

Management of Concussions and Other Head Injuries

The Board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries are potentially serious and may result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and managed properly. The Board adopts this policy to promote the safety of students participating in school-sponsored extracurricular athletic activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports.

Training

By July 1 of each year, the Athletic Director will identify the school-sponsored athletic activities that pose a risk of concussion or other head injury. A list of these activities will be distributed to school administrators and coaches.

All coaches, including volunteer coaches, must undergo training in the identification and management of concussive and other head injuries prior to assuming their coaching responsibilities. The training must be consistent with such protocols as may be identified or developed by the Maine Department of Education (MDOE) and include instruction in the use of such forms as the MDOE may develop or require. Coaches shall be required to undergo refresher training every two years and/or when protocols and/or forms have been revised.

Student and Parent Information

Annually, prior to the beginning of each sports season, students who will be participating in school-sponsored athletic activities will be given the IMPACT Baseline Test and they and their parents will be provided information regarding:

- A. The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected;
- B. The signs and symptoms of concussion and other head injuries; and
- C. The school unit's protocols for 1) removal from the activity when a student is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury, 2) evaluation, and 3) return to participation in the activity ("Zurich Progression Graduated Return to Play Protocol").

The student and his/her parent(s) must sign a statement acknowledging that they have received and read this information before the student will be allowed to participate in any school-sponsored athletic activity.

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It is the responsibility of the Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer and all Coaches of the activity to act in accordance with this policy when they recognize that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion or other head injury.

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-sponsored athletic activity including but not limited to competition, practice or scrimmage, must be removed from the activity immediately. The student and his/her parent(s) will be informed of the need for an evaluation for brain injury before the student will be allowed to return to the activity.

No student will be permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school-sponsored athletic activity on the day of the suspected concussion.

Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury shall be prohibited from further participation in school-sponsored athletic activities until he/she has been evaluated and received written medical clearance to do so from a licensed health care provider, completed this policy's Return to Play Protocol and is granted final approval by the Athletic Director.

Cognitive Considerations

School personnel will be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by students who have suffered a concussion or other head injury, including, but not limited to, difficulty with concentration, organization, long-and-short term memory and sensitivity to bright lights and sounds, and accommodate a gradual return to full participation in academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendations of the student's licensed health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g., 504 Coordinator).

Graduated return to athletic plans will begin only after a student has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom free at rest.

Return to play schedule for the student will proceed as follows and will be monitored by the Athletic Director and Athletic Trainer, in coordination with the school nurse. There will be an interval of 24 hours between each step.

Graduated Return to Play Protocol

Step 1: Administer Post-Injury ImPACT Test. Compare to baseline results.

Step 2: Light aerobic exercise. Intensity below 70%; no resistance training.

Step 3: Sport-specific exercise: Running, skating drills, no head impact drills.

Step 4: Non-contact training drills: Progression to more complex training drills, may start resistance training.

Step 5: Full-contact practice. Following a licensed health care provider's clearance, participate in normal training.

Step 6: Return to play: Normal game play.

If at any time post concussion symptoms occur during the graduated return, there will be at minimum, a 24 hour rest period. Once asymptomatic following the rest period, the athlete will drop back to the previous level and the progression will continue.

Concussion Management Team

The Superintendent will appoint a concussion management team including a school administrator to be responsible, under the administrative supervision of the Superintendent, to make recommendations related to implementation of this policy. The concussion management team will include the Athletic Director and school nurse and may include one or more principals or assistant principals, the school physician and such other school personnel or consultants as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

Legal Reference: Sec. 1. 20-A MRSA §6554

This is a required policy.

Adopted: November 1, 2012

Revised: