

HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION POLICY

Required Training

The following persons shall complete annually one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Department as specified on the Department's website:

- Coaches
- Athletic Director
- Certified athletic trainer
- Volunteers
- School and team physicians
- School nurse
- Parents
- Student athletes
- Marching Band Director
- Marching Band Students

This training shall be completed annually (on or after July 1st of each school year or prior to the students' participation) and a certificate of completion must be supplied to the high school athletic director. Parents/guardians of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity and students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity will complete a sign off indicating they have received head injury material and/or completed a course.

Each coach, trainer, and volunteer will be provided written information from the athletic director to teach form, techniques, and skills and promote protective equipment use to minimize sports-related head injury, and to prohibit athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, such as using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

Pre-Participation

1. Each student athlete and parent/guardian with a student athlete involved in an extracurricular athletic activity covered by 105 CMR 201.000: Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities shall be required to have a consent form completed. The form shall include:

- annual training requirement
- procedure for the school to notify parents when an athlete has been removed from play for a head injury or suspected concussion sustained during an extracurricular athletic activity
- protocol for obtaining medical clearance for return to play and academics after a diagnosed concussion
- parent's responsibility for completion of the pre-participation form, or school-based equivalent
- parent's responsibility for completion of the Report of a Head Injury Form, or school-based equivalent.

2. Each student and parent/guardian with a student-athlete involved in an extracurricular athletic activity covered by the regulation shall be required to complete a consent form before they may try out for, practice, or participate with any interscholastic athletic team. At the high school level all students shall have an approved physical in place before they may try out for, practice, or participate with any interscholastic athletic team. The athletic director or nurse at the middle school shall keep a master list of students with approved physical exams. High school coaches must check the approved physical list before a student may try out for, practice, or participate with any interscholastic athletic team.
3. For other extracurricular athletic activities covered by the regulation at the high school and middle school the school nurse shall review all Department of Public Health Pre-participation Forms indicating a history of head injury in consultation with the appropriate coach/advisor. For other extracurricular athletic activities covered by the regulation the school nurse shall maintain a list of approved physicals.
4. The procedure for sharing information concerning an athlete's history of head injury and concussion, recuperation, reentry plan, and authorization to return to play and academic activities shall be on a need to know basis consistent with requirements of the regulation and applicable federal and state law including but not limited to the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99, and shall be signed off by the parent/guardian on the Pre-participation Consent Form.
5. Each student-athlete and parent/guardian with a student-athlete involved in an extracurricular athletic activity covered by the regulation shall be required to have a district consent form (concussion statement) completed; the form shall include current information regarding an athlete's history of head injuries and concussions. For high school interscholastic athletic activities the athletic director shall review all Pre-participation Forms indicating a history of head injury in consultation with the appropriate coach.

Exclusion from Play

Any student, who during a practice of competition sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness briefly, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day. The student may not return to practice or competition until the student provides medical clearance and authorization as specified in 105 CMR 20.011. The coach shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent in person or by telephone immediately after the practice or competition from which a student was removed. The coach must also provide this information to the parent in writing, whether on paper or electronically by the end of the next school day. The coach must also communicate with the athletic director and school nurse by the end of the next school day.

Stages of Recovery

Red Stage (Usually 2 – 4 days, but could last weeks)

- Rest
- Students typically do not attend school

Orange Stage

- Rest
- Attend school half to full days
- Avoid school bus and heavy backpacks
- Work with designated educational personnel regarding school accommodations
- No tests in school
- No sports, band, chorus, physical education or outdoor recess

Yellow Stage

- Attend school full-time if possible
- Students and families work with teachers regarding homework deadlines (complete as much as possible)
- See school nurse for pain management and/or rest if needed
- Limit one quiz/test per day (untimed testing is recommended)
- Work in 15 minute blocks
- No sports
- Licensed medical professional will make decisions regarding band, chorus, physical education and outdoor recess (elementary level) based on medical assessment

Green Stage

- Attend school full-time
- Resume normal activities
- Resume sports once school work is back on track, student is symptom-free, and has been cleared by a licensed medical professional

Return to Play Schedule:

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 the athletic trainer/coach/athletic director.

Step 1: Light exercise, including 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.

Medical Clearance

The protocol for medical clearance for return to play after a concussion must at minimum comply with 105 CMR 201.011

1. The coach shall complete the **Report of Head Injury Form** immediately after the game or practice for head injuries that result in the student being removed from play due to a possible concussion. For high school interscholastic athletic activities the athletic director shall review the Report of Head Injury Form in consultation with the appropriate coach and school officials and the school nurse.
2. The coach shall follow the “**Head Injury Guidelines**” and report the situation to the nurse as soon as possible. For other extracurricular athletic activities covered by the regulation at the high school and middle school the principal or designee shall be informed by the appropriate coach/advisor/director. The school nurse will be informed.
3. Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, or a loss of consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall obtain and present to the school nurse, a **Medical Clearance and Authorization Form**, prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity.

Additional Information can be found at the following resources:

- [Center for Disease Control and Prevention Heads Up Concussion in Youth Sports On-Line Training Program](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html) (available online and free of charge)
http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html
- [National Federation of State High School Associations Concussion in Sports - What you Need to Know](http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=150)
<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=150>

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111: 222; 105CMR 201.00

Adopted By The
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