# Mental Health and Student Athletes

## PARENT & GUARDIAN CONSENT FORM

Connecticut State Department of Education — March 2024

CONNECTICUT Department of Education

CIAC CONNECTICUT INTERSCHOLASTIC ATHLETIC CONFERENCE

The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE), in collaboration with the Connecticut Interscholastic Athletic Conference (CIAC) and the Connecticut Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services (DMHAS), has developed a mental health plan for student athletes to help identify and assist in supporting their mental health needs.

The CSDE, CIAC, and DMHAS recommend that every school district develop a well-coordinated approach to this plan. A coordinated approach to services for athletes' mental health can provide the framework for families, community-based partners, and schools to work together to improve athletes' overall confidence and healthy performance in sports and school.

Mental health includes emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects feeling, thinking, and actions. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Experiencing mental health problems throughout life can impact mood and behavior (Centers for Disease Control, 2023). Mental health issues or concerns and mental illness are not the same. A person can experience mental health issues and concerns and not be diagnosed with a mental illness. Below is a list of some signs and symptoms of mental health concerns.

**Signs and Symptoms**

- Increased, newly initiated, or excessive alcohol or drug use
- Talking about wanting to die or suicide
- Uncontrolled anger
- Changes in behavior — reckless, grades drop
- Changes in sleep
- Feeling hopeless, desperate, trapped
- Withdrawal, feeling disconnected
- No sense of purpose
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Sudden mood changes
- Anxiety or agitation
- Giving away possessions
- Putting affairs in order
- Accessing lethal means (medications, firearms)

Family members are sometimes the first to see emerging mental health issues and can be important advocates to help them overcome difficult times. Parents and guardians should be aware of any issues their child is dealing with, engage in conversation often, seek help when needed, and share with the coach and school mental health team as warranted to encourage wrap-around support.

If you notice any of these symptoms, please call 211 for help. If your child is in crisis, please call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org to chat. Call 911 if your child is in immediate danger or go to the nearest emergency care center if they need immediate emergency assistance. Also, contact your school's social worker, school counselor, or school psychologist to provide additional support in school.

## Parent/Guardian Consent

We have read and understand the signs and symptoms of mental health and student athletes, who to contact if the student named below is showing any symptoms of mental health issues, and the need for immediate treatment of any suspected serious condition and where to acquire such services.

Student Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

Parent Name: _____ Date: _____

Signature: _____

**Resources**

- Resources for Families and Students is an online resource document created by the CSDE and is annually updated and distributed to local and regional boards of education. The information includes educational, safety, mental health, and food security resources and programs available for students and their families.
- 211 is a free, confidential information and referral service that connects people to essential health and human services 24 hours a day, seven days a week, online and over the phone.
- Call or text 988 or visit 988lifeline.org to chat. If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available.