Regional School Unit 5
Durham · Freeport · Pownal

"To inspire and support every learner by challenging minds, building character, sparking creativity, and nurturing passions."

Tom Gray, Superintendent of Schools
Kelly Wentworth, Director of Finance & Human Resources
Erica Mazzeo, Assistant Superintendent of Schools
Elisha Morris, Director of Instructional Support

TO: Colin Cheney, Kara Kaikini, Chris Savaiano

CC: Trevor Bean, Jill Hooper, Erica Mazzeo, Elisha Morris

FROM: Tom Gray, Superintendent

DATE: February 18, 2026

RE: Policy Meeting – March 5, 2026

The Policy Committee is scheduled to meet on Thursday, March 5, 2026 at 4:15 p.m. via Google Meet at the following link: https://meet.google.com/yiy-cnyh-nbh or dial: (US) +1 413-418-0542 PIN: 135 501 460#

Agenda:

1. Law Change:
   JJIF - Student Concussions and Other Head Injuries
   JJIF-E - Concussion Information Sheet

2. Regular Review:
   IHBAC - Child Find
   IMB - Teaching About Controversial Issues (New Policy)

3. Board Request:
   None

STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES

The Board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries are serious and ~~can potentially~~ **could** result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and ~~treated~~ **managed** properly.. ~~This policy is intended to promote awareness of this issue as well as the safety of students participating in school-sponsored activities that may pose a risk of concussion or other head injuries. This policy also applies to all school-sponsored activities that the Superintendent determines, in consultation with school staff, pose a risk of concussion or other head injury (hereafter referred to as "any other covered activities").~~ **The Board further acknowledges that a student may suffer a concussion during any activity during the school day or outside of school. The Board adopts this policy to promote the safety of all students, regardless of where or when the head injury occurred, in RSU No. 5 schools, PreK - grade 12.**

~~The Superintendent shall ensure that all training, protocols and forms implemented in the school unit are consistent with materials promulgated by the Maine Department of Education.~~

DEFINITIONS

The following definitions shall apply for the purpose of this policy.

Concussion: A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur from a fall or a blow to the head or body that causes the head and brain to quickly move back and forth.

Concussion Management Team: A Concussion Management Team (CMT), appointed by the superintendent may include, but is not limited to the following: school administrator, school nurse, athletic administrator, school counselor, and school physician. The Team shall oversee the implementation, graduated school reentry protocols, and make recommendations related to implementation and review of this policy. This team may be combined with another existing student support team within the school or school administrative unit.

Graduated school reentry: Graduated school reentry is a gradual and coordinated return to school activities following a concussion. It is an individualized, flexible plan developed by the Concussion Management Team or designee with input from the student, parents, and medical provider.

Medical clearance: Medical clearance includes a written statement from a health care provider licensed to diagnose a concussion, who is trained in the treatment and management of concussions, which allows a student to start the school's graduated school reentry plan and/or graduated return to play protocol.

School: School means any public school and any private school enrolling more than 60% of its students at public expense in the State of Maine.

School personnel: School personnel include any persons working within and on behalf of the school in a supervisory role to students during school sponsored activities including volunteers in a student supervisory role, such as athletic coaches.

~~STAFF~~ TRAINING

~~All school personnel involved in school-sponsored activities shall receive training in the identification and management of concussions and other head injuries.~~

~~All identified personnel will receive refresher training whenever the Maine Department of Education recommendations, protocols and/or forms have been revised.~~

Prior to the beginning of each school year, non-athletics related school personnel (for example, physical education teachers, school nurses, personnel with recess duty) identified by the school unit's Concussion Management Team must be made aware of this school 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 concussive or other head injury. This training must be consistent with protocols as identified or developed by the Maine Department of Education (DOE).

Prior to the beginning of each school year, non-athletics related school personnel (for example, physical education teachers, school nurses, personnel with recess duty) identified by the school unit's CMT, must be made aware of this school 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 concussive or other head injury. This training must be consistent with protocols as identified or developed by the Maine Department of Education (DOE).

STUDENT AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS ~~**Acknowledgment**~~

~~Students who intend to participate in school-sponsored athletics (and any other covered activities), and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are required to sign the School Department's Concussion/Head Injury Acknowledgment Form each year. Students may not participate in athletics (and any other covered activities) until the Acknowledgment Form is returned to the school.~~

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

A. **The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected;**

B. **The signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with concussion and other head injuries; and**

C. **The school administrative unit's protocols for 1) removal of the student from the activity when the student is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury, 2) evaluation, 3) medical clearance, and 4) graduated school 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 CONCUSSIVE AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES

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

- **Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during school or a school athletic activity must be removed from the activity immediately and evaluated by a qualified school personnel.**

- **Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury is prohibited from further participation in any school activities until they are evaluated by the school nurse or other school personnel trained in such evaluation, such as an athletic trainer who is able to determine if referral to a licensed health care provider is necessary.**

- **The student and their 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 school reentry and/or graduated return to play protocol, and then full participation in learning, recess, physical education, and any school activities.**

- **No student is permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school activity on the day of the suspected concussion.**

- **If referral to a licensed health care provider is necessary, 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 protocol.**

- **School personnel should be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury 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 a graduated school reentry protocol for return to full participation in all academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student's concussion trained health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel.**

- **No student is permitted to return to full participation in extra-curricular school activities until fully returned to their academic program.**

- **During the gradual return to school process, school nurses will refer to the orders of the student's health care professionals as well as current Maine DOE guidance on concussion management.**

~~Removal of Students from School-Sponsored Activities, Evaluations and~~ MEDICAL CLEARANCE

~~Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury in any school-sponsored activity must be immediately removed from the activity, practice or game.~~

~~A student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury must receive a brain injury evaluation and written medical clearance from a licensed healthcare provider, ideally one trained in concussion management, and operating within the scope of practice such as an MD, DO, Physician's Assistant or Nurse Practitioner prior to them being allowed to resume participation in the activity. Such return to participation will be gradual and at the discretion of the Concussion Management Team and in all cases will be based on the district's current accepted standards of care.~~

Once a referral to a health care provider has been made by the school nurse, athletic trainer, or other health services personnel, the student must receive written diagnosis and written medical clearance from a health care provider licensed to diagnose a concussion who is trained in the treatment and management of concussions. The written medical clearance allows a student to begin the graduated school reentry protocol. Should a written medical clearance not be provided, a School Nurse may require a written medical clearance based on a student's symptoms.

~~Academic and Disability Considerations~~

~~Teachers and other school staff must be alerted to possible cognitive and academic issues that a student who has sustained a concussion or other head injury may experience. School staff shall permit adjustments to the academic day and/or expectations, consistent with a medical recommendation from the student's health care provider.~~

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT TEAM **(CMT)**

The Superintendent will appoint a Concussion Management Team **including a school administrator** to be responsible, under the **administrative** supervision of the Superintendent, to make recommendations related to the implementation **and review** of this policy. The Concussion Management Team will include the school nurses and Athletic Director, Athletic Trainer and may include one or more principals or assistant principals, the school physician, and other school personnel or consultants as the Superintendent deems appropriate.

The team shall oversee and implement this policy and related protocols for ~~concussions~~ **concussive head injuries** ~~and other head injuries~~ based on the ~~generally~~ **currently** accepted ~~standards of care~~ **best practices**. ~~This~~ **The** team**, under the direction of the superintendent,** ~~will~~ **shall** identify the school personnel who shall be trained in concussion signs and symptoms and the school activities covered by this policy.

~~The policy and/or related protocols should be reviewed when generally accepted protocols change.~~

DATA

The Board recognizes how serious concussions are and the need for improved understanding of concussions in our schools and their impact on learning and school attendance. The school unit will track the number of concussions, activity associated with the injury, number of school days missed, and other information determined necessary by the Concussion Management Team. The CMT will review this data and make recommendations to the Board as needed.

Legal References: ~~Public Law Chapter 688 (2012)~~
20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 254(17)~~; 1001(19)~~

Cross Reference: JJIF-E RSU No. 5 Student and Parent Information Sheet and Acknowledgement Form
JLCE-E RSU No. 5 Student Accident/Injury Report

Adopted: November 28, 2012
Revised: June 15, 2016
Revised: October 23, 2019
Revised:

Parents and student-athletes: You must turn in a signed form prior to the start of practice. This information sheet is available on the athletic webpage and copies are available at each school.

~~RSU NO. 5~~
~~CONCUSSION INFORMATION SHEET~~

~~A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works.~~ **~~All concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.~~** ~~In other words, even a "ding" or a bump on the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your student-athlete reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.~~

~~Symptoms may include one or more of the following:~~

- ~~Headaches~~
- ~~"Pressure in head"~~
- ~~Nausea or vomiting~~
- ~~Neck pain~~
- ~~Balance problems or dizziness~~
- ~~Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision~~
- ~~Sensitivity to light or noise~~
- ~~Feeling sluggish or slowed down~~
- ~~Feeling foggy or groggy~~
- ~~Drowsiness~~
- ~~Change in sleep patterns~~
- ~~"Don't feel right"~~
- ~~Fatigue or low energy~~
- ~~Behavioral/Emotional/Social changes~~
- ~~Nervousness or anxiety~~
- ~~Irritability~~
- ~~More emotional~~
- ~~Confusion~~
- ~~Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)~~
- ~~Repeating the same question/comment~~
- ~~Amnesia~~

~~Signs observed by teammates, parents or coaches include:~~

- ~~Appears dazed~~
- ~~Vacant facial expression~~
- ~~Confused about assignment~~
- ~~Forgets plays~~
- ~~Is unsure of game, score, or opponent~~
- ~~Moves clumsily or displays lack of coordination~~
- ~~Answers questions slowly~~
- ~~Shows behavior or personality changes~~
- ~~Can't recall events prior to hit~~
- ~~Can't recall events after hit~~
- ~~Seizures or convulsions~~
- ~~Any change in typical behavior or personality~~
- ~~Loses consciousness~~
- ~~Slurred speech~~

~~This document is adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport Consensus Statement (2009)~~

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. RSU No. 5 requires the consistent and uniform implementation of a return to play concussion protocol as reflected in Board policy:

- Any student suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school-sponsored athletic activity including but not limited to competition, practice or scrimmage, must be removed from the activity immediately.

- No student will be permitted to return to the activity or to participate in any other school-sponsored athletic activity on the day of the suspected concussion.

- Any student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury shall be prohibited from further participation in school-sponsored athletic activities until he/she has been evaluated and received written medical clearance to do so from a qualified and licensed health care provider, ideally one trained in concussion management. Such return to participation will be gradual and is at the discretion of the Concussion Management Team and in all cases will be based on the district's current accepted standards of care.

You should also inform the athletic trainer, school nurse, and your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:
http://www.cdc.gov/Headsup

Student-athlete Name Printed _____ Student-athlete Signature _____ Date _____

Parent or Legal Guardian Printed _____ Parent or Legal Guardian Signature _____ Date _____

Adopted: November 28, 2012
Revised: October 23, 2019

RSU NO. 5 STUDENT AND PARENT INFORMATION SHEET AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT FORM

Prior to participating in a school athletic activity, all students and the student's legal parent or guardian must be informed of signs and symptoms of concussion, the risk of continuing to participate when a concussion is suspected, and the District's policy JJIF - STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES for the management of concussive and other head injuries and must sign a statement acknowledging that review. A Fact Sheet for Parents (https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/media/pdfs/schools/TBI_factsheets_PARENTS-508-a.pdf) (U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2021)

I understand that a concussion may occur from an injury in any setting. I have read the District's policy JJIF - STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES and understand that there is a protocol in place for graduated school re-entry following a concussion and medical clearance.

Concussion is a brain injury. All brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. These injuries can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged symptoms and/or recovery if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a "ding" or a bump on the head can be serious. You cannot *see* a concussion and most concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion (https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/signs-symptoms/?CDC_AAref_Val=https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/basics/concussion_symptoms.html) may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your student reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away. Our District has a policy JJIF - STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES that states any student who has concussion symptoms and is referred to a health care provider must be evaluated by a health care provider licensed to diagnose a concussion before they can return to full activities within school. For more information on concussions, you can go to https://www.cdc.gov/heads-up/.

I understand that a concussion may occur from an injury in any setting. I have read the District's policy JJIF - STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES and understand that there is a protocol in place for graduated school re-entry following a concussion and medical diagnosis and medical clearance.

Student-athlete Name Printed	Student-athlete Signature	Date
Parent or Legal Guardian Printed	Parent or Legal Guardian Signature	Date

Adopted: November 28, 2012
Revised: October 23, 2019

CHILD FIND

~~The purpose of this document is to outline how RSU No. 5 fulfills the Federal and State requirements to ensure that all children with disabilities in its jurisdiction receive the proper care under the Child Find requirements.~~

~~The Child Find requirements in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Part B require States to have policies and procedures in effect to ensure that all children with disabilities residing in the State who need special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated, regardless of the severity of the disability. An effective Child Find system is an ongoing part of RSU No. 5's responsibility to ensure that a Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) is made available to all eligible children with disabilities.~~

~~According to State law, RSU No.5 shall also implement Child Find procedures for children who are experiencing homelessness or are wards of the State, highly mobile and migrant children, Multilingual learners, and parentally-placed private school children with disabilities, as well as those suspected of having developmental delays as defined in 34 C.F.R. § 300.8(b). Child Find also includes children who have complex medical needs and who reside in nursing homes because of serious health problems and those who are in correctional facilities. 34 C.F.R. § 300.111(b)-(c). This requirement includes identification of children who are suspected of having a disability, including for example, children suspected of having long COVID or suspected of having post-COVID conditions that meet the definition of a disability under IDEA.~~

~~Child Find responsibilities include locating all children who may be in need of special education services, and determining through the evaluation and eligibility process if they require services. This responsibility shall be accomplished through a district-wide process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs.~~

~~IDEA's Child Find requirements permit referrals from sources who believe a child may be eligible for special education and related services. Sources include, but are not limited to, a parent, teacher, health care provider, law enforcement, or other individuals with knowledge about the child. However, consistent with the child find requirements and with the parental consent requirements under IDEA and the implementing regulations, only the child's parent or the child's Local Educational Agency (LEA) may initiate the request for an initial evaluation LEA. 34 C.F.R. § 300.301(b).~~

~~Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and eligibility determination by the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team.~~

~~RSU No. 5 shall implement the Child Find process during the first 30 days of the school year or during the first 30 days of enrollment for transfer children, in addition to other Child Find activities provided by the school unit.~~

RSU No. 5 seeks to ensure that all children within its jurisdiction who are between the ages of 4 and under 22 years of age, and who are in need of special education and related services are identified, located, and evaluated at public expense. This includes homeless children, state wards, state agency clients, students who have been suspended or expelled, children attending private schools or receiving home instruction, children incarcerated in county jails, children who have the

equivalent of 10 full days of unexcused absences or 7 consecutive school days of unexcused absences during a school year, highly mobile children (including migrant or homeless), and children who are suspected of being disabled and in need of special education and supportive assistance even though they are advancing from grade to grade.

RSU No. 5's child find responsibility shall be accomplished through a unit-wide process which, while not a definitive or final judgment of a student's capabilities or disability, is a possible indicator of special education needs. Final identification of students with disabilities and programming for such students occurs only after an appropriate evaluation and a determination by the IEP Team.

This Child Find process shall include obtaining data on each child through multiple measures, direct assessment, and parent information regarding the child's academic and functional performance, gross and fine motor skills, receptive and expressive language skills, vision, hearing and cognitive skills. RSU No. 5 may ~~schedule Child Find activities during its annual kindergarten enrollment to assist in planning for necessary special education and related services at the start of the school year. If screening occurs in the spring prior to school entry, RSU No. 5 will refer the child to the regional Child Development Services (CDS) site within 10 school days.~~ **receive referrals to the IEP team from parents, agency representatives, Early Intervention for ME, or other individuals with knowledge of the child; such referrals will be acted on in a timely manner. RSU No. 5 may also schedule child find activities during its annual kindergarten enrollment to assist in planning for necessary special education and related services at the start of the school year.**

RSU No. 5 may provide information regarding the referral process to parents and the school community at school events, publish information and relevant timelines in parent/student handbooks, school manuals, calendars, and on its website, and make information available for parents and the public in Doctor's offices, day care, library, town hall etc.

If the Child Find process indicates that a student may **have a disability that** require special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education, the student shall be referred to the IEP Team to determine the student's eligibility for special education services.

School staff, parents, or agency representatives or other individuals with knowledge of the child may refer children to the IEP team if they believe that the student, because of a disability, may be in need of special education and supportive services in order to benefit from regular education. Such a referral should follow the school unit's pre-referral and referral policy.

Legal References: 34 C.F.R. § 300.111 (~~2006~~) **(2015)**
~~34 C.F.R. § 300.301(b).~~
ME. Dept. of Educ. Rule Ch. 101, IV 2(A), (C-**E**) (~~2015~~) **(2024)**
~~Me Dept. of Educ. Administrative Letter 1 (January 21, 2021)~~
~~Long COVID under Section 504 and the IDEA: A Resource to Support Children, Students, Educators, Schools, Service Providers, and Families (Jul. 26, 2021).~~

Cross Reference: **IHBAA - Referral Procedures and General Education Interventions**
IHBAA-R - Referral Procedures and General Education Interventions

Adopted: June 24, 2009
Reviewed: April 25, 2012
Revised: April 24, 2013
Revised: February 28, 2018
Revised: February 15, 2023

TEACHING ABOUT CONTROVERSIAL ISSUES

Students are exposed to a wide range of issues, information, ideas and values at school, at home and in the community. Particular issues may be controversial because of differing political, religious, moral, ethical or cultural beliefs. In the context of the educational program and approved curricula, the Board supports discussion of controversial issues in an atmosphere that promotes learning and respect for the beliefs of others.

To promote appropriate and fair consideration of controversial issues in the instructional setting, the Board expects the following principles to be followed by educators.

1. Discussion of controversial issues shall be appropriate to the age, grade and maturity of the students involved.

2. Discussion of a controversial issue may take place as part of the approved curriculum and for educational purposes. The educator must be knowledgeable about the issue and serve as a facilitator to ensure that points of view are presented in a civil manner. In the capacity as facilitator, it is the educator's responsibility to identify diverse points of view on an issue, and to make certain that differing opinions and perspectives are treated with respect.

3. Students shall be given the opportunity to understand different/opposing sides of an issue and to use classroom discussion to formulate their own views. Students shall also be provided with appropriate instructional materials and opportunities to research and study the issue.

4. Educators shall not use the classroom as a forum to advance their personal views or proselytize, but are not prohibited from expressing their own views for legitimate pedagogical purposes.

5. Outside speakers on controversial issues must be approved in advance by the building administrator. When outside speakers are used, reasonable efforts should be made to expose students to speakers on more than one side of the issue. If this is not feasible, educators are responsible for providing appropriate information regarding differing points of view on the issue.

6. Students or their parents/legal guardians who object to particular topics based on their particular, sincerely-held religious, moral or philosophical beliefs may request an accommodation in accordance with Board Policy IMBB.

Cross References: IMBB – Exemption from Required Instruction
ILD – Educational Research: Student Submission to Surveys, Analyses, or Evaluation