

## GUIDELINES FOR DNR/DNAR ORDER POLICY FOR THE SCHOOL SETTING

### Introduction

The term DNR (Do Not Resuscitate) order usually is defined as a medical directive by an ordering healthcare provider that cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) is not to be used on an identified individual in the event of a cardiac or respiratory arrest. DNR is now referred to as DNAR (Do Not Attempt Resuscitation). This does not mean that a DNR/DNAR order for a student is automatically binding if presented to a school district/administration.

Situations in which DNR/DNAR orders are presented in the schools are often challenging to all concerned. This is identified well in the policy statement by the American Academy of Pediatrics (cited below):

*“These decisions challenge all persons involved in a situation in which CPR may be given to balance personal beliefs, strong feelings, legal concerns (especially those having to do with liability), educational considerations, and other issues.”*

### Guidelines

Although every school district should have (and allow) a DNR protocol, some do not have one or do not recognize DNAR/DNR orders. In those cases, the school nurse needs to meet with the family and ask what the family wishes are as well as to get orders from the medical provider and alert EMS in their area.

Each school district (school board) can determine DNR protocols for their district. The School Nurse should refer back to the school board policies and procedures for the district.

Before any school district establishes a policy or procedure for DNR/DNAR, or responds to any specific situation, it is imperative the district closely reviews state statutes with a multidisciplinary approach. The multidisciplinary task force should include at a minimum the parents, educators, legal representatives, local EMS advisor, support personnel and healthcare staff from the community.

There are excellent resources for developing DNR/DNAR policy and procedures. These resources include:

- National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Issue Brief on DNAR  
<http://www.nasn.org/PolicyAdvocacy/PositionPapersandReports/NASNIssueBriefs/tabid/336/smId/853/ArticleId/305/Default.aspx>
- American Academy of Pediatrics policy statement On Honoring DNR  
<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/125/5/1073.full>
- New Mexico Administrative Code (NMAC)  
<http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmregister/xvi/xvi24/7.27.6new.htm>
- “Do Not attempt Resuscitation (DNAR) Orders in School Settings: Special Needs School Nurses Review Current Research and Issues”, NASN School Nurse, Vo.I 28. No. 2, pp 71-75.

Once district policy has been set, educating all those who may be involved in response to a DNR order is a critical step. Sample policy options are included in this document. Also included is a sample procedure for implementing a DNR order in a school.

## **State Policy for Advance Directives**

In New Mexico the public education system gives the eighty-nine school districts autonomy in developing DNR policy. Therefore, the district has responsibility in responding to DNR requests presented in the school setting. Under state statute, school districts may choose whether or not to honor DNR/DNAR requests. However as stated in the DNAR brief by NASN,

*"A DNAR order is not abandonment of medical treatment and does not rescind any obligation to provide quality care; rather it is part of the management plan."*

New Mexico code (7.27.6 NMAC) for EMS advance directives in New Mexico that govern the management of DNR orders are very clear. These directives include honoring DNR orders from other states as long as the order is in compliance with the laws of New Mexico. The applicable NMAC can be accessed at <http://www.nmcpr.state.nm.us/nmregister/xvi/xvi24/7.27.6new.htm>.

## **Supplemental Information**

Supplemental information for your reference follows.

This includes:

- 2 sample policies for "Do Not Resuscitate (DNR) Orders"
- a sample of a "Do Not Resuscitate Order"
- a sample procedure for "Do Not Resuscitate Order"
- New Mexico EMS DNR Instructions
- New Mexico DNR form for posting.

## Sample Procedure

### **Do Not Resuscitate Orders (DNR)**

#### Presentation of a Do Not Resuscitate Order to the District

In order for School to recognize a Do Not Resuscitate Order as legally binding and valid, the order must be presented to the Manager of Nursing Services, the school nurse and the school principal and must meet the following requirements:

- 1 An original of the health care provider's Do Not Resuscitate order, the state Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Do Not Resuscitate form, and the Albuquerque Public Schools Do Not Resuscitate form. These forms shall be completed by the physician and the parent(s) /legal guardian(s). All forms must be the original document; copies are not acceptable.
- 2 Upon turning eighteen (18) years of age, the student shall be required to grant Do Not Resuscitate authorization unless custody of the student has been legally awarded to a guardian.

Upon receipt of a Do Not Resuscitate order, the school principal and the licensed school nurse shall immediately initiate the following procedures:

- 1 The Nursing Services manager and the superintendent, or his/her designee, shall be informed that a Do Not Resuscitate order was received
- 2 The Nursing manager and the superintendent, or his/her designee, shall receive the licensed school nurse's review, a copy of the Do Not Resuscitate order, and any identified concerns with the order
- 3 Upon receiving a Do Not Resuscitate order, a conference shall be arranged with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), the local Emergency Medical Service providers and appropriate school staff and health providers to outline expectations and procedures.
- 4 A plan of care, which follows the health care provider's orders, shall be developed and include goals, outcomes and delegation of care to be addressed in the student's Individualized Healthcare Plan. The healthcare plan shall be written by the licensed school nurse, in collaboration with the parent(s)/legal guardian(s), and shall to be reviewed and updated as needed at the beginning of each semester. If the student receives special education services, the healthcare plan shall be reviewed as part of the student's Individual Education Plan and/or 504 Plan, and updated as needed. All proceedings shall be documented in the student's health record.
- 5 The health care provider's order, Emergency Medical Services Do Not Resuscitate form and School Do Not Resuscitate form shall be documented on the student's emergency contact card and submitted to the Schools Nursing Services manager.
- 6 Student confidentiality shall be maintained as much as possible. Only school staff with a legitimate need-to-know shall be informed of the Do Not Resuscitate order. The parent(s)/legal guardian(s) shall be advised that anyone who is not directly informed about the Do Not Resuscitate order shall otherwise follow Albuquerque Public Schools policy and procedural directives and initiate resuscitation.
- 7 The licensed school nurse/school nurse practitioner shall be responsible for ensuring that all staff members who are informed of the Do Not Resuscitate order are trained to follow the expected procedures as delineated in the student's healthcare plan.

#### Procedures for Implementing a Do Not Resuscitate Order

If a student with a Do Not Resuscitate order suffers a cardiac or respiratory arrest at school, the following shall be implemented:

- 1 Activate Emergency Medical Services.
- 2 Contact the parent(s)/legal guardian(s).
- 3 Isolate the student and maintain as normal an atmosphere as possible in the school or site.
- 4 Contact the health care provider who wrote the Do Not Resuscitate order.
- 5 If a student with a Do Not Resuscitate order dies while at school, the school principal or designee shall inform the Office of the Medical Investigator, superintendent, New Mexico Department of Health and the Albuquerque Public Schools Nursing Services manager as soon as possible. The body shall not be moved until authorized by the Office of the Medical Investigator.
- 6 Grief counseling resources for school employees may be obtained from the Employee Assistance Program; and for students, from the Health and Wellness Counseling Team.
- 7 When appropriate, the district Crisis Counseling Team may be activated to provide assistance at the school.

#### Revocation of a Do Not Resuscitate Order

A Do Not Resuscitate order may be revoked at any time by:

- 1 Physical destruction of the Do Not Resuscitate order form with the consent of the authorized decision-maker; or,
- 2 An oral statement by the authorized decision-maker to resuscitate.

We understand that this order must be renewed at the beginning of each semester and reviewed at each IEP or 504 meeting.

Other comments:

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**Date**

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**Physician Signature**

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**State License Number**

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**Date**

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**Parent/Guardian Signature**

## Sample Policy Option A

### **POLICY FOR DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDERS \***

#### Presentation of a Student Do Not Resuscitate Order to School District

When a DNR order for a student is presented to the School District the following criteria must be met:

1. An original of the healthcare provider's order with original signatures, the state Emergency Medical Services (EMS) DNR form, and the school district DNR form (if applicable) must be completed by the physician and the parent(s)/legal guardian(s) and submitted to the school. Copies are not acceptable.
2. If a student is 18 years of age or older, the DNR forms must be signed by the student unless custody of the student has been legally awarded to a guardian.

A student DNR order is to be presented to the school principal and/or the licensed school nurse who will initiate the following procedures:

1. The District Nursing Coordinator (if applicable) and the Superintendent (or designee) are to be informed when a school has received a DNR order. Along with the DNR order, the school should submit the licensed school nurse's review and any identified concerns with the order.
2. In response to a DNR order, a conference will be arranged with the parent(s)/guardian(s), the local EMS providers and appropriate school staff and health providers to outline expectations and procedures. A plan of care consistent with the physician's orders will be developed to include goals, outcomes and delegation of care in the student's Individualized Healthcare Plan (IHP). The IHP will be written by the licensed school nurse in collaboration with the parent(s)/ guardian(s) and will be reviewed at the beginning of each semester as part of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) and/or 504 plan and updated as needed. All proceedings are to be documented in the student's health record.
3. The healthcare provider's order, EMS DNR form and school district DNR form must be documented on the student's Emergency Card and submitted to the District Nursing Coordinator (if applicable). DNR orders are to be reviewed each semester and as part of each IEP or 504 plan.
4. Student confidentiality will be maintained as much as possible. Only school staff with a legitimate need-to-know will be informed of the DNR order. The parent(s)/guardian(s) will be advised that anyone who is not directly informed about the DNR order will otherwise follow school district policy and initiate resuscitation.
5. The licensed school nurse will be responsible for ensuring that all staff members who are informed of the DNR order are trained to follow the expected procedures as delineated in the student's healthcare plan.

#### **Procedures for Implementing a Do Not Resuscitate Order**

If a student with a DNR order suffers a cardiac or respiratory arrest at school the following process will be implemented:

1. Activate EMS.
2. Provide comfort measures and any other medical intervention allowable under the DNR order and healthcare plan.

3. Contact parent(s)/guardian(s).
4. Isolate student and maintain as normal an atmosphere as possible in the school or at the site.
5. Contact physician who wrote DNR order.
6. If a student with a DNR order dies while at school the school principal or designee will inform the police and ensure that the Office of the Medical Investigator (OMI) is notified as soon as possible as well as the Superintendent and the District Nursing Coordinator (if applicable). The body may not be moved until authorized by OMI.
7. Grief counseling resources for school employees and for students should be made available as soon as possible.
8. The school district crisis response team should be activated immediately to provide assistance at the school.

### **Revocation of a Do Not Resuscitate Order**

The DNR order may be revoked at any time by:

- 1) physical destruction of the DNR order with the consent of the authorized decision-maker

**or**

- 2) delivery of an oral statement by the authorized decision-maker to resuscitate.

Staff who have been informed about the original DNR order will be informed of the revocation of any DNR order, and documentation of the revocation will be made on the student's health record.

\*Adapted from Albuquerque Public Schools and Belen Consolidated Schools.

## Sample Policy Option B

### **POLICY FOR DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDERS \***

#### **General Policy:**

It is the policy of the (school district name) Board of Education to provide all students with immediate first aid and emergency rescue services as appropriate.

#### **Definition of DNR Orders:**

DNR orders in the school setting means a parent/guardian's wish and a healthcare provider's written request to withhold life-saving techniques or resuscitative measures in the event of a respiratory or cardiac arrest suffered by a severely impaired or terminally ill student. A competent student who is 18 years of age or older or an emancipated minor may provide consent for the DNR order in lieu of a parent/guardian.

#### **Accepting DNR Orders:**

DNR orders presented to the school district by a parent or guardian on behalf of his/her minor child will be considered on a case-by-case basis through health services and student support services. Appropriate accommodations will be established and documented in the student's Individualized Educational Plan or 504 Plan.

#### **Implementing DNR Orders:**

The Board of Education policy will be fully explained to the parent/guardian who presents DNR orders by school administration and the following procedure will be followed.

- The school nurse will meet with the parent/guardian and initiating healthcare provider to determine the student's medical diagnosis, current medical condition, prognosis and anticipated medical needs.
- A multi-disciplinary team meeting will then be convened to develop a health management plan for the student which will include a medical resuscitation plan and individually appropriate life-sustaining intervention steps to be followed in a medical emergency at school.
- If the DNR authorizing parent/guardian declines to meet with the team or declines to agree to a health management plan following the school district policy, the DNR order will be declined by the school district and documented in the student's file.
- All school personnel who have been trained in emergency cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) are expected to administer first aid, including life-saving or resuscitation procedures, to any student, with or without a DNR order, in the event of an accident, choking, respiratory and/or cardiac arrest, or any other life-threatening emergency.
- Community Emergency Medical Services (EMS) at 911 will be called immediately when a life-threatening situation presents, and school personnel will continue resuscitation efforts until relieved by EMS who will be provided with the original DNR orders on file at the school.
- Once transport of the student from the school begins, DNR orders become the responsibility of the transporting team/individual, whether that be the parent/guardian or EMS.

\*Adapted from policies of Raton Public Schools and Clovis Municipal Schools.

DO NOT RESUSCITATE (DNR) ORDER SAMPLE

School \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
(Please Type or Print)

Date of Birth \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ Gender  Male  Female

Physician's Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

Physician's Address: \_\_\_\_\_

**TO BE COMPLETED BY PHYSICIAN**

A DO NOT Resuscitate order has been agreed upon between family members of \_\_\_\_\_  
(Student's Name)

And their physician for the following reason:

- Patient's medical condition continues to deteriorate.
- Resuscitation would result in unnecessary pain and suffering for this patient.

We hereby direct \_\_\_\_\_ personnel to withhold cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR).

(School Name)

artificial ventilation, or other related life sustaining procedures in the event of cardiac or respiratory arrest of the aforementioned child.

We understand that palliative care in the form of: control of bleeding, airway maintenance, appropriate nutrition, control of pain, positioning for comfort and other measures to ensure general comfort will be provided, as previously ordered, or as indicated by school procedures. When authorized by physician order and parental permission on the standard medication form, prescription medications will also be provided.

Other measures that are allowable are:

- Suctioning as necessary, using \_\_\_\_\_ Fr. Catheter at \_\_\_\_\_ mm. water
- Oxygen administration, as needed, via \_\_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_\_ L/min.
- Other: \_\_\_\_\_

We understand that the Emergency Medical Services System (911) will be activated in response to a real or perceived emergency at school.

In the event of cardiopulmonary arrest at school, the following persons should be notified, in this order:

1. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_ Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_