

CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

Concussions are a serious and growing public health concern, especially for students participating in contact sports. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, at least 3 million sports and recreation related concussions occur in the United State each year. The competitive athletic culture of playing through pain or “toughing it out” puts student-athletes at serious risk of brain injury, disability and death.

Allowing the student-athlete to return to play before recovering from a concussion increases the chance of more serious brain injury can result in severe disability and/or death.

The effects of concussion, while not all preventable can be mitigated by proper recognition and appropriate response. Therefore, the River Dell Regional School District shall require that:

- A. There is annual base-line testing for all middle school and high school student-athletes prior to sports participation using ImPACT online testing program.
- B. Student-athletes, coaches, athletic trainers, officials and physicians employed by the school district shall receive annual training relating to concussions.
- C. Annual National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) Learn online Concussion Training for Coaches is required. Coaches must complete online course and submit certificate of completion each year.
- D. Certified Athletic Trainers must biennially renew their licenses by completing 24 credits of continuing athletic trainer education which shall include a specific number of credits on topics relating to concussions and head injuries.
- E. Any student-athlete suspected of sustaining a concussion or exhibiting or complaining of concussion related symptoms or any student-athlete that has sustained a concussion or has become unconscious during a practice or athletic contest be removed from play and not return to play that day.
- F. A medical evaluation be performed by Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) and/or school doctor or other certified and approved medical personnel to determine the presence or absence of a concussion.
- G. If a student-athlete is diagnosed with a concussion there shall be a minimum of a 7 day wait before returning to activity. In addition, the student-athlete must be free of all concussion symptoms for 7 days prior to return to activity.
- H. An ImPACT test be administered once concussion symptoms are no longer present.
- I. The Board of Education approved concussion trained doctors receive and/or conduct Impact testing to help determine whether physical clearance and return to activity are appropriate.

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- J. Upon clearance for return to activity by Board approved concussion trained doctors, the ATC and coach, working in conjunction, shall implement a gradual and acclimated return to activity following Zurich Consensus Statement Guidelines.
- KI. The ATC keep the timeline for return to activity. The return to the first full activity shall be at a practice.
- L. Parents/guardians annually receive and submit the District’s Concussion Policy Acknowledgement Form prior to the student’s participation in any athletic practice or event. The form shall be submitted electronically whenever possible.
- M. The Superintendent shall develop specific regulations for return to play in concert with the ATC and the concussion trained doctors.

The signs and symptoms of concussion also impact student-athletes in their academic pursuits. This can cause deleterious effect on their ability to function in the classroom, learn new material, complete homework and study for tests. The District shall ensure that the appropriate staff are made aware of the condition and accommodate the student athlete’s symptoms as they would with any other illness.

Because activities that require concentration and attention may exacerbate post-concussion symptoms and delay recovery, while symptomatic student-athletes who have sustained concussion should limit activities that require attention and concentration such as driving, homework, video-game playing, or texting.

Use of school grounds by youth sports teams

If the District allows youth sports teams to use its athletic facilities the District shall be immune from liability for injury or death due to the action or inaction of persons employed by or under contract with a youth sports organization if the organization provides the District with the following:

- A. Proof of an insurance policy of an amount of not less than \$50,000 per person, per occurrence insuring the youth sports team organization against liability for any bodily injury suffered by a person;
- B. A statement of compliance with the district’s policies for the management of concussions and other head injuries.
- C. A “youth sports team organization” means one or more sports teams organized pursuant to a nonprofit or similar charter or which are member teams in a league organized by or affiliated with a county or municipal recreation department.

This policy shall be reviewed annually to ensure that it incorporates the most current information and practices.

<u>Legal References:</u>	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-41.1	Findings, declarations relative to head injuries of student athletes.
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-41.2	Interscholastic athletic head injury safety training program
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-41.3	Written policy for school district
	<u>N.J.S.A.</u> 18A:40-41.4	Removal of student athlete from competition, practice; return.

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Legal References: (continued)

N.J.S.A. 45:9-37.48a Continuing education requirement for athletic trainer

Cross References:

- *5141 Health
- *5141.1 Accidents
- *5141.2 Illnesses
- *5141.3 Health examinations and immunizations
- *5141.21 Administering medication
- *6142.4 Physical education and health
- *6145 Extra-curricular activities
- *6145.1/6145.2 Intramural competition; interscholastic competition

Key Words

Concussions, ImPACT Testing, Removal from athletic practice or Games, Return to Athletic Participation

Approved: June 22, 2011
Revised: