

DRAFT St. Francis Area Schools Cardiac Emergency Response Plan (CERP)

Issued TBD

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Purpose

The CERP provides a comprehensive strategy for responding to sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) on school grounds and fulfills the requirements of [Minn. Stat. 121A.035](#) and [Minn. Stat. 121A.241](#). The plan will become an addendum to Crisis Management Policy.

List of Abbreviations

AED	Automated external defibrillator
CERP	Cardiac emergency response plan
CERT	Cardiac emergency response team
CPR	Cardiopulmonary resuscitation
EMS	Emergency medical services
SCA	Sudden cardiac arrest

Definition of Sudden Cardiac Arrest

The American Heart Association (AHA) defines a sudden cardiac arrest (SCA) as a sudden and unexpected loss of heart function caused by an irregular heart rhythm and can occur with or without a known heart condition. This disruption prevents effective blood circulation, and without immediate intervention, can cause loss of consciousness, collapse, and death within minutes.

Signs of cardiac arrest may include one or more of the following:

- Not moving, unresponsive, or unconscious
- Not breathing normally (for example, irregular breathing patterns, gasping or gurgling, or may not be breathing at all)
- Seizure or convulsion-like movements
- In some cases, SCA may occur immediately after a sudden, forceful direct hit to the chest.

Cardiac Emergency Response Team

The Cardiac Emergency Response Team (CERT) team in each school will be the same members of the Medical Emergency Response Team (MERT). Administrators designate available and willing staff such as nurses, physical education teachers, activities directors, coaches, and office and maintenance staff, staff overseeing recess, and other staff who are present before, during, or after the school day. Best practice suggests including at least five people or 10% of overall staff (AHA, 2025). The MERT/CERT for each school will be identified in the school crisis plan.

CERT members should be prepared to assist in multiple roles as necessary to account for staff absent or not available.

- Call 911
- Retrieve the AED
- Meet the EMS at the quickest entry point to access the scene
- Clear the area and manage possible crowds
- Assist with compressions and AED use
- Document the event timeline and transition to EMS

Protocol for Cardiac Emergency Response

This protocol provides step-by-step guidance that any staff member can follow during a cardiac event:

1. Recognize signs of SCA:

- Not moving, unresponsive, or unconscious
- Not breathing normally (for example, irregular breathing patterns, gasping or gurgling, or may not be breathing at all)
- Seizure or convulsion-like movements
- In some cases, SCA may occur immediately after a sudden, forceful direct hit to the chest.

2. Call 911: Direct a specific person to call 911, stay on the line, and answer questions.

- Provide building address and closest entry point (for example, "Door A")
- Explain the person's condition and symptoms
- Listen carefully to the dispatcher for additional guidance.

3. Activate MERT/CERT: Use the internal communication system to alert the team: "Attention staff: MERT members, please report to [specific location]. Attention staff: please have students stay in your classroom until the "all-clear" is given. The health office is closed at this time. If there is an urgent medical need in your classroom, please have the student report to the main office."

4. Retrieve AED: Designate a person to retrieve and deliver the nearest AED.

5. Start CPR:

- Place the person on their back on a firm, flat surface.
- Use one hand for smaller children.
- Use two hands on others. Place the heel of one hand on the center of the chest, on the lower half of the breastbone and the other hand directly on top. Interlock fingers.
- Begin chest compressions (100-120 per minute).
- If you are able and willing to provide rescue breaths, use a barrier mask and provide 2 breaths after 30 compressions.
- Continue compressions until EMS arrives.

6. **Use the AED:** Turn on the AED. Apply the pads and follow all audio/visual prompts.

7. **Transfer Care:** Transfer care to EMS upon their arrival, reporting the time the person was found and when CPR began.

8. **Document:** A designated CERT member must document all event timings and conditions.

Post-Event Protocols

- **Notification:** Notify emergency contacts for the unresponsive person following the crisis management plan.
- **AED Data:** Provide AED data to medical providers, if requested.
- **After-Action Review:** CERT members should debrief to identify successes and improvements to the plan.
- **Mental Health Support:** Support staff member and student health needs. This may include support through the district's Employee Assistance Plan or Regional Crisis Response Team.

Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs)

Automated external defibrillators (AEDs) are devices that analyze the heart's rhythm and, if necessary, deliver an electrical shock to restore a normal rhythm.

- **Placement:** AEDs should be placed in unlocked cases in high-traffic, easily accessible areas (like cafeterias and gyms) to ensure retrieval and delivery ideally within 3 minutes of notification of the emergency. Other AEDs may be stored in offices and assigned to personnel such as coaches.
- **Site Maps:** This plan references site maps with locations for all campus buildings.
- **Maintenance:** The district provides routine maintenance, documenting safety checks as per [Minn. Stat. 121A.241](#) to verify that device pads and batteries are not expired and equipment is functioning properly.
- **Registry:** [Minn. Stat. 403.51](#) states that a person who purchases or obtains a public access AED shall register that device with an AED registry within 30 working days of receiving the AED. School districts and charter schools can register their public access AEDs via [PulsePoint](#).

- **Responsibility for AEDs:**

Position / Department Name	Responsibility
Alternative Education Supervisor	AED replacement plan
Alternative Education Supervisor	AED purchases
Alternative Education Supervisor	AED registry
Health Office Staff	Regular safety checks
Health Office Staff	Verification of pad/battery expirations

Communication

Information about the CERP plan will be distributed annually to all staff. Enough staff should be trained in CPR and AED use by a nationally recognized organization to effectively fulfill CERT roles, with certifications renewed at least every two years.

The following protocol outlines how staff members activate local EMS and the CERT in a consistent manner using two-way radios, phones, paging system, or other method with consideration for confidentiality.

- **Initial Alert:** Any staff member witnessing a collapse should immediately call 911.
- **Internal Notification:** Activate the MERT/CERT via site communication options.
- **Standard Script:** “Attention staff: MERT members, please report to [specific location]. Attention staff: please have students stay in your classroom until the “all-clear” is given. The health office is closed at this time. If there is an urgent medical need in your classroom, please have the student report to the main office.”

Training and Practice Drills

- **Staff Training:** Training is the educational process of learning how to recognize sudden cardiac arrest, call 911, perform quality chest compressions, and use an AED. School staff, including coaches, are encouraged to annually review the school's CERP and learn Hands-Only CPR and AED use to strengthen the school-wide readiness and timely response for cardiac emergencies.
- **CERT Certification:** Certification formally recognizes a person's proficiency in performing CPR and AED use. Certification is obtained through a nationally recognized organization (for example, the American Heart Association and the American Red Cross) and includes written and hands-on testing of competency. CERT/MERT members are encouraged to maintain CPR/AED certification renewed at least every two years.
- **Student Instruction and Practice:** As per [Minn. Stat. 120B.236](#), schools are required to provide 7-12 students with one-time CPR and AED use instruction with hands-on practice as part of the curriculum. Schools should also consider instructing students on the building's AED locations and how to initiate CERT.
- **Annual Drills:** [Minn. Stat. 121A.241](#) requires schools to conduct annual drills involving staff and students. A successful drill is defined by the American Heart Association as full completion of the protocol in 5 minutes or less.

Annual Review of the Plan

The CERP Coordinator will evaluate and review this plan annually to ensure it aligns with current evident-based best practices for responding to a cardiac emergency.

Legal References & Resources

[Minn. Stat. 121A.035](#) (Crisis Management Policy)

[Minn. Stat. 121A.241](#) (Cardiac Emergency Response Plan)

[Minn. Stat. 120B.236](#) (CPR and AED Instruction)

[Minn. Stat. 403.51](#) (AED Registration)

[Minn. Stat. 604A.01](#) (Good Samaritan Law)

