The board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries may be serious and potentially life threatening and that such injuries may result in serious consequences later in life if managed improperly. The board is committed to practices that reduce the potential for short-term or long-term effects from such injuries. In support of this commitment, the board directs school employees to comply with the concussion safety requirements for interscholastic athletic competition established by G.S. 115C-12(23) as amended in the Gfeller-Waller Concussion Awareness Act of 2011, and to implement and follow all concussion safety requirements set forth in State Board of Education rules and policies for middle and high schools. The superintendent or designee shall develop a plan consistent with state requirements and shall implement and monitor compliance with this policy. The superintendent is authorized to investigate the use of baseline testing for student-athletes and require that student-athletes undergo such testing prior to their participation in any interscholastic athletic competition.

A. DEFINITION OF CONCUSSION

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect impact to the head that results in disruption of normal brain function, which may or may not result in a loss of consciousness.

B. SCHOOL HEAD INJURY INFORMATION SHEET

Each year, all coaches, school nurses, athletic directors, first responders, volunteers, student-athletes, and parents of student-athletes must be provided with a concussion and head injury information sheet that meets the requirements of the State Board. Before any student, school employee, volunteer or first responder will be allowed to participate in interscholastic athletic activities, including tryouts, practices or competitions, he or she must sign the head injury information sheet and return it to the coach. Parents also must sign the sheet and return it to the coach before their children may participate in any interscholastic athletic activity. The principal of each school shall ensure that a complete and accurate record of the returned signed sheets is maintained in accordance with law and State Board policy.

C. REMOVAL FROM AND RETURN TO PLAY

Any student-athlete who is exhibiting signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion must be removed from athletic activity immediately. Further, the student-athlete must not be allowed to return to play or practice that day or on any subsequent day until he or she has been evaluated and has received written clearance for participation that complies with the requirements of G.S. 115C-12(23) and any other applicable law or State Board policy.

D. EMERGENCY ACTION PLANS

Each principal or designee shall develop a venue-specific emergency action plan to respond to serious medical injuries and acute medical conditions in which the condition of the injured student may deteriorate rapidly. All such plans must include a delineation of roles, methods of communication, available emergency equipment and a plan for emergency transport. The plans must be (1) in writing, (2) reviewed by an athletic trainer who is licensed in North Carolina, (3) approved by the principal if developed by a designee, (4) distributed, posted, reviewed and rehearsed in accordance with G.S. 115C-12(23), and (5) compliant with any other requirements of state law and State Board policy.

E. RECORD KEEPING

The superintendent shall require each principal to maintain complete and accurate records of actions taken in his or her school to comply with this policy and applicable legal authority. Records shall include accounts of any education or training as may be required by law or State Board of Education policy.

The superintendent's annual report to the board on compliance with laws and policies related to student wellness shall include a report on the system's compliance with laws and policies related to concussions and head injuries. (See Section G of policy 6140, Student Wellness.)

Legal References: G.S. 115C-12(23); S.L. 2011-147

Cross References: Student Wellness (policy 6140)

Other Resources: Matthew Gfeller Sport-Related TBI Research Center at UNC website *http://tbicenter.unc.edu/MAG_Center/Home.html; Report to the North Carolina General Assembly: Study of Sports Injuries at Middle School and High School Levels*, N.C. Department of Public Instruction (2011)

Adopted: