

# Alleghany County Public Schools

## Concussions in School Sports – Guidelines for Parents, Athletes & Coaches

### IMPORTANT INFORMATION – READ CAREFULLY

#### INTRODUCTION:

Effective July 1, 2011, the Code of Virginia was amended to include Section 22.1-271.5 directing Virginia school divisions to develop and distribute guidelines for policies dealing with concussions in student-athletes, and requiring ACPS to obtain written acknowledgment of information regarding the identification and handling of suspected concussions in student athletes.

#### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, face, neck, or body which results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull. An athlete **does not** have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion.

#### CONCUSSION FACTS:

- Concussions occur most frequently in football, but soccer, wrestling and basketball follow closely behind. **All athletes are at risk.**
- Concussion symptoms may last from a few days to several months.
- A concussion can affect a student's ability to do schoolwork and other activities.
- An athlete may not return to sports while still having symptoms from a concussion as they are at risk for prolonged symptoms and further injury.
- A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others may develop over the next several days or weeks.
- Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly and the consequence of a seemingly mild second concussion can be very severe, and even result in death (i.e., "second impact syndrome").

#### CONCUSSIONS SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS, COACHES, & STUDENTS:

- Athlete appears dazed or stunned.
- Is confused about what to do.
- Forgets plays.
- Is unsure of game, score or opponent.
- Moves clumsily.
- Loses consciousness.
- Shows behavior or personality changes.
- Can't recall events prior to hit.
- Can't recall events after hit.

#### SIGNS & SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

- Athlete feels Headache or "pressure" in head.
- Nausea or vomiting.
- Balance problems or dizziness.
- Double or fuzzy vision.
- Bothered by light or noise.
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy.
- Concentration or memory problems.
- Confusion.

## ACTIONS IF A STUDENT ATHLETE SUFFERS A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION EVENT:

- Immediately remove the student from play, be it game or practice.
- Have student-athlete evaluated by a licensed health care provider (i.e., physician, PA, osteopath or certified athletic trainer).
- If necessary refer student-athlete for further treatment.
- A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to have sustained a concussion shall not return to play that same day.
- The determination whether a student-athlete removed from play is suspected of having sustained a concussion shall be the sole determination of the licensed health care provider.
- WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.

## WHEN CAN A STUDENT ATHLETE RETURN TO PLAY?

- Student-athletes may-not return to play or practice the same day after suffering a concussion.
- Student-athletes must be evaluated by a licensed health care provider and cleared before returning to play.
- Once the student-athlete is symptom-free and cleared, the student athlete may proceed with activities in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exertion.

## STEPS THE STUDENT ATHLETE MUST FOLLOW AFTER CLEARANCE BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL:

If symptoms occur during any of the following steps, the **athlete must cease activity** and be **re-evaluated and cleared by their health care provider**.

- **Step 1** – Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight lifting.
- **Step 2** – 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 practice or training.
- **Step 5** – Game play.

## WHAT MUST BE DONE BY STUDENT ATHLETES, PARENTS, AND COACHES?

- **All parties must** learn to recognize the “Signs & Symptoms” of concussions as listed above.
- Teach student-athletes to immediately inform the Athletic Trainer & Coach if they experience such symptoms.
- Teach student-athletes to tell the Athletic Trainer & Coach if they suspect a teammate has a concussion.
- Report concussions to the Athletic Trainer & Coaches to help in monitoring injured athletes as they move to the next season.

**REST IS THE BEST TREATMENT FOR A CONCUSSION**

**Please acknowledge your receipt, understanding, and agreement with this important information by signing the attached form.**



**I have read, fully understand, and agree to the attached Allegheny County Public Schools guidelines regarding Student Athlete Concussions.**

<b>Student Athlete Name (print):</b>	
<b>Student Athlete Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>
<b>Parent/ Guardian Name (print):</b>	
<b>Parent/ Guardian Signature:</b>	<b>Date:</b>

**This form must be submitted prior to an athlete participating in any practice or game.**