



## **DEPARTMENT OF ATHLETICS**

### **Interim Procedures and Protocols Currently in Place to Address Suspected Sports Related Head Injuries and Concussions**

The information below outlines the procedures and practices that have been in place here at AMSA Charter School in compliance with Massachusetts General Law, Chapter 111, Section 222, in regards to concussions sustained during interscholastic athletic activity. The procedure, certified by the AMSA Administrative team, will continue to be followed during the 2017-18 school year unless told otherwise by the Department of Public Health.

The AMSA Charter School is committed to the safety of all our student athletes. The purpose of this protocol is to educate our coaches, parents, administrators, school personnel, volunteers and student-athletes on the seriousness of head injuries and concussions. A team of school-staff (consisting of our school nurse, athletic director, and a school administrator) has developed these policies for AMSA and will soon be adopted by the Board of Trustees in consultation with the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH). We have been informed by the MDPH that while these policies are not subject to MDPH review, they must be in accordance with MDPH regulations. AMSA will be submitting affirmations on our school letterhead to MDPH documenting that we have complied with the regulatory requirement to develop appropriate head injury policies. We will then update and submit this affirmation by September 30, 2017 and every two years thereafter.

#### **Roles and Responsibilities**

The Athletic Director, under the supervision of the Assistant Principal, shall be responsible for the general implementation of this protocol and any accompanying procedures as it relates to students in grades six through 12 who participate in interscholastic athletics.

Coaches are required to instruct student-athletes in form, technique and skills that minimize sports-related head injury and are directed to discourage and prohibit student-athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health and safety of a student-athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

Student-athletes who engage in unreasonably dangerous behavior while participating in extracurricular athletic activities may be excluded from the privilege of participating in extracurricular activities and further, may be subject to disciplinary consequences.

#### **Training**

The following personnel, both employed and those serving in a volunteer capacity, shall be required to participate in an annual training in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury, including second impact

syndrome: coaches (paid and unpaid), school physicians, school nurses, the Athletic Director, and physical education teachers.

In accordance with Section 222 and the Regulations at 105 CMR 201.008, online training programs will be offered through the AMSA Athletic Department at no charge to the individual. Individuals who are required to participate in the annual training shall submit documentation verifying the completion of the annual training either online or by another approved method to the Athletic Director. Such documentation shall be maintained for at least three years.

### Prerequisites to Participation in Interscholastic Athletics

At or before the start of each sport season, students/parents shall provide the following to the Athletic Director or his/her designee:

1. **A completed *AMSA Athletics Head Injury/Concussion Disclosure Form***
  - a) A comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history, any history regarding head, face, or cervical spine injury and/or any history of co-existent concussion injuries; and
  - b) Signatures of the student-athlete and a parent/guardian.

In addition, student-athletes who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents shall submit to the Athletic Director as a pre-requisite to participation in extracurricular athletic activities either a) a certification of completion for the NFHS online concussion course or b) a signed acknowledgement as to their awareness of the free course available online and to their receipt of approved written material required by 105 CMR 201.009 (A)(1).

Failure to provide this documentation and material will result in the student-athlete being deemed ineligible for athletic participation.

### Medical/Nursing Review of Reports of Head Injury During the Season

At the start of each sports season, the Athletic Director will review all pre-participation forms and forward to the school nurse those forms indicating a history of head injury. The school nurse will be responsible for:

- Reviewing or having the school physician review completed pre-participation forms
- Addressing any questions raised by the Athletic Director
- Communicating with the coach, via the Athletic Director, regarding the student's concussion history and discussing concerns
- Following up with parents and students as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities.

### Procedure for Reporting Head Injuries to the School Nurse

Collaboration and sharing of this information is crucial to management and coordination of student's care after a head injury. AMSA requires that the completed "Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form" should be submitted to the athletic director, and a copy should be forwarded to the school nurse who is responsible for reviewing the form. The school nurse will forward this form to the physician if medically indicated. The school nurse should also maintain documentation of the Head Injury Assessments in the student's health record.

Blank Copies of the “Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Forms” are kept in the nurse’s office and athletic director’s office. These forms are also available online at the school or athletic department website. Parents are made aware of their responsibility for completing the form in the event of a head injury occurring outside of extracurricular athletic activity through written materials at the start of the sports season. Such forms will be submitted to the athletic director or school nurse.

As instructed on the “Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form” the coach will complete this form immediately (day of injury) after the game or practice for head injuries that result in the student being removed from play due to a suspected concussion and submit it to the school nurse and/or school physician (if appropriate), athletic department or other designee and parent/guardian.

#### Removal due to Head Injury and Procedures for Returning to the Activity

Any student-athlete, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to practice or competition that day. The student must provide a completed *AMSA Athletics Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* to the Athletic Director or school nurse prior to any resumption of participation in an extracurricular athletic activity.

If a student-athlete is diagnosed with a concussion, school personnel, including but not limited to teachers, school nurses, coaches and Athletic Director shall develop – with the student’s parents - a written graduated entry plan for return to full academics and extracurricular activities. Accommodations may include, as appropriate: provision for physical or cognitive rest; graduated return to classroom studies; estimated time intervals for resuming activities; assessments by the school nurse; periodic medical assessments by a physician until the student is authorized to resume full classroom and extracurricular activities. The school physician and/or the student-athlete’s physician may be consulted as appropriate in devising the graduated entry plan.

#### Medical Clearance for Return to Play

If it is determined that a student-athlete has a concussion or suspected concussion, he/she will be out of competition until he/she can be cleared for participation by a physician. No player shall go from being sidelined with a concussion to full play until he/she has followed the recommended stepwise process from the treating physician regarding return to activity. Each athlete will likely have his/her own course of recovery, which may depend upon prior medical history of concussion.

Each student who is removed from practice or competition shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities. The plan shall be developed by the student’s teachers, the student’s guidance counselor, school nurse, parent, members of the building-based student support and assistance team or individualized education program team as appropriate and in consultation with the student’s primary care provider or the treating physician.

This written plan shall include instructions for students, parent(s) and school personnel addressing physical and cognitive rest, graduated return to academics and athletics, estimated time intervals for resuming activities,

assessment frequencies, as appropriate, by the school nurse or physician until full return to academics and athletics is authorized.

A plan for communication and coordination shall also be put into place with the above individuals who are managing the student's recovery. The student must be completely symptom-free at rest in order to begin graduated re-entry (stepwise program) to activities. Final authority for return to play shall reside with the student's physician or the physician's designee.

### Development & Implementation of Post-Concussion Graduated Re-Entry Plans

AMSA requires that all students returning to school and athletics after a concussion have a written plan for reentry. School staff, such as teachers, school nurses, counselors, administrators, speech-language pathologists, coaches and others should work together to develop and implement this plan in coordination with the student, their parent/guardian and the primary care provider. Graduated return to academic plans are based on the stages of recovery framework that takes a student from rest to gradual return to full participation in academic activities.

Graduated return to athletic plans will begin only after a student has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom-free at rest.

When a student athlete is completely symptom-free at rest and has the approval of a medical professional, she/he may begin a graduated return to play protocol. The return to play schedule for the student should proceed as follows and should be monitored by both the athletic director and coach.

Step 1: Light exercise, including stretching, walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.

Step 2: Aerobic exercise such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight-training can begin.

Step 4: Full-contact controlled training followed by practice or training.

Step 5: Full-contact game play.

### Providing Information/Forms/Materials to Parents & Athletes

Parents/guardians and students who plan to participate in any athletic program AMSA must also take a free online course. An easy-to-use on-line course is available and contains all the information required by the law. It is available through the National Federation of High School Coaches. You will need to click the "order here" button and complete a brief information form to register. At the end of the course, you will receive a completion receipt which should be provided to the coach or athletic director as documentation. The entire course, including registration, can be completed in less than 30 minutes: [Free NFHS Concussion Course](#)

If a student-athlete sustains a sports-related head injury, including a suspected concussion, the athletic trainer, school nurse, or coach will notify parents immediately and appropriate school staff within 24 hours of evaluating or learning of the injury. This protocol is the same for all home and away athletic events.

### Outreach to Parents About Forms/Training Completion

Student Athletes at AMSA will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular sports until both the parent and student have completed and returned the signed Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form before

the start of every sports season. In the event the school has not received the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form or other required forms, including documentation of an annual physical examination and documentation that both the student athlete and their parent/guardian have completed the required annual training, AMSA will make three attempts to contact a parent using the school's typical communication methods to parents (email, US mail, telephone, etc.). The student athlete will not be allowed to play or practice until the appropriate required signed and completed forms are returned to the Athletic Department.

### **Reporting Requirements**

The Athletic Director shall disseminate to the student-athletes and their parents copies of the *AMSA Athletics Head Injury/Concussion Disclosure Form* as part of the pre-season registration, given prior to the start of each season. The Athletic Director shall ensure that the school nurse receives a copy and reviews any forms that indicate a history of head injury, with review by the school physician if appropriate. The Athletic Director shall also ensure proper dissemination and review of reports relating to head injury during the sports season.

All coaches are required to report any circumstances in which the student-athlete was removed from play for suspected head injury, suspected concussion, or loss of consciousness and the nature of the suspected injury to the student-athletes parent in person or by phone immediately after the competition or practice. The coach must also notify the Athletic Director and school nurse of the removal from play and the nature of the suspected injury by e-mail no later than the next business day. The coach must also complete an *AMSA Athletics In-Season Head Injury/Concussion Report* and provide it to the Athletic Director.

All parents are required to complete and submit a completed *AMSA Athletics In-Season Head Injury/Concussion Report* if a student-athlete sustains a head injury outside of the extracurricular activity.

### **Publication and Consequences**

This protocol will be posted in the athletics section on [amsacs.org](http://amsacs.org) and portions of this document that are relevant to student-athletes and parents may be published annually in the student handbook.

No student-athlete will be permitted to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity unless the student-athlete and his/her parents have complied with their obligations under this policy. Failure of staff to adhere to the requirements herein may result in disciplinary action.