

HEAD INJURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Mansfield Public Schools seek to provide a safe return to activity for all athletes after injury, particularly after a head injury/concussion. Head injuries and concussions can have serious consequences for students, including long-term health and educational issues. Proper management of such incidences can help maximize recovery. Care and management of head injuries in the school setting requires collaboration between families, school nurses, coaches, athletic trainer if available, primary care physicians, consulting athletic and school physicians, athletic director, administrators, teachers, and counselors.

The purpose of this policy is to provide information and standardized procedures for Mansfield Public Schools and Mansfield Public Schools staff, families, and students dealing with diagnosed or suspected head injuries. These policy and procedures must address sports-related head injuries occurring in extracurricular athletic activities but will also apply to all head injuries in students, regardless of causation or source.

I. Concussion Overview

Concussion is an injury to the brain caused by direct or indirect physical trauma that can lead to a wide range of symptoms, from mild to severe, that resolve over a wide range of timespans, from days to years. Because concussions can lead to long-term brain disorders or further serious injury if not recognized and treated properly, and because they can affect the normal ability of a student to learn in school, it is important that Mansfield Public School staff members are aware of the general features of concussions and concussion recovery, and that there is a clear policy for concussion education, prevention, and recovery.

Second impact syndrome means a potentially lethal condition that can occur when a person sustains a head injury prior to complete healing of a previous brain injury, causing dysregulation of cerebral blood flow with subsequent vascular engorgement.

For the purposes of this policy, the word “concussion” will refer to any head injury, suspected concussion, diagnosed concussion, or presence of signs or symptoms of a concussion, such as the loss of consciousness (even brief). Scalp or facial laceration alone is not a head injury for purposes of this policy.

II. Training and Education

Early recognition of a head injury/concussion is essential to safe management and to the ultimate goal of a return to normal physical and academic functioning. Concussion training will be required and documented annually for coaches; certified athletic trainers; trainers; volunteers; school and team physicians; school nurses; athletic directors; directors responsible for a school marching band; employees or volunteers; and students who participate in an extracurricular activity and their parents.

III. Penalties

Mansfield Public School takes the safety of student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow the Head Injury Management Policy and Plan to support the health and safety of student athletes. The underlying philosophy of these policies is “when in doubt, sit

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them out.” Suspected concussions that occur during school activities will be reported immediately to families for referral to a provider. Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games, as determined by the Athletic Director and/ or the Superintendent.

If a student or parent have concerns that the policy or plan are being violated, s/he should contact the Superintendent and also place the complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

IV. Record Keeping and Reporting

The Superintendent or his/her designee will maintain complete and accurate records of the District’s compliance with the requirements of the Concussion Law and will maintain the following records for three years or, at a minimum, until the student graduates, unless state or federal law requires a longer retention period:

1. Verifications of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
2. Department of Public Health (DPH) Pre-participation forms and receipt of materials;
3. DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents;
4. DPH Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms, or school-based equivalents; and
5. Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

These records will be made available to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.

The Superintendent or his/her designee will maintain and report annual statistics on a Department of Public Health form or electronic format that at minimum report:

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

V. Administrative Plan and Protocols

The Superintendent or designee will oversee the development of administrative plans and procedures consistent with state law, Department of Public Health regulations, and district policy. These procedures will include measures addressing prevention, training, management, and return-to-activity decision.

This policy and plan will be made available to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and to the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education upon request.

VI. Biannual Review

The Superintendent, Athletic Director, Licensed Athletic Trainer, and Nurse Leader will review this policy and plan on a regular basis and at least every two years, by September 30, with collaboration as needed from the school physician or other appropriate consulting physicians.

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Any changes or modifications will be reviewed by and given to all Athletic Department staff and appropriate school personnel in writing.

The Superintendent or designee will provide the Department of Public Health with an affirmation, on school or school district letterhead, that the District has developed policies in accordance with 105 CMR 201.000 and will provide an updated affirmation biannually by September 30th every odd numbered year upon review or revision of its policies.

VII. Notice

Notice of the District's Head Injury Management Policy and Plan will appear in student/parent and employee handbooks with instruction on how to obtain the full policy and plan, as well as on the Mansfield Public Schools website.

Revised: January 26, 2016
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 September 2013

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 105 CMR 201.000, Head Injuries And Concussions In Extracurricular
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