

April 2014
Responding to Life Threatening Emergencies in Manitoba Schools

- *Respectfully submitted by Manitoba Association of Parent Councils Board of Directors for approval by membership at the 2014 Annual General Meeting.*

Background

Parents and schools have a shared responsibility to foster an environment which considers the health, safety, and wellbeing of all students in a school community. Ongoing training and education relating to identified health and safety concerns – such as anaphylaxis, asthma, and diabetes management - are well documented priorities with Manitoba Education and Advanced Learning (see *The Public School Act – Anaphylaxis Policies and The Unified Referral and Intake System (URIS) Policy and Procedure Manual*). While school divisions are obligated to follow these policies, procedures regarding non-identified medical emergencies – such as (but not limited to) Sudden Cardiac Arrest and emergency first aid – are not always included in such policies.

Introduction

It is widely understood that medical emergencies can happen at any time in any place. In cases where students experience sudden life threatening emergencies – such as cardiac arrest, asthma, or anaphylaxis related events – every minute is critical to deal with the crisis. Each adult supervisor in a school community – whether they are staff or volunteers – may or may not have had training to deal with non-identified medical emergencies. Precious minutes may be lost when attempting to find the trained adult who is qualified to deal with the emergency quickly and effectively. These potential situations become more worrisome for parents when students are participating in field trips, sporting events, and other occasions both inside and outside of school where help may not always be as accessible.

It is widely understood that the best response in emergency situations is to be well prepared in advance. Parents have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the school – whether early, middle, or senior years – and to inform the school of the development or status of known medical conditions as well as staying informed of current school policies and procedures regarding both identified and non-identified medical emergencies. Students who are granted a growing level of responsibility in managing and living with identified medical conditions, should be educated in dealing with potential medical emergencies which affect them. Staff, volunteers, and all students have a responsibility to recognize and respond appropriately to both identified and non-identified medical emergencies, which may affect their classmates or students in their care when a trained adult is not immediately present.

Action Request

Manitoba Association of Parent Councils strongly urges all schools and divisions to create or review - in consultation with its parents, parent advisory councils, and community members - policy and training opportunities for all staff, volunteers, and senior students in emergency first aid, CPR, use and maintenance of Automated External Defibrillators (AED), administration of auto-injectors (such as Epi-Pens), and other procedures surrounding non-identified health and safety emergencies for Manitoba students.