

IIIF: Concussion Management in Extracurricular Athletics

Purpose

To provide information and standardized procedures for Westwood Public Schools in the prevention, training, management and return to activities decisions regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports, in order to protect their safety, in compliance with Commonwealth regulations (MA DPH 105 CMR 201.000; “Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Activities”).

Scope

Pursuant to 105 CMR 201.000, this policy encompasses members of the Westwood High School and Thurston Middle School community including students who participate in any extracurricular athletic activity. Review and revision of this policy is to be completed every two years.

Definitions

All terms used in this policy are defined by the Department of Public Health, 105 CMR 201.005.

Responsibilities

Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity, along with: their parents/guardians, teachers, guidance counselors, school administrative staff, school nurses, athletic director, certified athletic trainer and coaches all have specific responsibilities as delineated in this policy.

Student-Athletes: Must provide the school with documentation of the student’s medical history, including previous head injury(ies) and previous concussion(s). Specifically, students must complete and/or sign a WHS/TMS Medical Consent Form via online registration. Prior to the start of each sports season, all students must complete the school-based equivalent of the DPH Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form via online registration. All student athletes must also provide annual documentation of a physical exam prior to his/her participation in extracurricular activities, and student athletes must complete and provide documentation of annual DPH-approved training in concussion awareness as specified in 105 CMR 201.009 (See “Training”, below)

Parents/Guardians: Provide the school with documentation of their child’s medical history, including previous head injury(ies) and previous concussion(s). Specifically, prior to the start of each sports season, parents must complete and/or sign a WHS/TMS Medical Consent Form and complete and sign the school-based equivalent of the DPH Pre Participation Head

Injury/Concussion Reporting Form.. All parents/guardians must complete and provide documentation of annual training in concussion awareness as specified in 105 CMR 201.009 (See "Training", below). All of this is done via online registration.

If a student sustains a head injury or concussion during the season but not while participating in an extracurricular athletic activity, the parents shall complete the Report of Head Injury Form or notify the school nurse of the injury. Parents should also provide all medical documentation to the school nurses following each evaluation.

Teachers: Cooperate with the implementation of accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a return to learn strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Guidance Counselors: Cooperate with the implementation of accommodations or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a return to learn strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

School Administrative Staff: The principal or their designee maintains records of student's/parent's completion of the annual concussion awareness form via an online registration process. The principal or designee will provide students and parents access to information and necessary forms to all parents and athletes via the student handbook and the school website.

The High School Nurses:

In collaboration with the athletic trainer and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries via the online registration portal.

Review of Report of Head Injury During Sports Season forms as they are submitted by the athletic trainer.

Maintain records of physical examination forms submitted by all students and student-athletes.

In collaboration with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and athletic trainer, the nurses will develop and implement post-concussion Return to Learn strategies under the guidance and recommendations of the medical provider.

Maintain and submit annual statistics required by the DPH.

Contact parent/guardian(s) of concussed student-athletes, via email or phone call, to discuss any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a return to learn strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has

suffered a head injury or concussion.

Communicate with guidance counselors and teachers to implement any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with the Return to Learn Strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student that has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Monitor recuperating students with head injuries during the school day.

Collaborate with the athletic trainer regarding all matters of documented head injuries and concussions including: injury incidence, nature, duration of symptoms, physician referral, parental contact, academic accommodations and/or modifications, return to full academics, return to play, and documentation.

The Middle School Nurse:

In collaboration with the athletic trainer and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Maintain records of physical examination forms submitted by all students and student-athletes.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries via the online registration portal.

In collaboration with the student, parent(s)/guardian(s), teachers, and coach, the nurse will develop and implement post-concussion Return to Learn Strategies under the guidance and recommendations of the medical provider.

Maintain and submit annual statistics required by the DPH.

Coordinate with guidance counselors and teachers to implement any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a return to learn strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Contact parent/guardians(s) of concussed student-athletes, via email or phone call, to discuss any accommodations and/or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a return to learn strategies for a return to full academic and extracurricular activities after a student has suffered a head injury or concussion.

Communicate with TMS coaches regarding concussed athletes status along a graduated reentry and return to play plan as advised by the athletes' physicians, including final clearance of athlete in order to return to play.

The Athletic Director:

Responsible for the implementation of this policy and its' protocols per designation by the superintendent, including the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Ensure that the training requirements for staff, parents/guardians, volunteers, coaches and student-athletes are met and recorded, and that records are maintained in accordance with 105 CMR 201.015.

Ensure that all athletes participating in extracurricular activities have completed and submitted a current physical examination form and completed the online registration.

In collaboration with the school nurse and athletic trainer, ensure that parents and coaches complete Report of Head Injury Forms when necessary.

Work with coaches to ensure that they are teaching techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury; discourage and prohibit student-athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of a student.

Develop and implement a procedure to reach out to parents who do not return completed forms, including situations wherein the student completes annual training but the parent has not.

Inform coaches of the penalties for failure to comply with provisions of the school's concussion policy, including teaching form, technique, skills, and use of protective equipment to minimize sports-related head injury (including using sports equipment - such as a helmet - as a weapon). Penalties include but are not limited to personnel sanctions and/or the forfeiture of games.

Collaborate with coaches, the school nurse, the athletic trainer, the student, and the parent(s)/guardian(s), and physician (or neuropsychologist) in the consideration of a student's head injury or concussion as a factor to determine whether to allow the student to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity or whether to allow such participation under specific conditions or modifications.

Ensure that annual statistics are reported to the Department of Public Health.

The High School Certified Athletic Trainer:

In collaboration with the school nurses and the athletic director, will participate in the development and biannual review of the policy and procedures.

Initial evaluation and documentation of any on-site head-injuries and potential concussions sustained by a WHS or competing student-athlete.

Removal from play of any high school student-athlete, who during practice or competition, suffers a head injury or suspected concussion or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion.

Review Pre Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for all students so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries, via the online registration portal.

Identify athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice and play and

remove them from play.

Administration of all Sway and ImPACT testing at WHS, including preseason baseline testing, initial and subsequent post-injury testing and post-exertional testing.

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008.

Collaborate with the High School Nurses regarding all matters of documented head injuries and concussions including: injury incidence, history, nature, duration of symptoms, Sway testing, ImPACT testing, physician referral, parental contact, academic accommodations and/or modifications, return to full academics, return to play, documentation.

Collaborate with High School Coaches regarding student-athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions, maintain discussion regarding student-athletes' progress with respect to his/her status in the WHS Concussion Management (Return to Play) protocol, up to and including final authorization of full return to play.

All Coaches:

Complete annual educational training as required by 105 CMR 201.008 (See "Training", below).

Review pre participation Forms so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries.

Teach techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury; discourage and prohibit student-athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of a student; identifying student-athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in play or practice and removing them from play.

Removal from play of any student-athlete, who during practice or competition, suffers a head injury or suspected concussion or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion; coaches complete Report of Head Injury Form for each of these cases.

Communicate promptly with parents of students removed from practice or competition due to a head injury or suspected concussion.

WHS Coaches:

Communicate with the High School Athletic Trainer regarding head injuries and suspected concussions, especially regarding away contests.

TMS Coaches:

Communicate promptly with the parent(s) of any student athlete removed from play due to a suspected concussion;

Communicate with the TMS principal's/nurse's office regarding the removal of play of MS student-athletes with suspected concussions, maintain discussion regarding student-athletes' progress with respect to his/her status, up to and including full return to play.

Exclusion from Play

1. Any student, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day.
2. The student shall not return to practice or competition unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization via the Athletic Trainer at WHS, and the School Nurse at TMS..
3. The coach shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent as soon as possible.
4. The coach shall communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the Athletic Trainer at WHS and the school nurse at TMS that the student has been removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness.
 - a. Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall provide written documentation from their medical provider regarding the course of action regarding return to learn and return to play strategies.
 - b. Return to learn and Return to play strategies should incorporate the most current pedagogical evidence and guidance regarding Sport-Related Concussion at the Secondary School Level. (Patricios et al., 2023).

Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion shall obtain and present to the Athletic Trainer (or School Nurse at TMS) a Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (Medical Clearance and Authorization Form) or equivalent provider's note stating medical clearance prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity. This form must be completed by a physician or another authorized individual. The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate.

1. Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play:
 - a. Physician;
 - b. An athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
 - c. A nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or
 - d. A neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

Use of Balance and Neurocognitive Testing

Sway: The Sway Medical platform is an all-in-one accessible mobile solution that collects rapid objective data for balance testing, cognitive testing and symptom tracking. Sway utilizes smartphone technology where both baseline and follow-up testing can be administered in the field.

ImPACT: ImPACT (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) is a scientifically validated computerized concussion evaluation system that can help to objectively evaluate the concussed athlete's post-injury condition and track recovery for safe return to play.

Participants in all contact/collision sports are administered baseline Sway tests. These include but are not limited to:

- Football
- Boys Soccer
- Girls Soccer
- Volleyball
- Field Hockey
- Boys Ice Hockey
- Girls Ice Hockey
- Boys Basketball
- Girls Basketball
- Boys Lacrosse
- Girls Lacrosse
- Baseball
- Softball

Baseline tests are valid for 2 years. Follow-up Sway testing can be administered on the field immediately post-injury or when appropriate based on the Athletic Trainer's initial evaluation of the student athlete. ImPACT testing will be utilized in cases of definitive, diagnosed concussions to provide more data for the Athletes' safe return to play.

Protocols

Pre-Season Protocols

Submission of WHS/TMS Medical Consent Forms via online registration

Submission of current physical examination form

Submission of Concussion Awareness Forms via online registration

Sway Baseline testing for collision/contact sports (WHS only)

Submission of pre-season concussion screening form via online registration

Concussion Management (Return to Play) Protocol

Training

Annual Concussion Awareness Training: The DPH has approved two online courses to provide annual pre-season concussion awareness training: The Centers for Disease Control's (CDC)

Heads Up Concussion training or the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) *Concussion in Sport: What You Need To Know* training.

The following staff will complete one of the training sessions annually:

- Coaches
- Volunteer coaches
- School nurses
- Athletic Director
- Parents of students participating in extracurricular activities
- Students participating in extracurricular activities

www.cdc.gov/concussion

www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000

Documentation/Appendices

WHS Medical Consent (Pre-Participation) Form

Annual Concussion Awareness Training Form – Students and Parents

Current Physical Examination Form

Annual Concussion Awareness Training Form – Coaches

Initial Injury Evaluation / Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC) Form

Report of head injury form

Pertinent Concussion Information Document, shared by School Nurse and ATC (Example)

DPH Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form

105 CMR 201.000 Head injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities

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