

CONCUSSION SPECIALISTS IN OUR AREA

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Black Horse Pike Regional School District

Head Injury and Concussion *Return to Learn* (RTL) Protocol

We have created a *Return to Learn* program for any student who has suffered a head injury or concussion. *Here are the steps to follow if your child suffers this type of injury:*

If your child has been referred to a doctor due to sustaining a possible concussion, you must schedule a doctor's visit to determine the diagnosis. **The doctor needs to complete the attached "Physician's Letter" that must be returned to the athletic trainer (athlete), the school nurse (non-athlete) and a copy to your child's school counselor.**

Academics:

Upon receiving all necessary paperwork, your child's school counselor will communicate the student's situation and recommend academic accommodations to his/her teachers. It is essential that your child meets with his/her school counselor frequently (at least 1 x per week) to update him/her on your symptoms and progress. **Please make sure your child does not ignore the passes to see the counselor!**

In order to receive academic accommodations, you must submit the attached academic restrictions/accommodations page to your child's counselor indicating their necessity. No note, no accommodations!

Triton Counseling Office: Phone - 856-939-4500 ext. 2021/Fax: 856-939-4724

Highland Counseling Office: 856-227-4100 ext. 4036/Fax: 856-227-8422

Timber Creek Counseling Office: 856-232-9703 ext. 6052/Fax: 856: 232-2919

Concussion Management Program: *Return to Learn* Phases*

Phase 1: No school, full cognitive rest (typically no more than 2-3 days)

Phase 2: Half-day attendance with accommodations

Phase 3: Full day attendance with accommodations

Phase 4: Full day attendance without accommodations

Phase 5: Full school and extra-curricular involvement (Must be cleared by doctor if student is participating in athletics, must also complete *Return to Play* protocols. Student must have completed all academic accommodations before beginning Stage 1 of the athletic return to play protocol).

*unless otherwise noted by the treating physician

Attention Athletes: Athletic Head Injury and Concussion *Return to Play* (RTP) Protocol

The goal of this protocol is to safely return the student-athlete to play following a head injury or concussion through the implementation of a comprehensive concussion management program. Head injuries and concussions are dangerous and life-threatening and it is imperative that they are handled appropriately. All suspected head injuries and concussions must be referred to the Certified Athletic Trainer or a physician that specializes in concussion management.

New Jersey state law currently states that any athlete suspected of sustaining a head injury or concussion must be removed from play. The athlete may not return until cleared by a licensed health care provider (MD or DO only) that is trained in the evaluation and management of head injuries and concussions.

The ER doctor cannot clear your child for sports participation. You will need to make an appointment with your child's regular physician for full clearance. The same physician who sees your child for the initial, non-emergency evaluation, must provide clearance, unless you are referred to a specialist physician, such as a neurologist. We strongly suggest seeing a concussion specialist. (see attached list for suggestions)

In addition, the student-athlete must complete the gradual *Return to Play* protocol to return to full competition. Any student-athlete entered into the concussion management program by a physician is expected to complete the *Return to Play* protocol IN ITS ENTIRETY. In the event of discrepancies, more communication with the physician may be required and parents may be asked to provide authorization for that communication. Student-athletes will be expected to return the "Physician's Letter" form located in this packet. **Student-athletes will not be cleared without this form signed and returned by your diagnosing physician or concussion specialist.**

Please Note:

- **Any student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion must complete the *Return to Play* progression outlined below.** The student-athlete will be monitored during this time period for any recurrence of concussion symptoms. Head injury and concussion RTP protocols cannot begin until the student-athlete is symptom-free for 48 hours.
- The student-athlete will be kept out of play until he/she is given clearance to return to activity by a physician trained in the treatment and management of concussions.
- All return-to-sports clearances must be consistent with the Black Horse Pike Regional School District's concussion policy. Any clearances that are inconsistent will not be accepted and the student-athlete will not be permitted to participate in any school sports. In addition, the matter may be referred to our school physician.
- Once a student-athlete's physician has provided written medical clearance, we follow a *Return to Play* protocol that is in accordance with the NJ guidelines for Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussion:

Return to Activity Progression:

Step 1: Completion of a full day of normal cognitive activities without the use of medications:

- Full day attendance in school without PE, participation in school work, interacting with peers

Step 2: Light aerobic activity:

- Stationary bike for 15-20 minutes

Step 3: Sport-specific exercises:

- Jogging for 15-20 minutes, running-only drills with team, body-weight-only exercises such as push-ups and sit-ups

Step 4: Non-contact practice activities:

- Sport-specific training, ball handling work, resistance training; no live play, no contact drills

Clearance:

- Before continuing to step 5, school health care personnel must provide final clearance

Step 5: Full contact practice activities:

- Full practice with breaks as needed, return to PE

Step 6: Normal game play

- Games, Competitions, or unrestricted practice

Each step is separated by 24 hours. If any symptoms occur, the athlete will drop back to the previous asymptomatic level and try to progress again after 24 hours of rest has passed.

If the student-athlete exhibits any re-emergence of any post-concussion signs or symptoms once they return to play, they will be removed from activity immediately and referred to his/her primary care physician or the school physician for re-evaluation.