

## CONCUSSION POLICY

The schools are committed to the health and safety of all students who participate in physical activities and sports on school premises or while representing the school at off-site events.

Concussions are brain injuries caused by movement of the brain inside the skull. Signs and symptoms may appear immediately or even days after an injury and may include:

Physical symptoms: headache, nausea, vomiting, balance problems, dizziness, visual problems, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to sound/ringing in ears, numbness/tingling, fatigue.

Cognitive symptoms: foggy, slowed down, difficulty concentrating, difficulty remembering

Emotional symptoms: irritable, sad, more emotional, nervous.

Sleep symptoms: drowsy, sleeping less than usual, sleeping more than usual, trouble falling asleep.

Symptoms can be short-lived or may last days, months, or even longer. Often no visible injury is present and supervisory personnel may not even witness a specific “event,” so reporting of symptoms by students, staff, parents, and volunteers is critical to diagnosis and management. Importantly, once a student has sustained a concussion, the risk of a second injury, often more severe, is increased, especially if the student returns to activities and sports too quickly.

The principal or the principal’s designee shall ensure that the Concussion Protocol and Forms (Appendix L), or equivalent protocol and forms providing the same terms and notice to parents and guardians, are implemented by the school. The Protocol and Forms must be included in the parent/student handbook, and the Forms must be provided to parents at the beginning of each sport session.

The principal shall ensure the establishment and implementation of protocols for reasonable academic support for students who are recovering from concussions.

## Appendix L: Concussion Protocol

Our school is committed to the health and safety of all students who participate in physical activities and sports while at the school, including activities during school day such as at recess or physical education or in an after-school program or while participating on a sports team. Given the evolving standards with regard to concussions, and our primary concern with the health and safety at the school, the goal of this protocol is to raise awareness among students, staff, volunteers, and parents.

By establishing this protocol, the school does not assume liability for advice given under this protocol, nor will liability result for failing to comply with this protocol. Rather, the protocol establishes minimum standards to be followed whenever possible. Due to the individual circumstances of each situation, the application of the protocol may vary.

In the interests of safety, the following protocol is to be followed, whenever possible, when a student is suspected of having sustained a concussion while at the school.

### Head Injury Evaluation

In the event that a student suffers an injury to the head (other than a minor scrape or bruise), the following procedures must be initiated. The school nurse or athletic trainer (if available) must be notified to evaluate the individual. If a school nurse or athletic trainer is not available, the principal or the principal's designee must be contacted. In addition, the parents or guardians must be notified of any injury to the head, and the school must send to the parents or guardians (either directly or with the student) a copy of the Concussion Signs and Symptoms checklist [www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI\\_schools\\_checklist\\_508-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_schools_checklist_508-a.pdf).

#### 1. Severe Brain Injury Suspected

Obtain Emergency Services (911) if symptoms warrant. Such symptoms include:

- Headaches that worsen
- Looks very drowsy/can't be awakened
- Can't recognize people or places
- Seizures
- Repeated vomiting
- Increasing confusion or irritability
- Unusual behavioral change
- Slurred speech
- Weakness or numbness in arms/legs
- Change in state of consciousness
- Significant neck pain/injury
- Concerns of skull fracture (excessive scalp swelling or bleeding)

#### 2. Concussion without severe/worrisome symptoms (above): The student must be evaluated and monitored by the school nurse or athletic trainer. If the school nurse or athletic trainer is unavailable or symptoms persist, evaluation must be performed by medical personnel at a nearby hospital.

3. Concussion not suspected: If history, symptoms, and exam do not support concussion, after a period of observation, the student may return to usual school activities, though teachers, coaches, and staff must be alerted to monitor for any common concussive symptoms (as above).

#### Concussion Ongoing Management

If a head injury (other than a minor injury such as a cut, scrape, minor bump, or bruise) occurs during an athletic event or during physical activity on school premises, the student must be removed from play immediately and cannot return to play on the same day until the student is evaluated by a health care provider and receives medical clearance and written authorization from the health care provider to return to play. The student also must submit written permission from a parent or guardian to return to play.

Students suspected of concussion must not return to school until the student is evaluated by a health care provider and receives medical clearance and written authorization from the health care provider to return to school.

If the student experiences any persistent symptoms or progressively worsening symptoms, especially symptoms that do not allow participation in non-sports or activity-related school activities or duties, the school must notify the parents or guardians and consider sending the student home.

The school nurse should make use of the following evaluation and management tools from the CDC's Heads Up program (<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/index.html>).

Fact Sheet for School Nurses:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI\\_factsheet\\_NURSE-508-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_factsheet_NURSE-508-a.pdf)

Concussion in sports palm card:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Concussion\\_in\\_Sports\\_palm\\_card-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/Concussion_in_Sports_palm_card-a.pdf)

Concussion Signs and Symptoms Checklist:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI\\_schools\\_checklist\\_508-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_schools_checklist_508-a.pdf)

Acute Concussion Evaluation form:

<http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/headsup/pdf/ACE-a.pdf>

Concussion Fact Sheet for Parents:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI\\_factsheets\\_PARENTS-508-a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/TBI_factsheets_PARENTS-508-a.pdf)

#### Concussion Management Goals

The standards for the management of concussions are evolving, with growing concerns about the long term risks to the health of athletes who return to activity too early. For example, an athlete who is *suspected* of having suffered a concussion should not be allowed back into play on the same day as the injury and an athlete who exhibits even brief symptoms should expect a

prolonged period of rest and graduated return to activity. Coaches must remove any athletes from practice or play and initiate this protocol if a concussion injury is suspected.

#### Concussion Training

All employees and volunteers, including nurses, athletic directors, and coaches are strongly encouraged to complete the following free online training course:

[http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online\\_training.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)

Materials for education of employees and volunteers may be obtained for free from:

Ordered/mailed: <http://wwwn.cdc.gov/pubs/ncipc.aspx#tbi4>

Downloaded/printed: <http://www.cdc.gov/injury/publications/index.html#tbi>

Concussion Statement

I am the parent/legal guardian of \_\_\_\_\_, a student-athlete for \_\_\_\_\_ School.

We understand the athlete must report all injuries/illnesses to the coach and/or school nurse. We have read *A Fact Sheet for Parents* (a copy of which has been provided to us) and we are aware of the signs and symptoms of concussion.

We will tell the coach if the athlete has experienced any previous concussion.

We understand:

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury and all brain injuries can be serious.

Concussion symptoms may appear immediately but also may present hours, days, or even weeks after an injury.

A concussion can impact reaction time, balance, sleep, classroom performance, and the ability to perform everyday activities.

If an athlete suspects a teammate has a concussion, the athlete is responsible for reporting the injury to the coach or school nurse..

The athlete must not return to play in a game or practice if the athlete has concussion-related symptoms.

After a concussion, the brain needs time to heal. A repeat concussion is more likely if an athlete returns to play before symptoms have had an opportunity to resolve.

Repeat or later concussions can be very serious and can cause permanent brain damage.

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_