Calhoun Athletics
Concussion and Return to Sport Policy

The Calhoun School recognizes that concussions and other traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) are serious and potentially life-threatening. Based on research, it is evident that if a concussion is not treated properly, it can have lasting effects. We strive to provide healthcare with the most recent evidence-based practices and ensure that all student-athletes return to sports safely following an injury.

The goal of this policy is to outline all the necessary steps that need to be taken from the moment of injury to the return to academics and sports.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) and is sometimes referred to as a mild TBI. It is a reaction of the brain to a force transmitted to the head from an impact or blow occurring anywhere on the body. Concussions are injuries to the brain that occur as the result of a fall, motor vehicle accident, or any other activity that results in an impact to the head or body. A concussion results from the brain moving back and forth or twisting rapidly inside the skull.

If a student is suspected of having a concussion, they must be immediately removed from activity and should not return to participation that same day. The symptoms of a concussion may develop within minutes, hours or days so it is important to monitor the student-athlete and to also inform their parent/legal guardian to monitor the student-athlete's behavior.

Common Signs and Symptoms of Concussions

Signs and symptoms of a concussion include, but are not necessarily limited to:

Signs (observed by others):	**Symptoms (reported by student-athlete):**
● Student appears dazed or stunned ● Confusion (about position, assignment etc.) ● Forgets an instruction ● Unsure about game, score or opponent ● Moves clumsily, altered coordination ● Answers questions slowly ● Loss of consciousness (even briefly) ● Mood, behavior, or personality change ● Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall	● Headache or "pressure" in the head ● Nausea or vomiting ● Balance problems or dizziness ● Double or blurred vision ● Sensitivity to light or noise ● Feels sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy ● Fatigue and/or sleep issue ● Concentration or memory problems ● Can't recall events prior to or after a hit or fall ● Confusion ● Ringing in the ears ● Just not "feeling right' or "feeling down"

RED FLAGS THAT WARRANT IMMEDIATE MEDICAL ATTENTION:

A student who develops any of the following signs, or experiences worsening symptoms, **must be seen and evaluated immediately at the nearest hospital emergency room**:

- Headaches that worsen (Persistent headaches not relieved with Tylenol)
- Seizures
- Looks drowsy and/or cannot be awakened
- Repeated vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Inability to recognize people or places
- Weakness or numbness in arms or legs, facial drooping
- Unsteady gait
- Dilated or pinpoint pupils, or change in pupil size of one eye
- Significant irritability
- Any loss of consciousness
- Suspicion of skull fracture: blood draining from ear, or clear fluid from nose

The Calhoun School Athletics Concussion Management Team

- Medical Director: To be announced
- Certified Athletic Trainer: Jada Tyson, ATC
- School Nurse: Lisa Moldowsky
- Athletic Director: Nicola Zimmer
- Team Coaches
- Student's Advisor
- Parent/Legal Guardian
- Student

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES

All Calhoun Athletics staff complete a New York State Education Department-approved concussion management course every two years, filed with their direct supervisor.

Certified Athletic Trainer Responsibilities:

Removal from Activity:

- Remove student-athletes from play who have suffered a significant fall or blow to the head/body.

Assessment:

- Assess the student's head, neck and body for concussion signs.
- If suspected for concussion, administer SWAY or SCAT6 assessment.

Communication:

- Notify parents of the incident, refer to a physician and provide home care instructions for monitoring possible complications.
- Share results with the school nurse, coaches, student's advisors and the athletic director.

- Relay return to school and activity plans post-concussion outlined here to parents/legal guardians and concussion management team.

PHYSICIAN EVALUATION/ DIAGNOSIS: For interscholastic (school-sanctioned) sports, a physician is the only healthcare provider that can evaluate and diagnose a concussion. However if the student-athlete gets a concussion outside of school sports or from non-sport school activities, they can be evaluated by additional healthcare providers such as nurse practitioners and physician assistants.

School Nurse Responsibilities:

Primary Role

- Support identification and management of students with potential concussions, overseeing their return to school activities and monitoring their progress.

Secondary Roles

- Inform appropriate school staff of the student's concussion diagnosis and share physician-requested accommodations.
- Serve as main liaison with the treating healthcare provider, coordinating information and support for the student's recovery.
- Review treating healthcare provider's return to school letter or treating physician's return to sport letter and share them with Athletic Director and Athletic Trainer as appropriate.

Athletic Director Responsibilities:

Primary Role

- Coordinate and support the return to school and return to activity process for the athletes recovering from concussions.

Secondary Roles

- Serves as a liaison between coaches, parents/legal guardians and school staff.
- Provide information on concussion policies and protocols when necessary.
- Verify that the school concussion policies align with the NYSPHSAA guidelines and ensure that they are enforced properly.
- Collect and maintain proof of concussion management certification for the school nurse and coaches.

Coach Responsibilities:

Primary Roles

- Remove any student with potential head injury symptoms from play immediately.
- Ensure no participation in physical activities until written clearance from a healthcare provider is obtained and approved by the Athletic Trainer (AT) and concussion management team.

Secondary Roles

- Contact AT or school nurse for further assistance and notify the athletic director of the incident.
- Provide parents/legal guardians with instructions on observing symptoms for potential emergency care.
- Support and monitor the student's return to activity process, communicating with the AT and relevant school staff.
- Use proper techniques and sports-specific equipment to minimize injury risk.

Advisor:

Primary Roles

- Support and coordinate the student's academic return to learn process following a concussion.

- Serve as a point of contact for teachers, Upper School student support team, and family regarding academic accommodations recommended by the treating physician.
- Check-in with the student during the return-to-school process to monitor for signs of anxiety, offer reassurance, and provide emotional support.

Parent/Legal Guardian Responsibilities:

Primary Roles

- Support the student athlete's recovery process by collaborating with the concussion management team and staying informed on concussion protocols.
- *Acknowledge* the assessment/recommendation of the Athletic Trainer and/or School Nurse to seek further assessment.
- Ensure the student-athlete is evaluated by a healthcare provider with expertise in head injuries.
- Regularly communicate with the team on the student athlete's recovery progress.

Secondary Roles

- Review concussion education resources (on Calhoun website)
- Actively work with the concussion management team to support the student athlete's return to school and physical activities.

Student-Athlete - Concussion Awareness and Recovery Participation:

- Plan an active role in prevention, recovery and communication to ensure a safe return to academics and sports.
- Promptly report any injuries to parents/legal guardians, coaches, the school nurse and the Athletic Trainer.
- Follow the return to learn and return to sports guidelines provided by the concussion management team.
- Maintain open communication with the team throughout the recovery process.

EDUCATION AND PREVENTION

- All student-athletes, parents/legal guardians, and coaches will receive annual education through documents on concussion prevention, recognition, and management. This education will include information on the signs and symptoms of concussions, the importance of reporting injuries, and the school's concussion protocols.

BASELINE TESTING

- Baseline testing will be conducted annually for all student-athletes. Student-athletes who miss baseline testing must complete it before participating in any school-sanctioned sports.
- Trained personnel, led by the Athletic Trainer, will conduct the baseline testing using Sway Medical, FDA-cleared technology for concussion assessments and screening.
- Concussion baseline testing may include cognitive assessments, balance testing, and symptom evaluation.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

If a student-athlete sustains a significant blow to the head:

- **REMOVE:** The student is immediately removed from athletic activity and undergoes a sideline assessment by the ATC.
- **COMMUNICATE:** If the student is suspected of having a concussion, the ATC will communicate with coaches, parents/caregivers, the Athletic Director, the school nurse, and the student's advisor.
- **EVALUATE:** Student-athletes suspected of having a concussion must be evaluated by a licensed physician (not Athletic Trainer) within 24-48 hours.

Reminder: If the student-athlete sustains a concussion during a school athletic (interscholastic) activity, they can be evaluated/diagnosed only by a physician.

If the student-athlete is diagnosed with a concussion by the physician:

- Diagnosis must be communicated to the concussion management team.
- The student-athlete **must not** participate in physical activity, including Athletics practices/games and PE class until cleared.
- Participation in academic classes may be impacted and should follow the direction of the diagnosing physician. Advisors are included on all communications so they can facilitate the return to learn process in partnership with the Upper School student support team.
- Once the majority of their symptoms have resolved, the student-athlete must be re-evaluated by the physician who diagnosed them.
- When cleared by the treating physician, the student-athlete begins the six-day Return to Play/Sports Protocol (RTP) with the Athletic Trainer. Please see the details below.
- Once the Return to Sports Protocol (RTP) is complete, the athlete is cleared for full participation. The Athletic Trainer and/or School Nurse will send a clearance email to coaches, parents/caregivers, the Athletic Director, the school nurse, and the student's advisor.

RETURN TO SPORTS PROTOCOL

As per New York State requirements, student-athletes formally diagnosed with a concussion must complete a gradual return to sport process under the supervision of the Athletic Trainer. The return-to-sport protocol, detailed below, allows the Athletic Trainer to gauge the student-athlete's readiness to compete.

Step/Day	Exercise Strategy	Goal
1	Symptom-limited activity	Gradual reintroduction of work/school
2	Light aerobic exercise - walking, stationary bike, etc. No resistance training	Increase heart rate
3	Heavy Aerobic Exercise/Sport-Specific Exercise. Progressive resistance training may begin.	Add movement change of movement, change of direction
Steps 4-6 should begin after the resolution of any symptoms, abnormalities in cognitive function and any other clinical findings related to the current concussion, including with and after physical exertion.		
4	Non-contact training/skill drills	Resume usual intensity of exercise, coordination, and increased thinking
5	Full contact training in a practice setting	Restore confidence and assess functional skills by coaching staff
6	Return to competition	Normal game play

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement

By signing below, I agree that I have read with my child and understand the Calhoun Concussion Policy. I also agree that I will comply with all that is required of me and my child to ensure that he/she/they can return to school and sports in a safe manner.

_____ _____

(Parent/Guardian First and Last Name) (Today's Date)

_____

(Parent/Guardian Signature)

CONCUSSION HOME CARE INSTRUCTIONS

Your child may have sustained a concussion while participating in athletics or school activities. The following guidelines will assist you during recovery. These guidelines are not intended as or used as substitutes for a healthcare provider referral or care.

STUDENT-ATHLETES SUSPECTED OF SUSTAINING A CONCUSSION DURING INTERSCHOLASTIC SPORT ACTIVITIES MUST BE SEEN BY A PHYSICIAN, PREFERABLY WITH EXPERTISE IN HEAD INJURIES, WITHIN 24-48 HOURS.

Instructions:

- Do not return to activity or sport for at least 24 hours and only when cleared by a healthcare provider.
- Light physical activity, such as walking and activities of daily living are acceptable, as long as symptoms do not increase during the initial 24-48 hours.
- Limit screen time during the first 48 hours (television, computer, cell phone).
- Ask your healthcare provider for guidelines on returning to activities, sports, school, driving, or work.
- Do not take aspirin, ibuprofen, or other NSAIDs (i.e. Motrin, Advil, Aleve) unless advised by a healthcare provider.
- Obtain physician clearance to return to sports.
- Consider the nurse's office for quiet periods of rest and for elevator access.

If any of the following signs and symptoms are noted, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room.

- Loss of consciousness
- Severe headache
- Vomiting
- Double, blurred vision, or loss of vision
- Unequal pupil size
- Slurred speech
- Seizures
- Confusion or disorientation
- Loss of coordination
- Drowsy, difficulty staying awake
- Blood or clear fluid drainage ears or nose
- Loss of control of bladder or bowel

If you have any questions, please contact the school nurse or Jada Tyson, Athletic Trainer, at 347-514-5561.

Any student-athlete suspected of/or sustaining a concussion cannot leave the athletic site without a parent/legal adult.

Created by J.Tyson, ATC from NYU Langone Health (3.25.25)

References:

1. NYSED Guidelines for Concussion Management in Schools July 2023. Guidelines for Concussion Management in Schools 2023. https://www.p12.nysed.gov/sss/documents/concussion-management-guidelines.pdf
2. Patricios JS, et al. 6th International Conference on Concussion in Sport (Amsterdam). Br J Sports Med. 2023;57:695-711.
3. The Concussion Management and Awareness Act, Chapter 496 of the Laws of 2011, (revised to include nonpublic schools effective July 1, 2023)