

Ga. Code § 20-2-324.5

Section 20-2-324.5 - Education on nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest; informational meetings; procedure when student exhibits symptoms; requirements of coaches; youth athletic organizations encouraged to comply

(a) As used in this Code section, the term:

(1) 'Athletic association' means any association of schools or any other similar organization which acts as an organizing, sanctioning, scheduling, or rule-making body for interscholastic athletic events in which public high schools in this state participate.

(2) 'Health care provider' means a licensed physician or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer, who has received training on the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest.

(3) 'Interscholastic athletic activity' means interscholastic athletics and practices, interschool practices, and scrimmages related to interscholastic athletics.

(4) 'School' means a public or private school in this state, including all charter schools which includes one or more grades from grades six through 12.

(5) 'Student' means a student in grades six through 12.

(b) The Department of Education shall develop and post on its publicly accessible website guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students participating in or desiring to participate in an interscholastic athletic activity, their parents or guardians, and coaches about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after experiencing the following symptoms: fainting or seizures during exercise, unexplained shortness of breath, chest pains, dizziness, racing heart rate, or extreme fatigue. In developing the guidelines and materials about the nature and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest, the Department of Education may utilize educational videos available at no cost to the state for the purpose of educating coaches about sudden cardiac arrest. In the event that an athletic association in this state provides such guidelines and relevant materials on its website, the Department of Education shall not be required to duplicate such materials and shall be deemed to have met the provisions of this subsection.

(c) A school shall hold an informational meeting twice per year regarding the symptoms and warning signs of sudden cardiac arrest. At such informational meeting, an information sheet on sudden cardiac arrest symptoms and warning signs shall be provided to each student's parent or guardian. In addition to students, parents or guardians, coaches, and other school officials, such informational meetings may include physicians, pediatric cardiologists, and athletic trainers.

(d)

(1) A student who passes out or faints while participating in, or immediately following, an interscholastic athletic activity, or who is known to have passed out or fainted while participating in or immediately following an interscholastic athletic activity, shall be

removed from participation in the interscholastic athletic activity at that time by the athletic director, coach, or athletic trainer.

(2) A student who exhibits any of the other symptoms set forth in subsection (b) of this Code section while participating in, or immediately following, an interscholastic athletic activity may be removed from participation in the interscholastic athletic activity by an athletic trainer, if the athletic trainer reasonably believes that such symptoms are cardiac related. In the absence of an athletic trainer, coaches who observe any of the other symptoms set forth in subsection (b) of this Code section shall notify the parents or guardians of such student so that the parents or guardians can determine what treatment, if any, such student should seek.

(3) A student who is removed from participation in an interscholastic athletic activity pursuant to this subsection shall not be permitted to return to participation in an interscholastic athletic activity until such student is evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by a health care provider.

(e)

(1) Once each school year, each coach of an interscholastic athletic activity shall review the guidelines and relevant materials and view an educational video approved by the Department of Education pursuant to subsection (b) of this Code section, or as provided by an athletic association.

(2) A coach shall not be eligible to coach an interscholastic athletic activity until he or she completes the requirements contained in this subsection.

(f) This Code section shall not create any liability for, or create a cause of action against, a local board of education, the governing body of a nonpublic school, or the governing body of a charter school or the officers, employees, or volunteers of any such entities for any act or omission to act related to the removal or nonremoval of a student participating in an interscholastic athletic activity pursuant to this Code section; provided, however, this subsection shall not include health care providers unless they are acting in a volunteer capacity.

(g) The sponsors of youth athletic activities, as defined in paragraph (4) of subsection (a) of Code Section 20-2-324.1, are encouraged to implement the provisions of this Code section.

OCGA § 20-2-324.5

Added by 2019 Ga. Laws 136, § 2, eff. 7/1/2019.