

JLCJ – 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 Board and administration.

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.

All school nurses and physical education teachers shall undergo similar training in head injury and concussion management.

Definitions

For purposes of this policy, “student-athlete” means a student involved in any intramural sports program conducted outside the regular teaching day or competitive student sports program between schools in grades 4 through 12.

“Student sports” means intramural sports programs conducted outside the regular teaching day for students in grades 4 through 12 or competitive athletic programs between schools for students in grades 4 through 12, including all NHIAA sanctioned activities, including cheer/dance squads, or any other district-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the Board or administration. “Head injury” means injuries to the scalp, skull, or brain caused by trauma, and shall include a concussion which is the most common type of sports-related brain injury.

Athletic Director or Administrator in Charge of Athletic Duties

Updating: Each spring, the Athletic Director 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. If there are any updated procedures, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.

Coach Training: All coaches and the Athletic Director shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once every two years by viewing the NHIAA sport-specific rules clinic or attending a concussion clinic.

Athletic Trainer: The Athletic Department may only contract with licensed Athletic Trainers.

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 protocol that allows students to participate in athletic activities and will require a parent signature acknowledging receipt of such information.

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. The student's parent(s) and school Athletic Director will be notified as soon as possible following the injury. The student will not be permitted to drive home from the athletic activity or be dropped off at his/her home without an adult present.

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.

Parent/Guardian Notification Responsibilities

The parent or guardian shall notify the School Office of students with a concussion or head injury. The School Office shall notify the School Nurse, Athletic Director, and contracted Athletic Trainer.

The Athletic Director or contracted Athletic Trainer shall notify the School Office of concussions or head injuries resulting from school related athletic activity. The School Office shall notify the School Nurse.

The School Nurse shall notify teachers of the academic issues associated with concussions and protocols to follow.

Protocol for Eligibility to Play

All student-athletes will be required to obtain a baseline concussion test (ImPACT - computerized neurocognitive assessment tool) prior to participating in competitive sport activities. The baseline concussion test will be valid for a two-year period. All student-athletes will be required to update his/her test every two years. The Athletic Department will make every effort to work with an outside agency to provide on-site testing free of charge.

Protocol for Removal from Play

A student athlete must be immediately removed from practice or a game if he/she is suspected of having sustained a concussion or head injury. The following individuals are authorized to render the decision to remove the student from play or practice: coaches, officials, licensed athletic trainer, athletic director, or health care providers.

Protocol for Return to Play after Being Suspected of Having a Concussion or Head Injury

The District uses the following guidelines, based on the NHIAA return to play protocol, for the return to play of student athletes. Return to play is a process and not an immediate return to game activity. Return to play is to be supervised by district contracted athletic trainer services. The District may limit a student-athlete's participation to play based on "return to play" standards and protocol and/or as determined by the student's treating health care provider. The District reserves the right to restrict play at any time and request a medical check.

- A student athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to play on the same day or until he or she has been evaluated by a health care provider and receives medical clearance and written authorization from that health care provider to return to play. Play includes games and/or practice. The student athlete shall also present written permission and authorization to

return to play from a parent or guardian.

- The student athlete must be asymptomatic for 24 hours.
- It is strongly recommended that ImPACT concussion testing be included in the return to play protocol. The student-athlete's ImPACT concussion test should return to baseline or normative data to return to play.

In addition the following NHIAA medical clearance for return to play guidelines shall be followed to return a student athlete to play.

1. No exertional activity until asymptomatic.
 2. When the athlete appears clear, begin low impact activity such as walking, stationary bike, etc.
 3. Initiate aerobic activity fundamental to specific sport such as running, and may also begin progressive strength training activities.
 4. Begin non-contact skill drills specific to sport such as dribbling, fielding, batting, etc.
 5. Full contact in practice setting.
 6. If athlete remains asymptomatic, he or she may return to game/play.
- Athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next level.
 - At any time during the process, if the student athlete experiences any signs or symptoms of concussion, the process is stopped and the cycle will revert back to the last step that was asymptomatic. The process does not begin again until the individual is asymptomatic for 24 hours.

Concussion Awareness and Education

To the extent possible, the Board encourages the administration to implement concussion awareness in the District's physical education and/or health education curriculum.

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, the School Nurse shall notify the student's teachers. Teachers will be instructed to 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 medical provider as necessary. 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.

Statutory/Regulatory/Policy/Handbook Cross References

RSA 200:49 (Head Injury Policies for Student Sports)
RSA 200:50 (Removal of Student-Athlete)
RSA 205:51 (School Districts (Limitation of Liability))

RSA 200:52 (Definitions)
Handbook (Referenced in Student/Athletic Handbooks)

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PREVIOUS POLICY: None