

## CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES

The School Board recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and other recreational activities. The Board acknowledges the risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed. However, in order to ensure the safety of District students, this policy will apply to all activities for all students in grades PK-12.

Consistent with the National Federation of High School (NFHS) and the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA), the District will utilize recommended guidelines, procedures and other pertinent information to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and parents/guardians of the nature and risk of concussions or head injuries, including the dangers associated with continuing to play after a concussion or head injury.

Annually, the district will distribute a head injury and concussion information sheet to all parents/guardians of student-athletes in competitive sport activities prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition.

All coaches, including volunteers, will complete training as recommended and/or provided by NHIAA, New Hampshire Department of Education and/or other pertinent organizations. Additionally, all coaches of competitive sport activities will comply with NHIAA recommended procedures for the management of head injuries and concussions.

### Athletic Director or Administrator in Charge of Athletic Duties

Updating: Each spring, the athletic director or designee shall review any changes that have been made in procedures required for concussion and head injury management or other serious injury by consulting with the NHIAA or the District's on-call physician, if applicable. If there are any updated procedures, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.

Identified Sports: Identified sports include all NHIAA-sanctioned activities, including cheer/dance squads, and any other district-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the district.

Coach Training: All coaches shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once every year by completing the NFHS on-line concussion management through the NFHS on-line concussion course. Proof of participation and successful completion of this course must be on file with the Athletic Director prior to any coaching. In addition, each coach will be required to participate in a hands-on concussion management training annually.

Parent Information Sheet: On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be distributed to the student-athlete and the athlete's parent/guardian prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition. This information sheet will be incorporated into the parent permission sheet that allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics.

Coach's Responsibility: A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury or other serious injury in a practice or game shall be immediately removed from play.

Administrative Responsibilities: The Superintendent or his/her designee will keep abreast of changes in standards regarding concussion, explore staff professional development programs relative to concussions, and will explore other areas of education, training and programs.

#### Removal From Play and Protocol For Return to Play

Any coach, official, licensed athletic trainer, or health care provider who suspects that a student-athlete has sustained a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall immediately remove the student-athlete from play. A student-athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to play on the same day. He/she must be evaluated by a health care provider and receive medical clearance and written authorization from that health care provider to return to play. The student-athlete shall also present written permission from a parent/guardian to return to play.

The District may limit a student-athlete's participation as determined by the student's treating health care provider.

#### Protocol For Return To Play For Athletes

No member of a school athletic team shall participate in any athletic event or practice the same day he or she is injured. No member of a school athletic team shall return to participate in an athletic event or training on the days after he/she is suspected of a concussion unless all of the following conditions have been met.

1. The student receives a written medical release from his health care provider that is reviewed and accepted by the Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer and/or Registered Nurse.
2. The student no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion.
3. The student is asymptomatic during, or following periods of monitored exercise that is gradually intensifying as outlined in the SAU #88 return to play protocol accepted by designated district personnel (Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer, and/or Registered Nurse).

4. The student-athlete shall also present written permission from a parent/guardian to return to play.

Designated District Personnel may limit a student-athlete's participation until the student completes an approved "Graduated Return to Play Standards and Protocol."

#### Concussion Awareness and Education

To the extent possible, the Board encourages the administration to implement concussion awareness and education into the district's physical education and/or health education curriculum. The administrative decision will take into account all relevant considerations, including time, resources, access to materials, and other pertinent factors.

#### Academic Issues in Concussed Students

In the event a student is concussed, regardless of whether the concussion was a result of a school-related or non-school-related activity, school district staff should be mindful that the concussion may affect the student's ability to learn. In the event a student has a concussion, that student's teachers will be notified by the school nurse. Teachers should report to the school nurse if the student appears to have any difficulty with academic tasks that the teacher believes may be related to the concussion. The school nurse will notify the student's parents and treating physician. Administrators and district staff will work to establish a protocol and course of action to ensure the student is able to maintain his/her academic responsibilities while recovering from the concussion.

Section 504 accommodations may be developed in accordance with applicable law and board policies.

#### ***Additional Resources:***

<http://nhiaa.org/PDFs/3076/SuggestedGuidelinesforManagementofConcussioninSports.pdf>

<http://www.bianh.org/concussion.asp>