STUDENT CONCUSSIONS AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES

The Board recognizes that concussions and other head injuries are serious and could result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and managed properly. 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.

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.

TRAINING

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).

STUDENT AND PARENTS/GUARDIANS

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.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE

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.

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 concussive head injuries based on the currently accepted best practices. The team, under the direction of the superintendent, shall identify the school personnel who shall be trained in concussion signs and symptoms and the school activities covered by this policy.

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: 20-A M.R.S.A. §§ 254(17)

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: April 29, 2026