

Guidelines for Concussion Management

1. A. Participation in Athletic Activity

To participate in any extracurricular athletic activity, each student-athlete and the parent/guardian shall review, on an annual basis (every 12 months), information on concussions provided by Maggie L. Walker Governor's School. The concussion training materials shall describe the short- and long-term health effects of concussions. After having reviewed materials, the student-athlete and parent/guardian shall sign a statement acknowledging receipt, review, and understanding of such information. The signed statements acknowledging the receipt of concussion training materials will be maintained at the school, shall be valid for one calendar year, and will satisfy the concussion training requirements for all of a student-athlete's extracurricular physical activities for a calendar year.

B. Suspected Head Concussions – Removal from Extracurricular Physical Activities

1. A student-athlete suspected by that student's coach, athletic trainer, or team physician of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in a practice, game, or competition shall be removed from the activity immediately, evaluated, and if necessary, referred for further treatment. A student-athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated, and suspected to have a concussion or brain injury shall not return to play that same day.

2. In determining whether a student-athlete removed from play is suspected of having sustained a concussion, an appropriately licensed healthcare provider or other properly trained individual shall evaluate the student-athlete at the time of removal utilizing a standardized concussion sideline assessment instrument (e.g., Side Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT3), the Standardized Assessment of Concussion (SAC), or the Balance Error Scoring System (BESS)).

3. The determination of whether a student-athlete removed from play is suspected of having sustained a concussion shall be the sole determination of the licensed healthcare provider or other properly trained individual conducting the concussion sideline assessment. Such determination is final and may not be overruled by another licensed health care provider or other properly trained individual, coach, assistant coach, school staff, or other person serving in a coaching or advisory role, the student-athlete, or the parent/guardian of the student-athlete.

4. The coach of a student-athlete may elect not to return the student-athlete to play, even if after the concussion sideline assessment it is determined that the student-athlete is no longer suspected of having sustained a concussion.

C. Return to Play Protocol

“Return to play,” as defined in Virginia Board of Education Guidelines, means to participate in a nonmedically supervised practice or athletic competition.

1. No student-athlete shall be allowed to return to extracurricular physical activities, which includes the student-athlete's practices, games, or competitions, until the student presents a written medical release from the student-athlete's licensed health care provider.

The written medical release shall certify that (i) the provider is aware of the current medical guidance on concussion evaluation and management; (ii) the student-athlete no longer exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion at rest or with exertion; and (iii) that the student-athlete has successfully completed a progressive return to sports participation program. The length of progressive return to sports participation program shall be determined by the student-athlete's licensed health care provider, but shall last a minimum of five calendar days.

The coach of a student-athlete may elect not to allow a student-athlete to return to extracurricular physical activities, even after the production of written medical release from the student-athlete's licensed health care provider, if the coach observes signs and symptoms of sports-related concussions. If the student-athlete's coach makes such a decision, the coach shall communicate the observations and concerns to the student-athlete's parent or guardian within one day of the decision not to allow such student-athlete to return to extracurricular physical activities.

D. Return to Learn Protocol

1. School personnel shall be alert to cognitive and academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury, including (i) difficulty with concentration, organization, and long-term and short-term memory; (ii) sensitivity to bright lights and sounds; and (iii) short-term problems with speech and language, reasoning, planning, and problem-solving.

2. School personnel shall accommodate the gradual return to full participation in academic activities by a student who has suffered a concussion or other head injury as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student's licensed health care provider as to the appropriate amount of time that such student needs to be away from the classroom.

E. Required Concussion Training for School Personnel and Volunteers

Every coach, assistant coach, school staff, adult volunteer, or other person serving in a coaching or advisory role over student-athletes during games, competitions, or practices shall receive annual training in how to recognize the signs and symptoms of concussions, strategies to reduce the risk of concussions, how to seek proper medical treatment for a person suspected of having a concussion, and the process by which a concussed student-athlete may safely return to practice, training, or competition. Each school shall maintain a written record of the names and dates of completion for all persons completing the school's concussion training.

Each school shall ensure that no person is allowed to coach or advise a student-athlete in any practice, game, or competition who has not completed the school's concussion training within the previous twelve months. Annual training on concussion management shall use the National Federation of High School Associations' online course, "Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know."

2. Concussion Management Team

A concussion policy team that includes a school administrator, athletic administrator, appropriate licensed health care provider, coach, parent, and student shall review concussion management policies and regulations annually.

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