Athletics & Driver Education
12465 Warwick Boulevard, Newport News, VA 23606-3401 • phone: 757-591-4601 • fax: 757-591-4683

For all students to participate in any extracurricular physical activity, each student-athlete, and the student- athlete's parent or guardian shall review, on an annual basis, information on concussions provided by the local school division. After having reviewed materials describing the short- and long-term health effects of concussions, each student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt of such information. *For more information on concussions, visit:* **www.cdc.gov/Concussions**

I. Definition of Concussion

A brain injury that is characterized by an onset of impairment of cognitive and /or physical functioning, and is caused by a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that causes a sudden jarring of the head. A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness, and proper management is essential to the immediate safety and long-term future of the injured individual.

II. Signs and Symptoms

Signs observed by parents or guardians

* appears dazed or stunned
* forgets an instruction
* moves clumsily
* loses consciousness (even briefly)
* can't recall events *prior* to hit or fall
* is confused about assignment or position
* is unsure of game, score, or opponent
* answers questions slowly
* shows behavior or personality changes
* can't recall events *after* hit or fall

Symptoms reported by athlete

* headache or "pressure" in head
*balance problems or dizziness
* sensitivity to light
* confusion
* does not "feel right"
* nausea or vomiting
* double or blurry vision
* sensitivity to noise
* feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
* concentration or memory problems

III. Return to Learn

Many of the signs and symptoms associated with a concussion can affect a student's ability to participate in normal academic activities. With different rates of recovery, students may need modifications to their academic setting. Adjustments could include cognitive and physical rest with no school, part-time school, or full day school with minimal instructional modifications and/or accommodations.

IV. Return to Play Progression

If an athlete is suspected of having incurred a concussion during practice or play, this procedure will be followed:

1. Removal from activity
2. Notification of parent/guardian regarding the incident
3. The student-athlete must bring written clearance from his/or licensed health care provider
4. Once the student athlete is asymptomatic they will complete a 5 step return to play progression under the supervision of the school's licensed athletic trainer or nurse

It's better to miss one game than the whole season. For more information on concussions, visit: **www.cdc.gov/Concussions**

Revised July 2023

Concussion Fact Sheet

Short Term Side Effects

- Headache
- Dazed and stunned
- Confused
- Balance problems (moves clumsily)
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Double or blurry vision
- Concentration or memory problems
- Behavior and personality changes
- Nausea or vomiting
- Loss of consciousness

Not all symptoms must be present for the athlete to have sustained a concussion
**If any of these symptoms worsen following the injury, it is advised you seek further medical evaluation

Long Term Side Effects

- Chronic headaches
- Sleep difficulties
- Impaired sensation (touch, taste, smell, etc.)
- Language impairment (communication, expression, and understanding)
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Personality changes
- Aggression

Repeated concussions can lead to long-term memory loss, psychiatric disorders, and other neurologic problems. If you have had a number of concussions, your physician likely will advise you to avoid the activities that may put you at risk for future head injuries and to discontinue contact sports.

A FACT SHEET FOR

High School Parents

CDC HEADS UP
SAFE BRAIN. STRONGER FUTURE.

This sheet has information to help protect your teens from concussion or other serious brain injury.

What Is a Concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. This fast movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, creating chemical changes in the brain and sometimes stretching and damaging the brain cells.

How Can I Help Keep My Teens Safe?

Sports are a great way for teens to stay healthy and can help them do well in school. To help lower your teens' chances of getting a concussion or other serious brain injury, you should:

- Help create a culture of safety for the team.
  - Work with their coach to teach ways to lower the chances of getting a concussion.
  - Emphasize the importance of reporting concussions and taking time to recover from one.
  - Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
  - Tell your teens that you expect them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- When appropriate for the sport or activity, teach your teens that they must wear a helmet to lower the chances of the most serious types of brain or head injury. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. Even with a helmet, it is important for teens to avoid hits to the head.

How Can I Spot a Possible Concussion?

Teens who show or report one or more of the signs and symptoms listed below—or simply say they just "don't feel right" after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body—may have a concussion or other serious brain injury.

Signs Observed by Parents

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Forgets an instruction, is confused about an assignment or position, or is unsure of the game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes
- Can't recall events *prior to* or *after* a hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Teens

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness, or double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light or noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Confusion, or concentration or memory problems
- Just not "feeling right," or "feeling down"

Talk with your teens about concussion. Tell them to report their concussion symptoms to you and their coach right away. Some teens think concussions aren't serious or worry that if they report a concussion they will lose their position on the team or look weak. Remind them that *it's better to miss one game than the whole season.*

CONCUSSIONS AFFECT EACH TEEN DIFFERENTLY.

While most teens with a concussion feel better within a couple of weeks, some will have symptoms for months or longer. Talk with your teens' healthcare provider if their concussion symptoms do not go away or if they get worse after they return to their regular activities.

Plan ahead. What do you want your teen to know about concussion?

What Are Some More Serious Danger Signs to Look Out For?

In rare cases, a dangerous collection of blood (hematoma) may form on the brain after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body and can squeeze the brain against the skull. Call 9-1-1, or take your teen to the emergency department right away if, after a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body, he or she has one or more of these danger signs:

- One pupil larger than the other
- Drowsiness or inability to wake up
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Slurred speech, weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea, convulsions or seizures (shaking or twitching)
- Unusual behavior, increased confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Loss of consciousness (passed out/knocked out). Even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously

What Should I Do If My Teen Has a Possible Concussion?

As a parent, if you think your teen may have a concussion, you should:

1. Remove your teen from play.
2. Keep your teen out of play the day of the injury. Your teen should be seen by a healthcare provider and only return to play with permission from a healthcare provider who is experienced in evaluating for concussion.
3. Ask your teen's healthcare provider for written instructions on helping your teen return to school. You can give the instructions to your teen's school nurse and teacher(s) and return-to-play instructions to the coach and/or athletic trainer.

Do not try to judge the severity of the injury yourself. Only a healthcare provider should assess a teen for a possible concussion. You may not know how serious the concussion is at first, and some symptoms may not show up for hours or days. A teen's return to school and sports should be a gradual process that is carefully managed and monitored by a healthcare provider.

Teens who continue to play while having concussion symptoms or who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—have a greater chance of getting another concussion. A repeat concussion that occurs while the brain is still healing from the first injury can be very serious, and can affect a teen for a lifetime. It can even be fatal.

Revised January 2019