

Blackstone-Millville Regional School District

Head Injury/Concussion Policy

Purpose

This policy provides for the implementation of MA 105 CMR 201.000, *Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities* which applies to all public middle and high school students who participate in any extracurricular athletic activity. This policy provides the procedures and protocols for Blackstone-Millville Regional School District (BMRSD) in the management and prevention of sports-related head injuries within the district or school.

Policies and procedures must address sports-related head injuries occurring in interscholastic and extracurricular athletic activities but may be applied to all head injuries in students. Review and revision of such policies and procedures shall occur as needed but at least every two years.

Participation Requirements and Training

A. Concussion training is a pre-participation requirement for all students and must be completed prior to practice or competition. This training applies to one school year and must be repeated for every subsequent year. The following persons shall complete one of the head injury safety training programs approved by the Department of Public Health (DPH) as found on DPH's website:

- Coaches or Supervisor of extracurricular athletic activity
- Licensed athletic trainers
- Trainers
- Volunteers
- School and team physicians
- School nurses
- Athletic Directors
- Directors responsible for a school marching band, whether or not employed by a school or school district or serving in such capacity as a volunteer
- Parents/Guardians of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity
- Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity

The student and parent shall submit to the Athletic Director as a pre-requisite to participation, a certification of completion from any DPH approved on-line course, a signed acknowledgement that they have read and understand DPH-approved written materials or an attendance roster from a session using DPH-approved training.

B. Participation Requirements for Students and Parents

Before the start of every sports season, the student and parent shall complete and submit a current Pre-participation Form, signed by both student and parent, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history, any head, face or cervical spine injury; and any history of co-existent concussive injuries. At the required pre-season meeting for every

season, the school shall provide current DPH-approved materials to all students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents in advance of the student's participation. Such materials shall be posted on the district's website and shall at a minimum include a summary of DPH's rules relative to safety including but not limited to recognition of a concussion, second impact syndrome and rules for return to play after a head injury or concussion.

Annually, students participating in MIAA sports are required to provide a physical exam to the school nurse's office consistent.

The school nurse will review pre-participation forms and physical exams prior to athletic participation. Students will not be considered eligible to participate until these forms are submitted. The school nurse shall consult with the school physician as necessary regarding a student's medical history and or eligibility. BMRSD may use a student's history of 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.

C. Documentation of a Head Injury/Concussion

If a student sustains a head injury or concussion during the season, the Report of Head Injury Form must be completed (a) by the coach, band director, or supervisor, if the injury or suspected concussion occurs during a game or practice, or (b) by a parent if the injury occurs during the season but not while participating in an extracurricular athletic activity and submit said form to coach, band director, supervisor or school nurse.

The Athletic Director or Band Director shall ensure that these forms are reviewed and provided to the school nurse.

Exclusion from Play

- A. Any student, who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to the practice or competition that day.
- B. The student shall not return to play unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization.
- C. The coach or band director shall communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent in person or by phone immediately after the game or practice in which a student has been removed from play for a head injury or suspected concussion. The coach or band director must also provide this information to the parent in writing (paper or electronic) by the end of the next business day.
- D. The coach or band director shall communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the Athletic Director that the student has been removed from play for a head injury, suspected concussion or any loss of consciousness.

Return to Academics/Extracurricular Activities

Each student who is removed from play and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

- The plan shall be developed by a multidisciplinary team that may include: the student's teachers, the student's guidance counselor, school nurse, athletic director, parents, members of the building-based student support and assistance team or individualized education program team as appropriate and in consultation with the student's physician.
- The plan shall include but not be limited to:
 - Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate;
 - Graduated return to classroom studies as appropriate, including accommodations or modifications as needed;
 - Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities;
 - Frequent assessments by the school nurse as appropriate; and
 - A plan for communication and coordination between and among school personnel and between the school, parent, and the student's physician.
- The student must be completely symptom free, have returned to full academics and be medically cleared in order to begin graduated reentry to extracurricular athletic activities.
- The student must complete the five (5) step graduated return to play protocol prior to resuming full participation in the extracurricular activity.

Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play

Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, or any loss or consciousness, shall obtain and present to the Athletic Director or school nurse a Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (Medical Clearance and Authorization Form) prior to resuming full participation in the extracurricular athletic activity. This medical clearance should only be provided after a graduated return to play plan has been completed and the student has been symptoms free at all stages. The student must be completely symptom free at rest and during exertion prior to returning to full participation in extracurricular activities. The ultimate decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate.

Only the following individuals, who have received DPH-approved training in post-traumatic head injury assessment and management or have received equivalent training as part of their licensure or continuing education, may authorize a student to return to play:

- 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;
- A duly licensed physician assistant under the supervision of a licensed physician; or
- A duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

If a situation arises such that the student has been cleared to participate and school personnel noted that the student is still experiencing symptoms, that student shall be removed from play. The school has the authority to make the final determination whether a student may safely participate in a given extracurricular athletic activity. Participation is a privilege that may be permitted or withheld by

school personnel based on individual circumstances. If these situations arise, the school personnel will communicate to the health care provider who provided the clearance, the specific symptoms and reason for the concern and that the student is not symptom free.

Responsibilities of the Athletic Director

A. The Athletic Director shall participate in the development and biannual review of the policies and procedures for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district or school.

B. The Athletic Director shall complete the annual training.

C. The Athletic Director, unless school policies and procedures provide otherwise, shall be responsible for:

- Ensuring that the training requirements for staff, parents, volunteers, coaches and students are met, recorded, and records are maintained;
- Ensuring that all students meet the physical examination requirements consistent with 105 CMR 200.000: *Physical Examination of School Children* prior to participation in any extracurricular athletic activity;
- Ensuring that all students participating in extracurricular athletic activities have completed and submitted Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, prior to participation each season;
- Ensuring that student Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, are reviewed);
- Ensuring that Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, are completed by the parent or coach and reviewed by the coach, school nurse, certified athletic trainer and school physician;
- Ensuring that athletes are prohibited 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; and
- Reporting annual statistics to the Department.

Responsibilities of Coaches

A. Coaches shall be responsible for:

- Completing the annual training;
- Reviewing Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;
- Completing a Report of Head Injury Form, or school-based equivalent, upon identification of a student with a head injury or suspected concussion that occurs during practice or competition;
- Receiving, unless otherwise specified in school policies and procedures, and reviewing forms that are completed by a parent which report a head injury during the sports season, but outside of an extracurricular athletic activity, so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;
- Transmitting promptly forms to 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 injury;

- 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; and
- Identifying athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice or competition and removing them from play.

B. Coaches are responsible for communicating promptly with the parent of any student removed from practice or competition and with the Athletic Director and school nurse.

Responsibilities of the School Nurse

The School Nurse shall be responsible for:

A. Participating in the development and biannual review of the policies and procedures for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district or school;

B. Completing the annual training;

C. Reviewing, or arranging for the school physician to review, completed Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, that indicate a history of head injury and following up with parents as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities;

D. Reviewing, or arranging for the school physician to review, Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, and following up with the coach and parent as needed;

E. Maintaining:

- Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents; and
- Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, in the student's health record;

F. 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;

G. Monitoring recuperating students with head injuries and collaborating with teachers to ensure that the graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities is being followed; and

H. Providing ongoing educational materials on head injury and concussion to teachers, staff and students.

Record Maintenance

The school, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for three years or at a minimum until the student graduates.

- Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;

- Pre-participation Forms;
- Report of Head Injury Forms;
- Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms; and
- Graduated re-entry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

The school shall make these records available to DPH and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE), upon request or in connection with any inspection or program review.

Reporting

Starting school year 2011-2012, schools shall be responsible for maintaining and reporting annual statistics on a DPH form or electronic format that at a minimum report:

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

Penalties

BMRSD takes the safety of students seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student athletes/band members. The underlying philosophy of these policies is “when in doubt, sit them out”. Failure to comply with the letter or the spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for the staff and/or forfeiture of games/competitions. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should place their concerns in writing with the Building/School Principal.

LEGAL REFS: M.G.L. 111:222, 105 CMR 201.000, 105 CMR 200.000