Mercer Island School District

Concussion Policy & Information

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. Even though most concussions are mild, **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 child 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
- Amnesia
- "Don't feel right"
- Fatigue or low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness or anxiety
- Irritability
- More emotional
- Confusion
- Concentration or memory problems
- Forgetting game plays
- Repeating the same questions/comments

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches may include:

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

Adapted from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sports Document

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion will be removed from play immediately and are required to have the signed release of a physician before being allowed to return to play. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a 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 athlete 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 will 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 written medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The new "Zackery Lystedt Law" in Washington now requires the consistent and uniform implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years: "a youth athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time" and "…may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed heath care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider". You should also inform 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/ConcussionInYouthSports/

Print Student Athlete Name	Signature of Student Athlete	Date

Print Parent/Legal Guardian Name	Signature of Parent/Legal Guardian	Date

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