

## HEAD INJURY MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Mansfield Public Schools seek to provide a safe return to activity for all students 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 applicable, 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. This policy and accompanying plan will address sports-related head injuries but will also apply to all head injuries in students, regardless of causation or source. These procedures will support all students regardless of participation in school-related sports. Students engaged in school-related sports will follow the return to play program outlined in the accompanying plan before returning to participation.

### I. Concussion Overview

*Concussion* means a complex disturbance in brain function, due to direct or indirect trauma to the head, related to neurometabolic dysfunction, rather than structural injury. It can be caused by a blow to the head or body that causes the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. Concussions can also result from a fall or from players colliding with each other or obstacles on the playing field. Contrary to previously thought, an athlete does not have to be knocked unconscious in order to sustain a concussion. A concussion – also known as a traumatic mild brain injury – changes how the cells in the brain normally

*Second impact syndrome* is 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.

*Post-concussion syndrome* is the persistence of concussion symptoms beyond the normal course of recovery. The majority of concussion symptoms will resolve within about two weeks, and with proper recovery almost all dissipate within a month. In cases where symptoms last longer than one or two months, doctors may diagnose Post-Concussion Syndrome

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

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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 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/guardian has concerns that the policy or plan are being violated, they should contact the Superintendent and also place the complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

### **IV. Record Keeping and Reporting**

The Superintendent or their 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. Verification 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 their 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-

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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.

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:                    June 07, 2022 (reviewed – no changes)  
                                 July 16, 2019  
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                                 May 27, 2014  
                                 September 2013

Adopted:                   January 2012

LEGAL REF:              M.G.L. 111:222  
                                 105 CMR 201.000, Head Injuries And Concussions In Extracurricular  
                                 Athletic Activities