

Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities Policy

(Taken from pages 68-71 of the HCCS Student-Parent Handbook)

Purpose

The purpose of the **Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities Policy** (Policy) is to provide standardized procedures for the school governing the prevention, training, management and return to activity decisions relating to students in grades 7-12 who participate in extracurricular athletic activities and to comply with Massachusetts regulation, 105 CMR 201.000:Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities (Regulations).

School Policies

This Policy addresses sports-related head injuries sustained by grade 7-12 student-athletes who participate in extracurricular athletic activities as defined by the Regulations, but may be applied to all head injuries in students.

The Athletic Director or other designated school administrator shall be responsible for the implementation of this Policy and related protocols.

Annual training, approved by the Department of Public Health (DPH), will be provided to coaches, physical education teachers, school nurses, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers and the Athletic Director, in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury and associated health risks. Documentation of each person's training shall be recorded and kept on file at the school.

The following concussion related forms will be used and kept in the student's school health record until the year the student graduates:

- Verification of the completed annual student and parent training
- DPH approved, **Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form**, (see appendix I)
- DPH approved, **Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form**, (see Appendix I)
- DPH approved, **Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form**, (see Appendix I)
- Graduated re-entry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities

An annual report to include the total number of **Report of Head Injury During Sports Forms** received and the total number of student athletes with diagnosed or suspected head injuries that occurred during extracurricular athletic activities will be kept on file at the school.

The Policy will be reviewed annually and as needed.

Information regarding this policy will be available in the school's Student/Parent Handbook and on the school's website (www.hccs-sabis.net).

School Procedures

Prior to participating in school sports, the following persons shall annually complete a DPH approved head injury training program: athletic director, coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers, physical education teachers, school physician, school nurses, student athletes, and their parents/guardians. All other school personnel may elect to complete the DPH approved program.

Educational training is required for all student athletes and their parents/guardians before they are allowed to practice. The school will provide a list of DPH approved online training courses that meet the annual training requirement. If the family cannot access the online trainings, DPH approved training forms will be available in the Athletic Office.

If the student athlete returns a completed form regarding training, and the parent/guardian of the student does not return completed forms, the school will contact the parent/guardian to request the required forms.

The DPH approved written training materials are available in English and Spanish. At the written request from a parent/guardian, the school will provide written training materials in the language of the student athlete's parent/guardian.

Annually, the school will maintain records of training completions for all persons specified by the Regulations through either of the following:

- Certification of completion from a DPH approved online course
- A signed acknowledgment that the individual has read and understands the DPH approved written materials.

Documentation and Review of Head Injury and Concussion History

Prior to the start of each sport's season, the student athlete and the parent/guardian shall complete and submit a current **Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form**.

- Prior to each sport season, coaches will review all Pre-participation forms in order to identify student athletes who are at greater risk of repeat head injuries.
- Prior to each sport's season, the school nurse will review all Pre-participation forms indicating a history of head injury.
- The school will use a student athlete's history of head injury or concussion as a factor to determine degree of participation and/or specific modifications of participation in an extracurricular athletic activity.

The **Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form** will be available in the Main Office, the Nurse's Office or from the school coaches. This form will be completed by coaches if a head injury occurs during practice or competition. The form is also used by parents if the student athlete's head injury occurs during the sports season but not while participating in a school sporting event.

Emergency Referral/Exclusion from Play

Any student athlete, who during a practice or competition sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, will be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to practice or competition that day. Any student athlete will be transported to the nearest medical facility if any of the following signs and or symptoms are noted:

- Loss of consciousness
- Unsteady gait
- Decreasing level of consciousness
- Abnormally unequal, dilated or unreactive pupils
- Suspected neck/spine injury
- Mental status change- lethargy, confusion, agitation, weakness/numbness, slurring of speech
- Headache that worsens over time
- Nausea or vomiting

The coach will communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent/guardian in person or by phone immediately after the practice or competition in which the student athlete has been removed from play for a head injury or symptoms of suspected concussion. The coach must also provide this information to the parent/guardian in writing, either paper or electronic, by the end of the next business day. This can be in the form of a *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form*.

The coach will complete a *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* upon identification of a student athlete with a head injury or symptoms of a suspected concussion. This form will be turned into the Athletic Director by the end of the next business day.

The coach will communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the School Director and School Nurse that the student athlete has been removed from practice/competition for a head injury or symptoms of suspected concussion.

Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student athlete who has been removed from practice/ competition for a head injury or symptoms of suspected concussion will obtain and present to the Athletic Director or School Nurse, the DPH approved *Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form*, prior to resuming extracurricular athletic activity.

Only a duly licensed physician, a duly licensed athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician, a duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician, or duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the student athlete's physician managing the recovery, may complete, the *Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form*, authorizing a student athlete to return to play.

The final return to play decision is a medical decision, made in consultation with a parent/guardian, the primary care provider, the school nurse and additional school staff as appropriate.

Graduated Reentry Plan

Every student athlete who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion will have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academics and extracurricular activities. The student athlete must be completely symptom free and medically cleared in order to begin graduated reentry to extracurricular athletic activities.

The written Graduated Reentry Plan will be developed by a school based team including but not limited to: the Academic Quality Controller (AQC), guidance counselor, school nurse, athletic director, certified athletic trainer (if on staff), parent/guardian and the Students' physician. The plan will include instructions and recommendations for the student, the parent/guardian and school personnel, addressing but not limited to:

- A plan for communication and coordination between school personnel,
- The parent/guardian and the student athlete's physician
- Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate
- Graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies as appropriate including accommodations and modifications as needed
- Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities
- Frequency of assessments by the student athlete's physician, school certified athletic trainer or school nurse, until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized

Information concerning a student athlete's history of head injury and concussion, recuperation, graduated reentry plan, and authorization to return to play and academic activities will be shared with all necessary academic staff and coaching staff.

Responsibilities of the Athletic Director

1. Complete the annual training requirement.
2. Participate in annual review of this policy
3. Ensure that all student athletes meet the physical examination requirements consistent with Massachusetts regulations 105 CMR 200.00 prior to participation in all extracurricular athletic activity.
4. Ensure that annual training requirements for student athletes, parents, staff, coaches and volunteers are met, recorded and maintained.
5. Ensure that all student athletes have completed and submitted, *Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Forms* prior to each season.
6. Ensure that Pre-participation forms are reviewed according to the policy.
7. Ensure that *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Forms* are completed by parent/guardian or coach and reviewed by the coach, school nurse or certified athletic trainer, or school physician.

Responsibilities of the Coach

1. Complete annual training requirement.
2. Record and review the *Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Forms* with prompt transmission to the school nurse for review.
3. Complete a *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* upon identification of a student athlete with a head injury or suspected concussion that occurred during practice or competition.
4. Receive, review and share with the Athletic Director, *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* completed by a parent/guardian after an incident outside of an extracurricular athletic activity.
5. *Form* completed by a parent/guardian after an incident outside of an extracurricular athletic activity.
6. Teach techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injuries while discouraging and prohibiting student athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous techniques.
7. Identify student athletes with suspected head injuries which occur in practice or competition and remove them from play.
8. Have prompt communication with the parent/guardian of any student removed from practice or competition due to head injury or suspected concussion.

Responsibilities of a Certified Athletic Trainer

1. Complete annual training requirement.
2. Participate in the annual review of this policy
3. Review *Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Forms* and *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* to identify student athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries
4. *During Sports Season Form* to identify student athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries