

Head Injuries and Concussion Policy

Policy Information

Series J - Students

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Policy # JIJ

FILE: JIJ

HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSION POLICY

In accordance with 105 CMR 201, all school districts and schools are required to have policies and procedures governing the prevention and management of head injuries within the school district or school.

Policies and procedures must address head injuries occurring in athletic and marching band activities, but may be applied to all head injuries in students. Review and revision of such policies and procedures shall occur as needed. At a minimum, these procedures shall include:

1. A person designated by the Superintendent responsible for the implementation of these policies and protocols;
2. Head Injuries and Concussion Policy information in the student handbook;
3. The reporting of suspected head injuries or concussions to the school nurse;
4. Penalties for failure to comply with provisions of the school district's policy.

Training Program

Before beginning athletic and marching band activities, the following persons shall complete one of the training programs approved by the Department as found on the Department's website:

1. Coaches;
2. Certified athletic trainers;
3. Volunteers;
4. School physicians;
5. School nurses;
6. Athletic Directors;
7. Referees and umpires who are employees, contractors, or agents of a school;
8. Directors responsible for a school marching band, whether employed by a school or school district or serving in such a capacity as a volunteer;
9. Parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity; and
10. Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity.

The Superintendent and/or designee shall maintain a record of persons trained in accordance with 105 CMR 201.015.

Documentation of Head Injury and Concussion History

1. At or before the start of each sport or marching band season, all students who plan to participate shall complete and submit a current Concussion History Form, signed by both the student and the parent/caregiver, that provides 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.
2. The Superintendent and/or designee shall ensure that all forms that are required by 105 CMR 201.009(B)(1) are completed and reviewed, and shall:
 - Provide each coach or marching band director with copies of forms from all students participating on that coach's team or marching band director's marching band;
 - Distribute copies of forms which indicate a history of head injury to the school nurse and school physician.
3. If a student sustains a head injury or concussion during the season, the Report of Head Injury Form must be completed (a) by the coach or marching band director, in the injury or suspected concussion occurs during a game or practice, or (b) by a parent/caregiver if the injury occurs outside of those settings, and forwarded to the coach or marching band director. The Superintendent and/or designee shall ensure that these forms are reviewed and provided to the persons specified in 105 CMR 201.009 (B)(2).

Suspected Concussion Exclusion from Play

1. Any student, who during a practice, game, competition or performance, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day.
2. The student shall not return to play unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization as specified in 105 CMR 201.011.
3. The coach and marching band director shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent/caregiver in person or by telephone immediately after the practice, game, competition or performance, in which a student has been removed for a head injury or suspected concussion. The coach also must provide this information to the parent/caregiver in writing by the end of the next business day.
4. The coach, marching band director or his/her designee shall communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the Superintendent and/or designee that the student has been removed for a head injury or suspected concussion.
5. Each student who is removed and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and all other activities.
 - The plan shall be developed by the student's teachers, school nurse, and parent/caregiver, members of the building-based student support and assistance team, or individualized education program team as appropriate and in consultation with the student's physician.
 - The written plan shall include but not be limited to:
 - Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate;
 - Graduated return to classroom studies as appropriate;
 - Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities;
 - Frequent assessments by the school nurse as appropriate; and

- Periodic medical assessments until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized.
- The student must be completely symptom free and medically cleared in order to begin graduated reentry to athletic and/or marching band activities.

Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student who is removed for a head injury or suspected concussion shall obtain and present to the Superintendent and/or designee or nurse a Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (herein after “Department Medical Clearance and Authorization Form”) prior to resuming athletic and/or marching band activities. This form must be completed by a physician or one of the individuals as authorized by 105 CMR 201.011(A). The ultimate “return” decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parent/caregivers, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate.

If the situation arises such that the student has been cleared to participate and the school staff notes that the student is still experiencing symptoms, that student shall be removed from the athletic and/or marching band activity. The school has the authority to make the final determination whether a student may safely participate in a given activity. Participation is a privilege that may be permitted or withheld by the school staff based on individual circumstances. If these situations arise the school staff will communicate to the health care provider who provided the clearance, the specific symptoms and reason for concern and that the student is not symptom-free.

Record Maintenance

The school, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for 3 years or at a minimum of the student graduates:

- Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
- Department Pre-Participation Forms;
- Department Report of Head Injury Forms;
- Department Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms; and
- Graduated re-entry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular activities.

The school shall make these records available to the Department and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon request or in connection with any inspection or program review.

Reporting

Starting school year 2011-2012, schools shall be responsible for maintaining and reporting annual statistics on a Department form or electronic format that at a minimum report:

- The total number of Department Report of Head Injury Forms received by the school;
- The total number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in any extracurricular athletic activities.