

O'FALLON PANTHERS

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Concussion Protocol

O' Fallon Township High School (OTHS) is committed to the safety of students during the school day and school sponsored events. Training on concussion prevention and recognition is necessary for all persons participating in an athletic related capacity. This may include, but is not limited to, student-athletes, parents, coaches, athletic trainer, athletic director, school administrators and school nurses. We understand that the early recognition of concussions with appropriate management is essential in obtaining the best outcome. OTHS is aware that non-athlete students during the school day or student-athletes may suffer a concussion despite the use of safety equipment and practices. Procedures have been developed to assist those students in transitioning back to full activity and learning.

Concussion Oversight Team (COT)

The OTHS concussion oversight team will work in conjunction with other licensed health care providers (HCP). A HCP is defined as “physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers working in conjunction with physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.” The OTHS concussion oversight team is comprised of the following:

- OTHS assigned physician
- OTHS assigned certified athletic trainer (ATC)
- OTHS nurse

The OTHS athletic director is responsible for monitoring the COT's compliance with the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols.

Concussion training

All athletes and their parents must read and sign the concussion information sheet provided to them during the pre-season online registration process. They should also review the information provided under the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) [Concussion Management](#) resources and related pages.

If a student-athlete does not read and sign off that the concussion information has been reviewed, then the athlete will not be able to register for, or participate in, a sport. The OTHS coaching staff is required to provide proof of completion of the IHSA approved concussion training.

Members of the COT will receive concussion training as required per their health care licensure.

Concussion Prevention

Concussions due to incidental contact or via contact during sports play cannot be eliminated, but incidents can be decreased by following appropriate safety guidelines. For sports activities, safety guidelines would include the use of proper equipment at all times, ensuring that equipment fits properly, and instructing in the proper techniques of play as appropriate for the activity.

Concussion Identification and Assessment

Proper education of athletes, their parents, coaches, and medical providers will improve the identification of symptoms that may indicate a concussion is present. Once a concussion or possible concussion is identified in an athlete, the Concussion Oversight Team and school staff will follow proper concussion health care evaluation and management guidelines according to their level of training and licensure.

- Students sustaining a head injury during the school day will be assessed by the school nurse and, if appropriate, referred to their primary care physician (PCP). Once a concussion is suspected, the school nurse will work together with the PCP to provide the student with appropriate academic accommodations as identified by the PCP, to the extent possible.
- Student-athletes sustaining head injuries during sports participation, will be assessed by the ATC or physician licensed to practice medicine. Once a concussion is suspected, the ATC and school nurse will work together to provide the student-athlete with appropriate academic and athletic accommodations as identified per the ATC or physician, to the extent possible. If neither the ATC or physician are immediately available, coaches will remove the athlete from play until a proper assessment can occur.
- A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from participation or competition at that time.
- A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury cannot return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer (ATC).
- If not cleared to return to that contest, a student athlete cannot return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided his or her school with written

clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois. All athletes suspected of concussion must follow the below OTHS Return to Play Concussion Protocol.

Concussion management

Concussion management for students during the school day will be facilitated by the school nurse under the direction of the PCP. Concussion management for student-athletes during the school day will be facilitated by the school nurse under the direction of the athletic trainer. The nurse's office will be responsible for teacher communication regarding any restrictions for physical education and/or academic accommodations that may be necessary.

Any student requiring long term academic accommodations will be referred to the department of special services.

Return-to-Learn

Return-to-Learn accommodations for students and student athletes will be individualized and dependent upon written instructions from their PCP.

Return-to-Play

With the start of the 2010-11 school term, the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) implemented a new national playing rule regarding potential head injuries. The rule requires "any player who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall be immediately removed from the game and shall not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional."

In applying that rule in Illinois, it has been determined that only certified athletic trainers, advanced practice nurses (APN), physician's assistants (PA) and physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois can clear an athlete to return to play the day of a contest in which the athlete has been removed from the contest for a possible head injury.

Per the IHSA's [Concussion Management](#) web page, IHSA member schools are not to allow a student to return to practice or competition following a possible concussion until the student has **completed** the school's return-to-play protocol. To

comply with this mandate, OTHS has adopted the Center for Disease Control's (CDC) [6-Step Return to Play Progression](#) as it's guidelines for return-to-play protocol.

- A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from participation or competition at that time.
- A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury cannot return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer (ATC).
- If not cleared to return to that contest, the student must complete the return to play protocol and the student athlete cannot return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided his or her school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.

**O'FALLON TOWNSHIP HIGH SCHOOL
CONCUSSION PROTOCOL
(RETURN-TO-PLAY PROGRESSION)**

RESOURCES:

- Illinois Athletic Trainers Practice Act ([225 ILCS5/](#))
 - [IHSA Concussion Management](#)
 - [6-Step Return to Play Progression](#)
- A. Student athletes that are suspected and then diagnosed with a concussion will be withheld from play for the remainder of the day.
- B. Student athletes will not be allowed to return-to-play if they have symptoms of a possible concussion or a concussion is otherwise suspected and there is not an ATC or licensed physician available to evaluate student athlete.
- C. Once a student athlete is diagnosed with a concussion, they cannot begin the return-to-play protocol progression until they are asymptomatic for 24 hours without medication.

D. All return-to-play Steps must be completed under ATC / physician direction.

E. 6-Step Return-to-Play protocol progression*:

1. No activity until asymptomatic*
2. Light aerobic exercise*
 - a. 15 minutes could include: stationary bike, jogging, and elliptical
3. Sport Specific exercise*
 - a. Interval Aerobic Exercise: walk, jog, sprint series – 10-minute series
 - b. Body Weight Exercises: squats, push-ups, sit-ups - 3 x 1 minute
4. Non-contact practice / training drills*
 - a. Shuttle Run / 3 Cone Drill
 - b. Non-Contact Practice - 20-25 minutes
5. Full contact practice*
 - a. Controlled Contact Practice - monitoring symptoms
 - b. If part a, symptom free, allow to finish practice “Live” type scenario.
6. Return to Game Play

*24 hours of asymptomatic time must pass between each step. If the athlete has symptoms during the step or afterwards, they must start over at the previous step once asymptomatic for 24 hours again.

*A physician may recommend light aerobic exercise while the athlete is still symptomatic based upon some evidence suggesting prolonged inactivity with concussions may be counterproductive. Documentation of the recommendation should be provided.

F. No athlete can return to competition until they have completed the return-to-play protocol progression. Once an athlete has started in the return-to-play criteria, the athlete must finish the entire protocol progression.

G. At any time if the ATC feels the student athlete needs to be further evaluated, they will refer the athlete to a licensed physician as needed. If the athlete is still symptomatic after 10 days the athlete must be referred to a physician for further evaluation.

H. The ATC reserves the right to withhold an athlete from practice or games after a physician evaluation and clearance if (a) the athlete has not completed the return-to-play protocol progression or (b) the athlete still demonstrates any signs / symptoms of a concussion.

- I. If a student-athlete is withheld from athletic activity, they should also be excused from physical activity in physical education classes without punishment until they have completed the return to play criteria.
- J. Documentation Required
 - a. Daily symptom score documentation during a concussion treatment plan.
 - b. Daily symptoms score documentation during a concussion return-to play plan.

Baseline Testing

Computerized baseline neurocognitive testing may be used for student-athletes and their families. Post-injury neurocognitive testing may be used according to physician's medical judgments but is not mandatory. All return-to-play protocol progression steps must still be met. Pre-testing and post testing does not allow for any "skipping" of steps. Pre-testing and post testing systems are only an added level of protection for the athletes and their families and may be used at their discretion.