



POLICY: Management of Concussions

Thornton Academy recognizes that concussions are serious and could result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and managed properly. The Academy further acknowledges that a student might suffer a concussion during any activity during the school day or outside of school hours. The Academy adopts this policy to promote the safety of all students, regardless of where or when the head injury occurred.

TRAINING

Annual training must be completed by extracurricular and athletics-related school personnel (including volunteers) identified by the Concussion Management Team. The above-mentioned personnel must be made aware of this policy and protocols related to the management of concussive injuries and must participate in concussion awareness training that includes (1) recognizing signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussion and (2) instruction in the use of graduated school and activity reentry protocols.

Coaches (including volunteers) are required to complete the NFHS concussion management course (per the Maine Principals Association guidelines).

Prior to the beginning of each school year, non-athletics related school personnel (for example, physical education teachers, school nurses, dance teachers) identified by the school's (CMT), must be made aware of this policy and protocols related to the management of concussive injuries and must participate in concussion awareness training that includes recognizing signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussion.

STUDENT AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

Prior to participating in any school athletic activity, all students will be provided information including:

1. The risk of concussion and the dangers associated with continuing to participate after a concussion are suspected,
2. The signs, symptoms, and behaviors associated with a concussion, and
3. The school's protocols for removal of the student from the activity when the student is suspected of having sustained a concussion, evaluation, referral, medical

clearance, and graduated school and activity reentry protocols.

The student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a statement acknowledging that they received and read this information before the student is allowed to participate in any school athletic activity.

MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION

It is the responsibility of all school personnel trained in signs and symptoms related to concussion to act in accordance with this policy when that person recognizes that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms, and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion must be immediately removed from participation. The student is prohibited from returning to the school activity until a thorough evaluation has been conducted by school health personnel trained in concussion recognition. In the absence of available school health personnel, the student will be directed to their primary care provider for further assessment.

School health personnel will assess the student and determine if referral to a higher level of care is needed.

- If a referral is necessary, the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the referral to a licensed health care provider for a medical evaluation for possible concussion or brain injury before the student is allowed to begin the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol.
- If a referral to a licensed health care provider was made, the student will require written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider qualified and trained in concussion management. The student is also required to complete the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol as determined by the CMT.
 - The medical clearance note is to be interpreted as clearance to start the graduated school reentry protocol.
- A member of the CMT will notify school personnel with a legitimate educational interest of possible symptoms, cognitive and/or academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion, including but not limited to difficulty with concentration, organization, long-and-short term memory, and sensitivity to bright lights and sounds.
- School personnel shall accommodate the graduated school reentry protocol in all academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student's health care provider trained in concussion management and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g., 504 Coordinator, school nurse).

- No student is permitted to return to full participation in extracurricular school activities (e.g., competition, games, performances) until they have fully returned to their academic program and have completed the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol. Each phase in the progression of this protocol takes at least 24 hours. Return to learn and return to play may occur at the same time.

Please refer to the [“MaineHealth Sports Performance Center Protocol & Procedures for the Management of Sports-Related Concussion.”](#)

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

Once a referral to a health care provider has been made by the school nurse, athletic trainer, or other school health professional, the student must receive written medical clearance. The medical clearance allows a student to begin the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol.

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Headmaster will appoint a Concussion Management Team (CMT) which may include: the Associate Head of School, the Assistant Head for Student Affairs, the Middle School Principal, the school nurse(s), the Director of Athletics, the Director of School Counseling, and members of the Athletic Training Department. The team will make recommendations related to the implementation and review of this policy and shall oversee and implement this policy and related protocols for concussions based on currently accepted best practices. This team will identify the school personnel who shall be trained in concussion signs and symptoms and the school activities covered by this policy.