

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 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.

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.

Identified Sports: Identified sports include all NHIAA-sanctioned activities and any other District-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the District.

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 or attending a concussion clinic.

Athletic Trainer: The Athletic Department may only contract with qualified 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) will be notified. 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 Athletic Director shall notify the School Principal and School

Nurse of students with a concussion or head injury. 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.

Protocol for Eligibility to Play

All student-athletes will be required to obtain a baseline concussion test prior to participating in competitive sport activities, and a follow up test for any athlete suspected of having a concussion or head injury following a contact or collision. The Athletic Department will provide students and parents with information on concussion testing, accessibility, and cost. The Athletic Department will make every effort to work with an outside agency to provide on-site testing free of charge.

Protocol for Return to Play

No member of a school athletic team or activity shall participate in any athletic event or practice the same day he or she is injured and:

1. Exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors attributable to a concussion; or
2. Has been diagnosed with a concussion.

No member of a school athletic team or activity shall return to participate in an athletic event or training on the days after he/she experiences a concussion unless all of the following conditions have been met:

1. The student no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, at rest or with exertion;
2. The student is asymptomatic during or following periods of supervised exercise that is gradually intensifying; and
3. The student receives a written medical release from a licensed health care provider.

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.

Concussion Awareness and Education

To the extent possible, the Board encourages the administration to implement safeguards and protocols to protect against concussions and head injuries, and provide education for concussion awareness in the District's physical education and/or health education curriculum. Administration will take into account all relevant considerations, including time, resources, materials, equipment, and other pertinent factors in educating and protecting against concussions and head injuries.

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 student's teachers will be notified. Teachers should 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. Accommodations may be developed in accordance with applicable law and Board policies.

Statutory/Regulatory/Policy/Handbook Cross References

Policy JLCA (Physical Examinations of Students)
Handbook (Referenced in Student/Athletic Handbooks)

APPROVED: January 19, 2012

PREVIOUS POLICY: None