



Northampton Area School District

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Office of the Assistant Superintendent

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To: All NASD Families
From: Jeanette Gilliland, Assistant Superintendent
Re: Sudden Cardiac Arrest Act

If you have a Student Athlete registered to play our PIAA sports, you may have already received and signed a copy of this form which will be held in the Athletic Department files. Please return this copy to your student's teacher so your student may participate in any school sponsored Club or Sporting Event.

This year the Pennsylvania Department of Health has signed a new bill into law - Act 59 - about Sudden Cardiac Arrest which affects all school students. Each year, there are approximately 300,000 cardiac arrests outside of the hospital. Of these, nearly 2,000 occur in people under the age of twenty-five and lead to premature death. Sudden cardiac arrest occurs when the heart stops beating suddenly and unexpectedly. When this happens, blood stops flowing to the brain and other vital organs, causing the heart to suddenly stop beating.

Act 59 requires that:

- (1) Every student athlete and their parent/guardian must read and sign a standard form developed by the Pennsylvania DOH. The form must be returned to the school before participation in any athletic activity. A new form must be signed and returned to the school each year.
- (2) If a student athlete has signs or symptoms of sudden cardiac arrest, they must be removed from play — play means any and all athletic activities — and before returning to play, the athlete must be evaluated. Clearance to return to play must be in writing and the evaluation must be performed by a licensed physician, certified registered nurse practitioner, or cardiologist.
- (3) Act 59 also requires that coaches undergo mandatory training regarding sudden cardiac arrest and the law provides penalties for those coaches who do not comply.
- (4) Finally, the Act suggests that schools may hold informational meetings regarding sudden cardiac arrest. The meetings can occur before each athletic season and the meetings may include student athletes, parents, coaches, and school officials.

We are proud to inform you that our coaches have had the opportunity to attend one mandatory training already, and another is planned for September. Also, our students registered for PIAA sports have been given copies of this letter. The informational meeting for families is in planning stages with September dates to be announced.

We believe that the provisions of this Act can protect all our students during time spent in any school activity if staff and parents are fully informed. The attached page is for your reference. Please sign that you have read it and return this acknowledgement to your child's teacher.

Please contact my office at the number above with any questions.