

Students

Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement a program to manage concussions and head injuries suffered by students. The program shall:

1. Fully implement the *Youth Sports Concussion Safety Act (YSCSA)*, that provides without limitation, each of the following:
 - a. The Board must appoint or approve member(s) of a Concussion Oversight Team for the District.
 - b. The Concussion Oversight Team shall establish each of the following based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence consistent with guidelines from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
 - i. A return-to-play protocol governing a student's return to interscholastic athletics practice or competition following a force of impact believed to have caused a concussion. The Superintendent or designee shall supervise an athletic trainer or other person responsible for compliance with the return-to-play protocol.
 - ii. A return-to-learn protocol governing a student's return to the classroom following a force of impact believed to have caused a concussion. The Superintendent or designee shall supervise the person responsible for compliance with the return-to-learn protocol.
 - c. Each student and the student's parents/guardians shall be required to sign a concussion information receipt for each school year before participating in an interscholastic athletic activity.
 - d. A student shall be removed from a physical education class or an interscholastic athletic practice or competition immediately if any of the following individuals believes that the student sustained a concussion during the practice and/or competition: a coach, a physician, a game official, an athletic trainer, the student's parents/guardians, the student, or any other person deemed appropriate under the return-to-play protocol.
 - e. A student who was removed from physical education class or interscholastic athletic practice or competition shall be allowed to return only after all statutory prerequisites are completed, including without limitation, the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols developed by the Concussion Oversight Team. An athletic team coach or assistant coach may not authorize a student's return-to-play or return-to-learn.
 - f. The following individuals must complete concussion training as specified in the *YSCSA*: all coaches or assistant coaches (whether volunteer or a District employee) of interscholastic athletic activities; nurses, licensed healthcare professionals or non-licensed healthcare professionals who serve on the Concussion Oversight Team (whether or not they serve on a volunteer basis); athletic trainers; game officials of interscholastic athletic activities; and physicians who serve on the Concussion Oversight Team.
 - g. The Board shall approve school-specific emergency action plans for interscholastic athletic activities to address the serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which a student's condition may deteriorate rapidly.
2. Comply with the concussion protocols, policies, and by-laws of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA), including its *Protocol for Implementation of NFHS Sports Playing Rules for Concussion which includes its Return to Play (RTP) Policy*. These specifically require that:
 - a. A student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) in a practice or game shall be immediately removed from participation or competition at that time.

- b. A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury may not return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer.
- c. If not cleared to return to that contest, a student athlete may not return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided their school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois, advanced practice registered nurse, physician assistant, or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.
3. Require that all coaching personnel, including the head and assistant coaches, and athletic directors obtain online concussion certification by completing online concussion awareness training in accordance with Illinois law.
4. Require all student athletes to view the IHSA's video about concussions.
5. Inform student athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) about this policy in the *Niles Township High Schools Extra-Curricular Permit Card*, 7:240-E1, or other written instrument that a student athlete and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign before the student is allowed to participate in a practice or interscholastic competition.
6. Provide coaches and student athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) with educational materials from the IHSA regarding the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries, including the risks inherent in continuing to play after a concussion or head injury.
7. Include a requirement for staff members to notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who exhibits symptoms consistent with that of a concussion.
8. Include a requirement for staff members to distribute the Ill. Dept. of Public Health concussion brochure to any student or the parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who may have sustained a concussion, regardless of whether or not the concussion occurred while the student was participating in an interscholastic athletic activity, if available.
9. Include a requirement for certified athletic trainers to complete and submit a monthly report to the IHSA on student-athletes who have sustained a concussion during: (1) a school-sponsored activity overseen by the athletic trainer; or (2) a school-sponsored event of which the Athletic Director is made aware.

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/22-80

105 ILCS 25/1.15, Interscholastic Athletic Organization Act.

20 ILCS 2310/2310-307, Civil Administrative Code of Illinois.

CROSS REF.: 4:170 (Safety), 5:100 (Staff Development Program), 7:240-E1 (Extra-Curricular Permit Card), 7:300 (Extracurricular Athletics)

ADOPTED: August 1, 2023