

## Head Injury and Concussion Policy

JJIF

Research has estimated that 5-10% of high school or college contact sports students sustain a concussion each year. These estimates likely understate the true incidence of concussion. In one investigation over 50% of high school football athletes did not report their injury to a parent, coach, or medical professional. A concussion is an alteration of mental status resulting from the brain being jolted inside of the skull due to a blow to the head or body. Among the many symptoms associated with concussion, headache, dizziness, confusion, amnesia, nausea and disorientation are commonly reported. Loss of consciousness, however, occurs in less than 10% of all injuries and is not an indicator of concussion severity. Also, following the injury, the student may experience other difficulties such as sensitivity to light and sound, forgetfulness, fatigue and emotional changes such as anxiety or depression.

Most students who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as the brain has had time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an student's self-report of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school students are not aware of the signs and symptoms of injury, the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under-diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Research has shown that young concussed students, who return to play before their brain has healed, are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, a catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome.

The Hopedale Head Injuries and Concussions Policy was created in accordance with 105 CMR 201.000 by a committee that included; Dennis Breen, Superintendent, Kelley Butler, Athletic Director, June Colelli, JSHS Nurse, Judy Carlson, Elementary Nurse, Kevin McGowan, Guidance Counselor, and Kelly Viera, Health/Wellness Teacher, and reviewed by Dr. Cocciarella, School Physician. Review and revision of policies and procedures shall occur as needed, but at least every two years.

### Training for Athletic Staff, Students and Parents

Annual training of persons specified in 105 CMR 201.008 in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury, including second impact syndrome, and documentation of each person's completion of such training. Participants in the training shall include: coaches, students who participate in an extracurricular activity; parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular activity; athletic trainers, parent volunteers for any athletic activity; physicians employed by the school or who volunteer for any extracurricular athletic activity; school nurses or nurses who volunteer for any extracurricular athletic activity; athletic directors; and school marching band director.

Documentation of annual physical examinations of students participating in extracurricular athletic activities, consistent with 105 CMR 200.000, and completion of the **Hopedale JSHS Athletic Information Form**.

### Reporting Head Injuries or Suspected Concussions

It is required that head injuries or suspected concussions sustained in practices or games be reported by the coach to the student's parent so the parent may take the student to a medical provider for appropriate medical evaluation and treatment. Coaches are also required to report head injuries or suspected concussions to the school nurse, guidance counselor, and athletic director as soon as possible after the injury. For head injuries and suspected concussions occurring during the school day or during non-school sponsored activities, the school nurse, guidance counselor and appropriate school staff should be notified immediately. Any head injury occurring outside of Hopedale athletics, the parents/guardians shall submit a **Report of Head Injury Form** to the athletic director, coach, and school nurse.

### Coaching

Coaches at all levels will provide every student-athlete with instruction on proper form for contact (if applicable) or avoidance of potentially dangerous situations that may occur during practice or games. No coach will encourage a student-athlete to participate with a suspected head injury or encourage any student-athlete to falsify signs or symptoms in hopes of returning to play.

### Medical Clearance and Authorization for Return to Play

Student-athletes with suspected concussions, or diagnosed concussions, will not be allowed to return to play without completion of a **Medical Clearance and Authorization Form** by a certified physician or by the following duly licensed certified individuals in consultation with a certified physician; athletic trainer, nurse practitioner, or neuropsychologist.

The physician's return to play recommendations must be communicated to the school nurse, athletic director, coach, and guidance counselor.

### Maintenance of Records

Hopedale Public Schools, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for 3 years or at a minimum until a student graduates:

- Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of confirmation documentation via the **Athletic Information Form** and the **Pre-Participation Form** (Athletic Director)
- **Report of Head Injury Forms, Medical Clearance and Authorization Form** (Athletic Director / School Nurse)
- **Graduated Re-entry Plans** (Athletic Director / Coach / Guidance Counselor)

The District shall make these records available to the Department of Public Health and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request or in compliance of determined regulations or program review.

The District will maintain and electronically report (Athletic Director) annual statistics as required DESE that include:

- The total number of Head Injury Report Forms received by the school
- The total number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in any extracurricular athletic activities

REF: 105 CMR 201.000: M.G.L. c. 111, § 222.

### Athletic Director Responsibilities

The Athletic Director shall participate in the development and biannual review of the policies and procedures required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school.

The Athletic Director shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the training requirements for staff, parents, volunteers, coaches, and student-athletes are completed, recorded and records maintained;
- Ensuring that all student-athletes meet the physical examination requirements consistent with school policy;
- Ensuring that all students participating in extracurricular athletic activities have completed and submitted **Athletic Information Forms** and **Pre-Participation Forms** prior to participation in a practice session;
- Ensuring that all **Athletic Information Forms** and **Pre-Participation Forms** are reviewed and that the school nurse is informed of all identified concerns;
- Ensuring that **Report of Head Injury Forms** are completed by the parent or coach and reviewed by the coach, school nurse, and physician;
- Ensuring that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health and safety of an athlete;
- Reporting annual statistics to the DESE in accord with 105 CMR 201.017.

### Coaches Responsibilities

- Completing the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.017
- Reviewing the **Pre-Participation Forms** so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;
- Completing the **Report of Head Injury Form** upon identification of a student with a head injury or suspected concussion that occurs during practice or competition;
- Communicating promptly with the parent of any student removed from practice or competition as directed in 105 CMR 201.010(C) and with the Athletic Director who will notify the school nurse as directed in 105 CMR 201.010(D)
- Promptly transmitting **Report of Head Injury Forms** to the Athletic Director who will notify the school nurse for review and maintenance in the student's health record, unless otherwise specified in school policies and procedures;
- Teaching techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injuries;
- Discouraging and prohibiting athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon;
- Identifying athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice or competition and removing them from play;

### School Nurse Responsibilities

- Participating in the development and biannual review of the policies required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school;
- Completing the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.007;
- Reviewing completed **Pre-Participation Forms** that indicate a history of head injury and following up with parents as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities;
- Reviewing **Report of Head Injury Forms** and following up with the Athletic Director or parent as needed;
- Maintaining: **Pre-Participation Forms** and **Report of Head Injury Forms** in the student's health record;
- Participating in the graduated reentry planning for students who have been diagnosed with a concussion to discuss any necessary accommodations or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities after a head injury and revising the health care plan as needed;
- Monitoring recuperating students with head injuries and collaborating with the guidance counselor to ensure that the graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities required by 105 CMR 201.010(E) is being followed;
- Providing ongoing educational materials and resources on head injury and concussion to teachers, staff, and students.

### School Responsibilities

- Review and, if necessary, revise the concussion policy every 2 years;
- Once the school is informed of the student's concussion, a contact or "point person" should be identified (guidance counselor);
- Guidance Counselor to work with the student on organizing work assignments, making up work, and ensuring extra time is provided for assignments and tests/quizzes as determined at the **Gradual Re-entry Plan Meeting** and maintaining a record of the meeting in the student's academic folder;
- Educate staff on the signs and symptoms of concussions and the educational impact concussions may have on students;
- Include concussion information in all student and faculty handbooks;
- Develop a plan to communicate and provide language-appropriate educational materials to parents with limited English proficiency.

### Parent/Guardian Responsibilities

- Complete and return **Pre-Participation Forms** to the athletic department;
- Inform school if a student sustains a concussion outside of school hours by completing and submitting a **Report of Head Injury Form** with the school nurse;
- Complete training provided by the school on concussions confirmed by the Athletic Director on the **Athletic Information Form**;
- Encourage your child to follow concussion protocol as determined by your physician;
- Enforce restrictions on rest, electronics, and television;
- Request a contact person (guidance counselor) from the school with whom you may communicate about your child's progress and academic needs;
- Observe and monitor your child for any physical or emotional changes;
- Request to extend make up time for work if necessary;
- Recognize that your child will be excluded from participation in any extracurricular athletic event if all forms are not completed and on file with the Athletic Director.

### Student and Athlete Responsibilities

- Return all necessary forms prior to engaging in any activity;
- Participate in all concussion training and education;
- Report all symptoms to your coach and/or school nurse;
- Follow the recovery plan as determined by your physician;
- Keep strict limits on use of electronics and viewing of television;
- Don't carry books or backpacks that are too heavy;
- Tell your teachers if you are having difficulty with class work;
- See the school nurse for pain management as determined by your physician;
- Return to athletic activities when cleared by a physician (Return to Play Form)
- Follow the return to play guidelines as directed by your physician;
- Report any symptoms to the school nurse and your parents/guardians if any occur after return to play;
- Students who do not complete and return all required forms and trainings will not be allowed to participate in athletic activities.

### Penalties for Non-Compliance

The Hopedale Public Schools takes the safety of our student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student athletes. The underlying philosophy of these policies is "when in doubt, sit them out".

Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline and/or forfeiture of games. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact the Superintendent or Principal and also place their complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

105 CMR 201.006 (A) (17)

Source: New  
Date Adopted: March 20, 2012  
Legal Reference: M.G.L. c. 111, § 222; 105 CMR 201.000  
Forms: Athletic Information, Report of Head Injury, Medical Clearance and Authorization, and Pre-Participation  
Posted: Website, Principals' Offices, School Libraries, PPS Office, Handbooks