

**HOLBROOK PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

**POLICY TO ADDRESS SUSPECTED SPORTS RELATED HEAD  
INJURY/CONCUSSION**

The Holbrook School Committee has adopted this policy to address the identification and proper handling of suspected head injury for students in grades 6-12 who are participating in school-sponsored extracurricular athletic activities in accordance with Mass. Gen. L. c. 111, Section 222 and accompanying regulations (105 CMR 201. et seq.) (“Regulations”). Affirmation of an Interim Policy was provided to the Department of Public Health on school letterhead in January 2012, with affirmation of the Final Policy to be provided by March 1, 2012. Review and affirmation of the Policy will again be provided no later than September 30, 2013, and bi-annually thereafter.

**I. Definitions**

The definitions of terms used in this policy are those set forth in the Regulations at 105 CMR 201.005. The following are selected for reprinting here:

Coach means an employee or volunteer responsible for organizing and supervising student athletes to teach them the fundamental skills of Extracurricular Athletic Activities. The term coach includes both head coaches and assistant coaches (and per the definition of Extracurricular Athletic Activity below, marching band directors).

Concussion means a complex disturbance in the brain function due to direct or indirect trauma to the head, related to neurometabolic dysfunction, rather than structural injury.

Extracurricular Athletic Activity means an organized school sponsored athletic activity generally occurring outside of school instructional hours under the director of coach, athletic director or band leader. (Among the examples listed in the definition are cheer leading and marching band.)

Head Injury means a direct or indirect trauma to the head including a concussion or traumatic brain injury.

Second impact syndrome means a potentially lethal condition that can occur when a person sustains a head injury prior to the complete healing of a previous brain injury causing deregulation of cerebral blood flow with subsequent vascular engorgement.

Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) means a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces. TBI may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, neck or elsewhere on the body with an impulsive force transmitted to the head. TBI includes, but is not limited to, a concussion.

II. Roles and Responsibilities

Athletic Director

The Athletic Director shall be responsible for the general implementation of this policy and any accompanying procedures. These responsibilities include:

1. Supporting and enforcing protocols, documentation, training and reporting requirements.
2. Supervising, reviewing and properly distributing all documentation received.
3. Reviewing the policy every two years and recommending changes and/or updates to the school committee for adoption.
4. Reviewing and recommending updated training programs and student/ parent handbooks at least once every two years.
5. Reviewing all *Pre-Participation Forms* and forwarding to the school nurse those forms that indicate a history of head injury.
6. Coordinating outreach to parents who have not provided required pre-participation forms and documentation.

School Nurse and other School Based Staff

As reflected throughout this policy, various members of the school staff play an important role in implementation of this policy. The School Nurse's role is particularly key, involving responsibilities for:

1. Reviewing or having the school physician review completed *Pre-Participation Forms* forwarded to her by the athletic director.
2. Communicating with coaches regarding a student's history of head injury.
3. Following up with parents and students as needed prior to the student's participation in Extracurricular Athletic Activities.
4. Reviewing *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* which a parent submits as a result of a head injury occurring outside of extracurricular activities, with follow-up reporting requirements outlined herein.

Coaches

As reflected in this policy, coaches also have a key role in its implementation. In addition to their other responsibilities listed herein, all coaches are required to instruct students in form, technique and skills that minimize athletic-related head injury and are required to discourage and prohibit students from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health and safety of a student, including using a helmet or any other equipment as a weapon.

### Students

Students are expected to adhere to skills and instructions designed to minimize athletic related injuries. Students who engage in unreasonably dangerous behavior while participating in Extracurricular Athletic Activities may be excluded from the privilege of further participation and, further, may be subject to disciplinary consequences in accordance with the code of conduct.

### III. Training

The following personnel, both those employed and those serving in a volunteer capacity, shall be required to participate in an annual training approved by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDHP) in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury, including second impact syndrome: coaches (as noted above, this term includes marching band directors), certified athletic trainers, school physicians, school nurses, Athletic Director. In addition, students who wish to participate in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity and their parents shall be required to participate in such training annually

*The trainings available for school for school staff, parents/guardians and student athletes are MDPH Approved Training On-line courses annually listed below. They are on line, available free of charge, and last only about 30 minutes.*

- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention Heads Up Concussion in Youth Sports On-Line Training Program](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html)
- [National Federation of State High School Associations Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know](http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000)

*The training materials are available at the Holbrook Public School's website ([www.holbrook.k12.ma.us](http://www.holbrook.k12.ma.us)), and hard copies are available in the athletic department office, the school nurse office and the athletic handbook.*

Individuals who are required to participate in the training must submit documentation verifying their completion of the training on an annual basis to the Athletic Director.

### IV. Prerequisites for Student Participation in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity

Prior to a student beginning (or continuing) participation in any Extracurricular Athletic Activity, whether involving tryouts, practices, contests, or performances, the following must take place;

1. Parents and students must submit to the Athletic Director a certification that they have completed the training requirements described in Section III above. Once submitted, the certification is valid for one school year.

2. Parents and students must submit to the Athletic Director documentation of an annual physical examination for the student providing medical clearance for the student to participate in the relevant Extracurricular Athletic Activity. Physical examinations must have occurred within the past 12 to 13 months. If the student's physical exam expires during the season of participation, the student must submit an updated exam in order to continue participating. The Athletic Director will forward all exam reports to the School Nurse, who shall maintain them as part of the student health record and shall notify a student in the event his/her physical exam expires during the season of participation.
3. Prior to a student's participation in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity, the parent and student must provide to the Athletic Director a completed form for *Pre-Participation Head Injury/ Concussion Reporting For Extracurricular Activities* ("*Pre-Participation Form*") which shall include:
  - a. A comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history, any history regarding head, face or cervical spine injury and/or any history of co-existent concussion injuries; and
  - b. Signatures of both the parent and the student;
4. During the season of participation if a student sustains a head injury outside of the extracurricular activity, his/her parent is required to complete and submit *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* to the Athletic Director.
5. The Athletic Director will forward to the coach the *Pre-Participation Forms* and all *Reports of Head Injury During Sports Season* for each student member of that coach's team. In addition, the Athletic Director will forward the *Pre-Participation Forms* indicating a history of head injury and all *Reports of Head Injury During Sports Season* to the school nurse, who will consult with the school physician and athletic staff regarding whether the student will be allow to begin (or continue) to participate and if so, whether limitations may apply.

In the event a parent and/or student has not provided the documentation set forth above to the Athletic Director in a timely manner, school staff will make two attempts to contact the parent using the district's typical communication methods (e.g., email, first class mail or telephone). The student will be ineligible to begin (or continue if applicable) participation in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity until all documentation has been received and reviewed by appropriate school personnel.

V. Removal Due to Head Injury and Protocols for Reentry

Any student who sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, during participation in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity shall be removed from the activity immediately and may not return to return to

the activity that day even if the condition seems to resolve itself. If there is an athletic trainer on site, the coach must immediately report the suspected injury to the trainer or nurse for a medical assessment. If no trainer or school nurse is on-site, the coach is responsible for notifying the student's parents and contacting EMS for emergency service and transport to a local hospital if in their reasonable judgment such intervention is appropriate.

In all circumstances, the coach must complete a *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* and follow all Reporting Requirements outlined below in Section VII. Any student removed from an Extracurricular Athletic Activity due suspected head injury must provide a *Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* completed by a licensed medical professional (physician, nurse practitioner in consultation with a physician, certified athletic trainer in consultation with a physician, or neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery) to the Athletic Director prior to the student's return to normal physical activities (including physical education class). The Athletic Director will consult with the School Nurse in reviewing such forms if appropriate. In the event a student exhibits symptoms of head injury following return to participation, the coach will immediately remove the student from the activity and will inform the Athletic Trainer, School Nurse and/or the parents in order to initiate further consultation.

#### VI. Graduated Reentry Plan and Medical Clearance following Diagnosis of Concussion

In the event the student has been diagnosed with a concussion, the student may not resume full participation in Extracurricular Athletic Activities until he/she has participated in a graduated re-entry plan and provided a completed *Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* to the Athletic Director.

In addition, school personnel, including but not limited to teachers, school nurse, and certified athletic trainer, along with parents shall develop a written graduated entry plan for return to academics and other school based activities, including Extracurricular Athletic Activities. Accommodations, may include, as appropriate: provision for physical or cognitive rest; graduated return to classroom studies; estimated time intervals for resuming activities; assessments by the school nurse; periodic medical assessment by a physician until the student is authorized to full classroom and extracurricular activities. The school physician and/or student's physician may be consulted as appropriate in devising the graduated entry plan.

#### VII. Additional Communication and Reporting

The Athletic Director shall disseminate to each coach copies of the completed *Pre-Participation Form* for each member of that coach's team or student group. The Athletic Director shall ensure that the nurse receives a copy and reviews any forms that indicate a history of head injury, with review by the school physician and certified athletic trainer if appropriate. The Athletic Director shall also ensure proper dissemination and review of any *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form*.

All coaches are required to report any circumstances in which the student under their supervision was removed from participation for suspected head injury, suspected concussion, or loss of consciousness and the nature of the suspected injury to the student's parent in person or by telephone immediately after the competition or practice, with written confirmation to the parent by paper or electronic format no later than the end of the next business day. The Coach must also notify the Athletic Director and school nurse of the removal from play and the nature of the suspected injury no later than the end of the next business day. The coach is responsible for ensuring that a *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* has been completed and provided to the Athletic Director, parent, certified athletic trainer and school nurse.

The School Nurse shall inform the principal and guidance counselor of the injury so that an appropriate graduated reentry plan can be initiated.

#### VIII. Maintenance of Records and Confidentiality

Copies of all documentation received by the school department under this policy will be maintained for a minimum of three years. Such documentation includes Verification of Training Completion, which will be kept by the Athletic Director. The School Nurse shall maintain copies of *Annual Physical Exams, Pre-Participation Forms, Reports of Head Injury During Sports Season, Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season, Department Post Sports Related Head Injury and Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms*, and any *Graduated Reentry Plans* that may be necessary.

Medical information received by the district in implementing this policy is part of the student health record and may be disclosed only as authorized by the laws governing student records. Generally, authorized school personnel who work *directly with* the student in an instructive (academic or athletic), administrative, or diagnostic capacity will have access to the information on a need to know basis. Authorized school personnel should be instructed not to disclose the information to others. Notwithstanding these limitations, there may be times when school officials may or must disclose health or related information to others in order to protect a student's health or safety.

#### IX. Notification of Policy Information to Parents and Students

The Athletic Director in consultation with the Principal shall disseminate to parents and students on annual basis information regarding this policy, including but not limited to:

1. Pre-requisites for students to participate in Extracurricular Athletic Activities, including opportunities for students and parents to fulfill their obligations to participate in training under this policy;
2. Requirements for parents to report to the Athletic Director a head injury occurring outside of school;

3. Procedures for notifying parents of a student's removal from play due to head injury;
4. Protocols for medical clearance prior to return to participation;
5. Contact information for key personnel.

In addition, information regarding this policy shall be incorporated into the Student Handbook. Copies of forms referenced in this policy may be obtained from the athletic director.

School staff will work with parents of limited English proficiency to facilitate effective notice of this policy and effective communication regarding suspected head injury. In the event an interpreter is needed, parents and/or staff should contact the Principal's office.

X. Consequences

The Holbrook Public Schools takes the safety of student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow the policies and protocols set forth herein and in Massachusetts law to support the health and safety of students who participate in Extracurricular Athletic Activities. The underlying philosophy of these policies is "when in doubt, sit them out". Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact the Superintendent or Principal. Parents are also expected to do their part in supporting the health and safety of students by ensuring that all documentation required by this policy is submitted in a timely manner.

Each student must also adhere to the rules of safe play as instructed by their coaches. Students must also immediately inform a coach or other adult in the event the student believes he/she may have been injured during an activity. No student will be permitted to participate in an Extracurricular Athletic Activity unless the student and his/her parents have complied with their obligations under this policy.

SOURCE: Stoneman, Chandler, Miller, LLP

LEGAL REF: Mass. Gen. L. ch. 111, Section 222  
105 CMR 201.000 et seq.  
Student Handbook Policies

CROSS REFS: JJIF-E-1 Pre-Participation Head Injury/ Concussion Reporting For Extra-Curricular Activities Form  
JJIF-E-2 Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form  
JJIF-E-3 Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form

APPROVED: December 19, 2011

AMENDED: