



The Taft School

May 2019

Dear Parent/Guardian,

As medical director of The Taft School, I write to you about some changes we made several years ago in accordance with best practices and a Connecticut statute on concussion prevention. For this school year, no student will be allowed to participate in any extracurricular activity at Taft without an up-to-date, signed “Participation Agreement, Assumption of Risk and Release Regarding Concussions” form on file in the Health Center.

The science and treatment of concussions have changed dramatically in recent years. In less than a decade, schools, universities and sports organizations have moved from a time when a concussion prompted phrases like “he had his bell rung” and treatment included a query on how many fingers the athletic trainer was holding up, to the realization that brain injury can be real and serious—and that treatment must be prompt, careful, and informed. Taft has been on the forefront of concussion prevention and treatment for years. We have worked with leading specialists, consulted heavily in the literature, and developed protocols that put student safety at the forefront. Our previous head athletic trainer, Maryann Laska, was critical in helping shape our policies, intervention, and treatment practice for concussions; and we carefully coordinate the efforts and input of the athletic trainers, medical center, academic dean, classroom teachers, class dean, and advisor. And, of course, we inform parents throughout the treatment. None of this is news to you. After all, the topic of concussions is everywhere.

What is new is that Connecticut law now requires us to provide information on concussions to student athletes and their parents/guardians as a means of reducing concussions in children.

The law requires that parents/guardians and student athletes read this information and then sign an informed consent authorizing participation in athletics at Taft. Since concussions are a risk for non-athletes as well, we believe it is important that all Taft parents and students understand concussions and the risks. **All Taft students, regardless of whether they are playing a sport at Taft, and their parents/guardians must review the concussion materials and sign the Participation Agreement, Assumption of Risk and Release Regarding Concussions form** prior to the students engaging in any extracurricular activity at Taft.

The form titled “Important Information Regarding Concussions” provides important information on concussions, including identifying the symptoms and an explanation of treatment for concussions. **We ask that both you and your child read this document carefully to understand the symptoms of concussions as well as its treatment.** Please contact me or Sergio Guerrero, Taft’s Head Athletic Trainer, with any specific questions regarding these materials, or regarding the treatment of concussions at Taft. You can also visit the website, www.concussionwise.com, to learn more about concussions through a free online interactive course.

Once you have read and understand the “Important Information Regarding Concussions” form, we ask that you sign “The Taft School Student Participation Agreement, Assumption of Risk and Release Regarding Concussions” form and **return the original signed document to the Health Center no later than July 15.** You should retain the other information for your reference throughout the year.

Thank you,

Diane L. Fountas, M.D.