoor Sporting Events and Outside Physical Education Class:

- The portable AED will be brought to all outside events during and after school.
- In the event that the portable AED is in use for an off-site sporting event, the physical education teacher/coach will be responsible to take the AED from the gym lobby and bring it outside.
- The physical education teacher will be responsible to either carry the AED during gym class or place it in the center of the field for fastest accessibility.
- The Athletic Director will assign a lead staff member or coach outside to be responsible for the AED for outdoor events.

Required Equipment:

Each AED station shall include:

- Functional AED (with unexpired battery and electrode pads)
- CPR mask or face shield
- Scissors
- Disposable gloves (latex-free)
- Towels or cloths

Maintenance:

The CERP Coordinator shall ensure:

- Regular monthly inspection of AEDs
- Replacement of expired batteries and pads
- Documentation of all maintenance checks
- Coordination with EMS regarding AED readiness

Emergency Response Procedures:

In the event of a suspected SCA:

1. Assess responsiveness and breathing
2. Contact 911 immediately
3. Begin chest compressions (CPR)
4. Retrieve and apply AED as soon as possible
5. Follow AED prompts
6. Continue CPR until EMS arrives

Training Requirements:

- At least 10% of staff shall be certified in CPR and AED use
- All staff shall receive training in recognizing SCA and activating emergency response
- Training shall emphasize:
 - Immediate recognition of SCA
 - Contacting 911
 - Hands-only CPR
 - AED use

Drills:

- Cardiac emergency response drills shall be conducted at least annually
- Drills shall include:
 - Activation of emergency communication systems
 - AED retrieval and deployment
 - Role-based response practice
- A successful drill should be completed within 5 minutes
- Drill performance shall be documented and reviewed by the school nurse.

EMS Coordination:

The school nurse shall coordinate with local EMS to:

- Share the CERP and AED locations
- Align response procedures
- Participate in drills when feasible
- Ensure rapid access to school facilities

Communication and Plan Distribution:

- The CERP shall be distributed to all staff annually
- AED locations and emergency procedures shall be clearly posted
- Emergency protocols shall be accessible during school and after-school activities

Post-Incident Review:

Following any cardiac emergency:

- A formal review shall be conducted
- Documentation shall include:
 - Date, time, and location of event
 - Personnel involved
 - Actions taken
- The response shall be evaluated for effectiveness
- Identified gaps shall result in plan modifications
- Debriefing and support shall be provided to responders

Annual Review:

The CERP shall be reviewed annually by:

- The Medical Director
- The CERP Coordinator
- School Administration

Revisions shall ensure compliance with current medical guidelines and best practices.

References:

- American Heart Association (AHA). *Cardiac Emergency Response Planning for Schools*
- Aschieri et al. (2025). AED Training and Survival Outcomes
- Hansen et al. (2017). Bystander CPR and AED Use
- Heckard et al. (2026). AED Deployment Strategies
- Malik et al. (2023). Sudden Cardiac Arrest in Youth

RISD Board of Trustees

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