

Responding to Unexpected Health Emergencies

Purpose

A timely and effective response to unexpected health emergencies is essential to ensuring a safe school environment. Unexpected health emergencies can occur without warning and require immediate action to improve survival outcomes by providing critical intervention before emergency responders arrive. By ensuring that schools are equipped, trained, and prepared to respond to health emergencies, the district supports the safety, well-being, and confidence of all students, staff, families, and community members.

This Administrative Procedure aligns with the Ministry of Education and Child Care's Response to Unexpected Health Emergencies guidelines and supports the Board's publicly available policy on this matter.

Implementation Timelines

- AEDs and naloxone kits shall be installed in all SD84 secondary schools by December 31, 2025.
- All SD84 elementary schools will be equipped by September 8, 2026.

Definitions

- **Unexpected Health Emergency:** A sudden or unforeseen medical event requiring immediate intervention before emergency medical services arrive (e.g., cardiac arrest, opioid overdose, anaphylaxis, severe asthma attack, or other life-threatening incidents).
- **Automated External Defibrillator (AED):** A portable electronic device that automatically diagnoses and treats life-threatening cardiac arrhythmias through defibrillation.
- **Naloxone:** A medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose by restoring normal respiration.
- **Responder:** Any staff member, volunteer, or community member who provides emergency assistance.
- **Designated Staff:** School administrators, First Aid Attendants, or other trained individuals assigned emergency response responsibilities.
- **Barrier-free Access:** Placement and design that ensure equipment is accessible to all users, regardless of physical ability.
- **Non-stigmatizing Presentation:** Display and communication practices that present emergency tools in a supportive, inclusive, and non-judgmental manner.

Procedures

All schools in SD84 shall be equipped with readily accessible lifesaving first-aid tools, including Automated External Defibrillators (AEDs) and Naloxone kits.

AEDs and naloxone kits shall be:

- Readily accessible and located in barrier-free areas to accommodate diverse user needs.
- Clearly marked with standardized signage to support easy identification and use.
- Inspected routinely (monthly minimum) to ensure functionality and monitor expiry dates.
- Presented in a non-stigmatizing and inclusive manner to encourage comfortable and equitable use.

Emergency Response Protocol

When an unexpected health emergency occurs, staff shall follow these steps:

1. Assess the Scene – Ensure the environment is safe for responders and bystanders.
2. Check Responsiveness and Breathing – Determine whether the individual is conscious and breathing.
3. Call for Help – Direct a staff member to call 911 immediately and retrieve the AED or naloxone kit.
4. Provide First Aid – Follow First Aid training appropriate to the emergency.
5. Use Emergency Equipment – Apply AED pads and follow prompts; administer naloxone if indicated.
6. Continue Care Until EMS Arrives – Provide ongoing first aid until emergency responders assume care.
7. Protect Dignity and Privacy – Clear unnecessary bystanders and ensure privacy.
8. Notify Emergency Contacts – Inform the parent/guardian or designated contact once stable.

Post-Incident Documentation, Notification, and Debriefing

- Staff shall complete required First Aid and Incident Reports promptly.
- The principal or designate shall notify the District Health and Safety Officer.
- AED or naloxone use shall be documented per Occupational Health & Safety procedures.
- Principals shall coordinate a post-incident debrief with involved staff.
- Equipment used must be replenished, reset, or replaced promptly.

Roles and Responsibilities

District Office:

- Ensure implementation, budgeting, and acquisition of AED and naloxone equipment.
- Oversee AP review and ensure alignment with Ministry updates.
- Ensure universal access to required training.

Operations Supervisor:

- Maintain AEDs per manufacturer instructions.
- Oversee replenishment of naloxone kits.

Health and Safety Officer (Assistant Superintendent):

- Review inspection logs annually.
- Ensure compliance with WorkSafeBC requirements.
- Support post-incident debriefing.

Principals and Vice Principals:

- Ensure AEDs and naloxone kits are installed, accessible, and properly maintained
- Ensure staff receive required training and annual orientation.
- Incorporate emergency response procedures into school safety plans.
- Lead documentation and follow-up after incidents.

School-Based OH&S Committees:

- Conduct monthly inspections to confirm AED functionality and check naloxone expiry.
- Review training records during safety audits.

All Staff:

- Know the location of AEDs and naloxone kits.
- Respond according to training and comfort level.
- Participate in annual refresh and awareness training.

Training

- First Aid Attendants and administrators shall receive annual AED and naloxone training.
- All staff shall receive annual notification of purpose, presence, and location of equipment.
- Training records retained at the school level and reviewed during safety audits.
- Optional awareness training supported by the district.
- Good Samaritan Act protects voluntary responders acting in good faith.

Inspection and Maintenance

- OH&S teams shall inspect AEDs and naloxone monthly.
- Operations Supervisor ensures AED maintenance and naloxone replenishment.
- Inspection logs retained for at least five years and reviewed annually.

Accessibility, Equity, and Cultural Safety

All equipment and communications shall:

- Ensure barrier-free access.
- Use Ministry-approved signage.
- Be culturally safe and non-stigmatizing, especially in Indigenous and rural contexts.
- Promote inclusive understanding through awareness and education.

Privacy and Information Sharing

- Personal information shall be handled under FOIPPA.
- Only necessary information may be shared with those who need to know.
- Health information must remain confidential.
- Staff must respect dignity and privacy throughout.

Integration with Emergency Response Plans

- This Administrative Procedure shall be referenced in each school's Emergency Preparedness Plan and First Aid Plan.
- Schools must include AED and naloxone response procedures in emergency drills and orientations.

Public Availability

This procedure will be posted on the SD84 website and shared annually with administrators and Health & Safety Committees.

Review Cycle

This procedure will be reviewed every two years, or following any incident, or upon Ministry or WorkSafeBC updates.