

HEAD INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT POLICY

Children and adolescents have the greatest risk for head injury and concussion. The potential for this type of injury is high during activities where collisions can occur such as during physical education class, recess or extracurricular activities including but not limited to, interscholastic sports.

Concussions and head injuries have a more serious effect on a young developing brain and need to be addressed correctly.

Based on the above statement and in accordance with [105 CMR 201.000](#), this policy serves to establish the Wellesley Public School's expectations to standardize the guidelines for training, prevention, management and return to school and activities for students who incur a head injury.

A team of school staff representing nursing, athletics, the licensed athletic trainer, school administration and guidance developed this policy and protocol for a comprehensive school based approach.

The care and management of head injuries in the school setting requires collaboration between families, medical providers, and school nursing, athletic and guidance staff.

A current physical examination is collected and reviewed by a school nurse for every student participating in athletic activities before the first try-out or practice.

Concussion training is required and documented annually for athletic staff and volunteers, sponsors of club type sports like cheerleading, school nurses, teaching staff, students participating in school athletic activities and their parents/guardians.

Suspected concussions that occur during school or school activities are reported immediately to the parent/guardian for referral to a medical provider. Head injuries occurring outside of the school day or school athletic activities are reported by the family to the school for follow up and monitoring of the student while in school.

Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, licensed athletic trainers, and neuropsychologists providing medical clearance for return to play shall verify that they have received Department-approved training in post-traumatic head injury assessment and management or have received equivalent training as part of their licensure or continuing education under the guidelines set forth in [105 CMR 201.000](#).

If needed, a graduated reentry plan meeting will be scheduled for a student with a concussion. The purpose of this meeting will be to discuss any accommodations or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities.

The Director of Student Services in conjunction with the school principals will be responsible for the overall implementation of this policy.

This policy will be reviewed at least every two years and revised if indicated.

LEGAL REFS.: [105 CMR 201.000](#) (Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular
 Athletic Activities)
 M.G.L. [111:222](#)

HEAD INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL - ATHLETICS

In order to effectively and consistently manage sports related head injuries, the Wellesley Public School District has established the following protocol in order to prevent, train, manage and make appropriate return to activity decisions for all students participating in extracurricular athletic activities.

Responsibilities

Athletic Director

- Completes annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports related head injury and the associated risks including second impact syndrome.
- Participates in the review of head injury policies and procedures every two years.
- Is responsible for ensuring that the training requirements for staff, parents, volunteers, coaches and students are met, recorded and records maintained.
- Verifies that all student athletes have a current physical examination on file prior to participating in extracurricular athletics.
- Collects and reviews the athletic registration forms along with the licensed athletic trainer to identify athletes at greater risk for head injury and shares information with the school nurse when indicated.
- Verifies that the *Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Forms* are used.
- Reinforces that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous technique that endangers the health and safety of an athlete.
- In conjunction with the licensed athletic trainer, annually prepares a report to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) indicating the number of head injury forms collected and the number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions during organized athletics for the school year.

Licensed Athletic Trainer

- Completes annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports related head injury and the associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
- Submits verification of annual training to the Athletic Director.
- Reviews the athletic registration forms along with the Athletic director to identify athletes at greater risk for head injury and shares information with the school nurse when indicated.
- Offers neurocognitive testing for WPS athletes and cheerleaders. This provides baseline data that can be used in post-injury assessment.
- Reviews *Report of Head Injury Form* for head injuries that occur during practice or competition and submits to the school nurse at the appropriate school.
- Removes the student athlete from play with head injuries.
- Coordinates/participates in a graduated reentry plan for the student athlete diagnosed with a concussion.

School Nurse

- Completes annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports related head injury and the associated health risks including second impact syndrome.
- Submits annual training to the Department Head for Nursing Services by the second week of the school year.
- Participates in the review of policies and procedures for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district every two years.
- Consults with the licensed athletic trainer, and provides follow up with parents as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities.
- Reviews the *Report of Head Injury Forms* and provides follow up as needed.
- Is responsible in conjunction with athletics for maintaining *Report of Head Injury Forms*.
- Participates in the graduated reentry planning for students diagnosed with a concussion to discuss any necessary accommodations or modifications.
- Monitors recuperating students with head injuries and collaborates with teachers and counselors to ensure that the graduated reentry plan, if needed, for return to full academic and extracurricular activities is being followed.
- Provides ongoing educational materials on head injury and concussion to teachers, staff and students.

Coaches

- Completes annual training in the prevention and recognition of sports related head injury and the associated risks including second impact syndrome.
- Submits verification of completion of required annual training to the Athletic Director.
- Reviews in conjunction with the licensed athletic trainer, the registration form in order to identify athletes at greater risk for head injury.
- Is responsible for taking the emergency contact/information forms for their athletes to every game and practice.
- Encourages techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury.
- Discourages athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique.
- Completes the *Report of Head Injury Form* for head injuries that occur during practice or competition and submits them to the licensed athletic trainer - forms are part of the Head Injury Packet prepared by the licensed athletic trainer.
- Removes student athletes from play with head injuries that occur during practice or competition.
- Communicates directly with parents of any student removed from play if not done so by the licensed athletic trainer.
- Communicates with the licensed athletic trainer about any student removed from play. The licensed athletic trainer will notify the school nurse.

Parents

- Annually and for each extracurricular athletic activity, submits a signed registration form that indicates completion of training regarding head injuries and concussions as well as a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history, any head, face or cervical spine injury history and any history of co-existent concussive injuries.

- Submits a *Head Injury Report Form* for any head injury or concussion that occurs during the season outside of extracurricular activity.
- Participates in the gradual reentry academic plan for their child if he/she is diagnosed with a concussion.
- Submits a medical clearance form to the school nurse and athletic department before return to play can resume.

Student Athlete

- Completes the mandated head injury education program.
- It is recommended that all Middle and High School athletes complete the ImPACT testing done by the licensed athletic trainer for baseline evaluations.
- Submits a current physical examination according to the MIAA thirteen-month rule.

Training Program

Annual training is required in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome. The following individuals are required to complete the annual education:

- Coaches
- Licensed Athletic Trainer
- School Nurses
- Athletic Director
- Volunteers in the athletic program
- Club sponsors
- Parents of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity
- Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity

This training will utilize approved programs through the Massachusetts Department of Public Health. Documentation of the annual training will remain on file for at least three years. The training program applies to one school year and must be repeated for every subsequent year.

Documentation of Physical Examination

All student athletes must have a physical examination on a yearly basis. It is the policy of the Wellesley Public Schools that there is documentation of a current physical examination according to the MIAA thirteen-month rule.

It is the student's responsibility to provide documentation of a current physical examination. The copy of the physical examination will be reviewed by the school nurse and will be maintained in the student's health record.

Any student athlete who does not have a current physical on file prior to the first day of try-outs/practice is not eligible to play/practice until a new/updated physical is submitted and reviewed by a school nurse.

WPS Athletic Registration Form

Parents and student athletes are required to provide an accurate history of head injury to the

school prior to the start of each athletic season.

The form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian before the start of the sport.

The form will be turned into the Athletic Office and reviewed by the athletic director/ licensed athletic trainer. Information will be shared with the school nurses as needed.

The school nurse will address any questions raised by the licensed athletic trainer and follow up with parents as needed.

NO STUDENT will be allowed to begin practice or play without review of the registration form.

Exclusion From Play

Any student who during practice or competition sustains a head injury, suspected concussion, exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion, loses consciousness even briefly is to be REMOVED from play immediately and MAY NOT return to practice or competition that day.

The student may not return to practice or competition UNLESS and UNTIL the student provides medical clearance.

The coach shall communicate by the end of the next business day with the Athletic Trainer that the student has been removed from practice or competition for a head injury.

Each student who is removed from practice or competition and is subsequently diagnosed with a head injury/concussion will have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

The student MUST be medically cleared in order to begin a graduated reentry program.

Medical Clearance for Return to Play

Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, loses consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, will obtain and present to the Athletic Trainer a *Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form* or other medical documentation prior to resuming athletic activity.

The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach including consultation with parents, the athletic trainer, the school nurse and the guidance department as appropriate.

Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play:

- A duly licensed physician
- A duly licensed athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician
- A duly licensed nurse practitioner or physician assistant in consultation with a licensed physician
- A duly licensed neuropsychologist with the physician managing the student's recovery.

- Physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, licensed athletic trainers and neuropsychologists providing medical clearance for return to play shall verify that they have received Department-approved training in post-traumatic head injury assessment and management or have received equivalent training as part of their licensure or continuing education.

Record Maintenance

The district will maintain the following records for three years or at a minimum until the student graduates:

1. Verification of completion of annual training and receipt of materials
2. Department Pre-Participation Forms
3. Department Report of Head Injury
4. Department Medical Clearance and Authorization Forms
5. Graduated reentry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular activities

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

Reporting

The Wellesley Public School District will submit annual statistics that report:

1. The number Report of Head Injury Forms received by the school; and
2. The total number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in any school sponsored extracurricular athletic activity

The athletic department will compile this report.

HEAD INJURY PREVENTION AND MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL - NURSING

The care and management of head injuries in the school setting requires collaboration between families, school nurses, guidance counselors, school administration and physicians. The key components for a successful reentry plan after a concussive event are management, communication, education and academic accommodations.

Head Injury Guidelines

Head injury at school with no presenting symptoms:

- The school nurse will provide a detailed physical assessment and immediate care of the head injury and monitor the student in the Health Office as needed.
- Student will be reassessed before returning to the classroom.
- The teacher will be provided with information regarding the student's injury if needed.
- Parent/guardian will be notified by telephone call or in writing of head injury and assessment results by the school nurse.
- The school nurse will complete an accident report if appropriate.
- The school nurse will make the decision if the student should participate in physical education or recess if scheduled for that day.

Head injury at school with presenting symptoms:

- Any student who sustains a head injury during the school day with loss of consciousness must be transported to the hospital for evaluation and the parent contacted immediately.
- Students who present with symptoms or deviations from a normal neurological assessment should be dismissed from school accompanied by a parent or responsible adult. No student should be allowed to drive themselves home after sustaining a head injury.
- Follow up assessment should be completed by a physician or emergency room.
- Students should follow the direction of their health care provider about when to return to school, physical activity including physical education and athletics.

Head injury outside of school hours:

- Parents will provide information to the school nurse about their child's injury. Medical documentation should include when the student may return to school and any restrictions that need to be implemented while at school.

Management

1. The school nurse will serve as an advocate for the student during the school day.
2. Provide a quiet environment for brief rest periods as directed by the student's physician.
3. Recognize the signs and symptoms and "red flags" indicating a change in the student's condition during the school day.
4. Participate in interdisciplinary planning for management of student concussions.
5. Maintain documentation of head injury in the student's health record.

Communication

1. At the Middle School and High School, the nurse will notify the guidance department, athletics and health and fitness teachers.
2. At the elementary schools, the nurse will notify the student's teacher (who will then notify specialists, recess monitors, etc.).
3. The nurse will maintain communication with the student's parents and physician until resolution of concussive symptoms and full reentry in school, academics and athletics is achieved.

Education

1. The nurse and/or athletic trainer will provide parent education about home care and the need for medical consultation and follow-up evaluation for a student with a concussion.
2. The principals of each school will ensure that one educational session per year will be provided for teaching staff regarding the signs and symptoms of concussion, expectations when a student returns to school after a concussion, possible behavioral issues, academic accommodations, etc.

Academic Accommodations

Rest is necessary for the brain to heal. The goal for academic accommodations is to create an environment where the student's academics, homework and extracurricular activities do not cause an increase in symptoms.

1. Academic accommodations are provided only when ordered by the student's prescribing physician or neuropsychologist.
2. The nurse will notify the guidance department at the Middle School and High School once the request is received from the student's prescribing physician. At the elementary schools, the nurse notifies the 504 Coordinator or Special Education Department Head and the school principal.
3. The school nurse is responsible for frequent follow-up with the student's parents and/or prescribing physician.
4. Academic accommodations are only provided during the time frame that the physician indicates.
5. If a student's symptoms exceed the indicated time frame by the physician's initial assessment, a temporary 504 Plan or an amendment to an existing IEP should be considered.