

**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. The Board recognizes that the majority of concussions will occur in “contact” or “collisions” sports. However, in order to ensure the safety of all District student-athletes, this policy will apply to all competitive athletic activities as identified by the administration.

Consistent with the National Federation of High Schools (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.

All coaches, including volunteers, all members of the physical education department, and all nurses 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.

#### 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 spirit/cheer/dance squads, and any other district-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the district.

Coach Training: All coaches and physical education teachers shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once every two years by both of the following means: (1) through viewing the NHIAA sport-specific rules clinic; and (2) through completing the NFHS or Centers for Disease Control (CDC) on-line concussion in sports training at [www.NFHSlern.com](http://www.NFHSlern.com) or [www.CDC.gov](http://www.CDC.gov).

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 may be incorporated into the parent permission sheet that allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics.

Supervisor’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 and the parents/guardians notified.

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.

#### Protocol for Return to Play

No member of a school athletic team shall participate in any athletic event or practice the same day he or she is injured and:

1. Exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors attributable to a concussion; or
2. Has been diagnosed with a concussion.

No member of a school athletic team shall return to participate in an athletic event or training on the days after he/she experiences a concussion unless all of the following conditions have been met:

1. The student no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion;
2. The student is asymptomatic during, or following periods of supervised exercise that is gradually intensifying; and
3. The student receives a written medical release from his/her treating certified health provider (physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant) and their parent(s) or guardian(s).

The District may limit a student-athlete's participation to "Graduated Return to Play" standards and protocol, as determined by the student's treating certified health provider.

#### 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. 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 certified health care provider. 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.

NOTE: A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that alters the way the brain functions. Effects are usually temporary, but can include problems with headache, concentration, memory, judgment, balance, and coordination. (Reference: Centers for Disease Control)

**Additional Resources:**

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

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

*<http://www.mhsa.org>*

Law Reference: RSA 200:49. RSA 200:50

Appendix Reference:

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