

Traumatic Brain Injury/Concussion Policy

All school districts and schools must have policies and procedures governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district or school. Information regarding our policy and procedures in regards to concussions can be found on our school website. The Athletic Director is responsible for the implementation of these policies and protocols.

Pre-participation Requirements.

Each year, the school district shall provide current Department-approved training, written materials or a list and Internet links for Department-approved on-line courses to all students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents in advance of the student's participation.

All students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents shall satisfy the following pre-participation requirements:

- ❑ Every Student-Athlete must complete a Pre-Season Physical Examination in accordance with MIAA Rule 56.
- ❑ Before the start of every sports season, the student and the parent shall complete and submit a current Pre-participation Form, or school-based equivalent, signed by both, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history; any head, face or cervical spine injury history; and any history of co-existent concussive injuries. The School Nurse and the Athletic Trainer will review this form.
- ❑ Each year, before the student begins practice or competition, the student and the parent shall complete current department-approved training regarding head injuries and concussions in extracurricular athletic activities; and provide the school with proof of completion for any Department-approved on-line course or an acknowledgement, signed by both, that they have read and understand Department-approved written materials.

The following individuals must complete annual training in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related-head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome utilizing Department-approved training materials or program, and documentation of each person's completion of such training;

- (1) Coaches/PE Teachers
- (2) Certified athletic trainers
- (3) Volunteers
- (4) School and team physicians
- (5) School nurses
- (6) Athletic Director
- (7) Band Director
- (8) Parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity
- (9) Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity

The required training applies to one school year and must be repeated for every subsequent year.

Exclusion from Play

Any student, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day. The

student shall not return to practice or competition unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization.

The Coach and/or Athletic Trainer shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent in person or by phone immediately after the practice or competition in which a student has been removed from play for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness. The coach or athletic trainer also must provide this information to the parent in writing, whether paper or electronic format, by the end of the next business day. This information will also be sent to the school nurse and guidance department.

The coach and/or athletic trainer will complete the DPH Head Injury During Sports Season Form (Report of Head Injury Form), in the event of a head injury or suspected concussion that takes place during the extracurricular activity season. Parents will complete the Head Injury During Sports Season Form (Report of Head Injury Form) in the event of a head injury that is sustained in an extracurricular activity during an athletic season.

Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities. The plan, developed by Student Assistance Team, will address, but not be limited to:

- (a) Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate;
- (b) Graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies as appropriate, including accommodations or modifications as needed;
- (c) Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities;
- (d) Frequency of assessments, as appropriate, by the school nurse, school physician, team physician, certified athletic trainer if on staff, or neuropsychologist if available until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized; and
- (e) A plan for communication and coordination between and among school personnel and between the school, the parent, and the student's primary care provider or the physician who made the diagnosis or who is managing the student's recovery.

Student-Athletes must be completely symptom free and medically cleared in order to begin graduated reentry to extracurricular athletic activities.

Medical Clearance and Re-Entry Plan

The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate. Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall obtain and present to the Athletic Director, unless another person is specified in school policy or procedure, a Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (Medical Clearance and Authorization Form) prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity. This form must be completed by a physician or one of the individuals listed below:

- (1) A duly licensed physician;
- (2) A duly licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
- (3) A duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or
- (4) A duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

Return to Play Stages:

Return to play procedure for an athletic trainer after a concussion is diagnosed is as follows:

Once it has been determined by any of the above medical professionals that an athlete is symptom-free, a gradual progression for return to play may begin. During this time, the athlete will need to return to his or her diagnosing physician for a Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form to be filled out and returned to the Chelmsford High School certified Athletic Trainer. Only after this form is returned and the athlete has successfully completed their gradual progression shall he or she be allowed to participate in athletic competition. The stages of gradual progression are as follows with 24-48 hours between stages determined on a case by case basis considering past concussion history and severity of current concussion.

- (1) Stage 1: Light aerobic, nonimpact, exercise – e.g., walking, stationary bike, supervised by athletic trainer.
- (2) Stage 2: Light Aerobic exercise – e.g., jogging on field, track, supervised by athletic trainer.
- (3) Stage 3: Sport-specific training – progress aerobic activities depending on the athlete's sport and position (to include, sprinting, stop/start, cutting as indicated), incorporate progressive balance training, increasing difficulty of balance task and adding toss and catch over the next several stages, SUPERVISED BY ATHLETIC TRAINER.
- (4) Stage 4: Non-Contact (no hitting, no scrimmaging and no heading) training drill with team.
- (5) Stage 5: Full contact practice (no game play) with team.
- (6) Stage 6: Released for game play.
- (7) Note: If the athlete experiences post-concussion symptoms during any stage, activity, should cease for that day and until symptoms have again resolved. Once the athlete has a new 24-hour asymptomatic period, the athlete may resume the progression beginning at the previous asymptomatic level.

Stages 1-3 are supervised by the athletic trainer. Stages 4-6 can be supervised by the team coach after she or he has received specific instructions from the athletic trainer. The progression through the stages is to be approved by the athletic trainer ONLY, and not left up to the coach. The athlete should see the athletic trainer daily for re-assessment and instructions until he, or she, has progressed to unrestricted activity.