

Needham Public Schools

Concussion Policies and Procedures

A concussion is a form of Mild Traumatic Brain Injury that results from a direct blow (i.e. head coming in contact with another object) or indirect blow (i.e. blow to another part of the body). Concussions can be life-threatening if not treated correctly or too aggressively.

It is important that coaches are able to recognize common signs and symptoms of concussion:

Signs (what you see)

*Inappropriate emotions

*Loss of orientation

*Poor balance/coordination

*Vomiting

*Irritability

*Memory problems

*Poor concentration

*Easily distracted

*Loss of consciousness

*Personality change

*Vacant star/glassy eyed

Symptoms (what they tell you)

*Blurred Vision

*More sleep than usual

*Feel “slowed down”

*Nervousness

*Seeing stars

*Sleep disturbance

*Dizziness

*Fatigue

*Headache

*Ringing in the ears

*Sensitivity to light

*Drowsiness

*Feel “in a fog” or “swimmy”

*Nausea

*Sadness

*Sensitivity to noise

State Requirements

Chapter 111: Section 222: “...(c) If a student suffers a concussion as diagnosed by a medical professional, or is suspected to have suffered a concussion while participating in an...athletic activity, the student shall not return to the practice or competition during which the student suffered, or is suspected to have suffered, a concussion and shall not participate in any... athletic activity until the student provides written authorization for such participation, from a licensed physician, licensed neuropsychologist, certified athletic trainer or other appropriately trained or licensed health care professional as determined by the department of public health, to the school’s athletic director.”

Bottom Line

- When in doubt, pull them out: You know your athletes, if you suspect he/she sustained a head injury, call the ATC or inform their parents (if ATC is unavailable).
- If for some reason no one is available, call Needham Dispatch and send to ER.

Return to Play Procedure

We are adopting a more dynamic return to play policy adapted from recommendations from the Division of Sports Medicine at Children’s Hospital. It is based on stages and will be monitored by ATC, NHS nurses and parents, as well as coaches (WE ARE A TEAM). An athlete must experience no signs/symptoms for 24 hours in order to progress to the next stage, should (s)he experience symptoms, (s)he will return to previous stage.

Stage 1: No activity (aprox. 2-4 days)

Stage 2: Light activity (walking, light biking, light elliptical).

Stage 3: Moderate activity (running, bike, elliptical, swimming, light sports specific work: shooting baskets, throwing, etc...).

Stage 4: Non-contact training with some light strength training if available.

Stage 5: Return to full contact practice: must be cleared medically.

Stage 6: Full return to play. Final clearance from ATC required.