

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 activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports.

TRAINING

All school personnel including coaches and volunteer coaches must undergo annual training in the identification and management of concussive and other head injuries prior to assuming their responsibilities. The training must be consistent with such protocols as may be identified or developed by the Maine Department of Education (DOE) and include instruction in the use of such forms as the DOE may develop or require.

Coaches shall be required to undergo refresher training annually or when protocols and/or forms have been revised.

STUDENT AND PARENT INFORMATION

Students and parents of students who will be participating in school-sponsored athletic activities will be provided information by the athletic director annually 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 ("return to play").

The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(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 coach of the activity to act in accordance with this policy when the coach recognizes that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with a concussion or other head injury. The coach must submit a written accident report of the incident to the athletic director, athletic trainer and school nurse of any student suspected concussion within 24 hours.

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-sponsored activity including but not limited to competition, practice or scrimmage, must be removed from the activity immediately. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(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 activity on the day of the suspected concussion. Students who have been diagnosed with a concussion and released to return to play by a licensed health care medical provider must then complete the five step gradual return to play protocol.

Students participating in a game or practice who have been sent to a medical facility for an injury (concussive or otherwise) require a release to return to play by a licensed health care medical provider and must then complete the five step gradual return to play protocol.

Return to Play Procedures After Concussion

These recommendations from the Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: The 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, (Zurich 2008) provide guidance for a gradual return-to-play protocol after the student/athlete is symptom-free at rest:

Day 1: light aerobic exercise (walking, swimming, or stationary cycling) keeping exercise heart rate less than 70% of maximum predicted heart rate. No resistance training

Day 2: sport-specific exercise, any activities that incorporate sport-specific skills. No head impact activities.

Day 3: non-contact training drills

Day 4: full contact practice, participate in normal practice activities

Day 5: return to competition

If any concussion symptoms return during any of the above activities, the athlete should return to the previous level, after resting for 24 hours.

Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury shall be prohibited from any school activities (physical education classes, co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, recess, class trips) until he/she has been evaluated and received written medical clearance to do so from a licensed health care provider (licensed physician, nurse practitioner, physician's assistant and Doctor of Osteopathy). More than one evaluation by the student's health care provider may be necessary before the student is cleared for full participation.

Coaches and other school personnel shall comply with the student's health care provider's recommendations and follow the RSU 56 gradual return to play protocol. No student will be permitted to return to full participation (competition) until cleared to do so.

If at any time during the return to full participation in school activities the student exhibits signs and symptoms of concussion, the student must be removed from the activity and be re-evaluated by the treating licensed health care provider.

All documentation from the licensed health care provider in regards to a concussion will be filed with the school nurse and athletic director. All medical documentation pertaining to educational restrictions will also be filed with principal and guidance counselor. Orders from the licensed health care provider will determine if there will be short-term or a long-term plan for educational restrictions.

COGNITIVE CONSIDERATIONS

School personnel should 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

School personnel should accommodate a gradual return to full participation in academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendations of the student's health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g., 504 Coordinator).

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 meet annually to make recommendations related to implementation of this policy based on the generally accepted protocols. 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, athletic trainer, and such other school personnel or consultants as the Superintendent deems appropriate. The policy and/or related protocols should be reviewed when generally accepted protocols change.

Adopted: July 11, 2017