

## **Pine Point School Head Injury/Concussion Policy**

A “concussion” is a complex disturbance in brain function, due to direct or indirect trauma to the head, related to neurometabolic dysfunction, rather than structural injury. A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness, and proper management is essential to the safety and long-term future of the injured individual. A “head injury” is a direct blow to the head or indirect trauma to the head including a concussion or traumatic brain injury.

Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly.

As such, the guidelines outlined below should be followed to ensure that students are identified, treated, and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up care during the school day, and are recovered prior to returning to full activity. For questions or concerns at any time, please contact the Athletics Office.

### Concussion Awareness

Concussions and other brain injuries can be serious and potentially life threatening. If managed properly, most athletes can enjoy participation in sports long after a concussion. Research indicates that these injuries can also have serious consequences later in life if not managed properly. The School has developed procedures to help ensure the safety and well-being of student athletes.

A concussion occurs when there is a direct or indirect injury to the brain. As a result, transient impairment of mental functions such as memory, balance/equilibrium, and vision may occur. It is important to recognize that many sport-related concussions do not result in loss of consciousness and, therefore, all suspected head injuries should be taken seriously. Coaches, parents and fellow teammates can be helpful in identifying those who may potentially have a concussion, because a concussed athlete may not be aware of his or her condition or may be trying to hide the injury to stay in the game or practice.

The School requires parents to sign the Student and Parent Concussion Informed Consent form prior to their child’s participation in practices or games.

### Signs and Symptoms

An athlete may report one or more of the following symptoms: Headache or “pressure” in head; double or fuzzy vision; dizziness; tinnitus (ringing in the ears); nausea; just doesn’t “feel right;” sensitivity to light and/or noise; feeling sluggish, foggy, or groggy; concentration/memory problems; and/or confusion.

One or more of the following symptoms may be observed in the athlete: Loss of consciousness; appears dazed or stunned; moves clumsily; unsure of score, opponent, date, etc.; cannot recall events prior to incident; cannot recall events after incident; answers questions slowly; confused about what to do—assignments, position, etc.; forgets an instruction; shows mood, behavior, or personality changes.

The School recommends that an athlete should receive prompt medical attention for the following dangerous symptoms of a concussion. These include any of the following:

- Loss of Consciousness
- Vomiting
- Confusion
- Convulsions or seizures
- One pupil is larger than the other
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Extreme drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- Any weakness or numbness
- Headache worsens or does not go away after 24 hours

When a student-athlete shows any signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion, the athlete is expected to be promptly removed from practice or competition and evaluated by the athletic trainer and/or the student's healthcare provider. It is recommended the student be evaluated by a health care specialist with experience in the evaluation and management of concussion.

- A student-athlete diagnosed with a concussion is expected to be withheld from the competition or practice and not return to activity for the remainder of that day.
- Parents/Guardian should be notified at once.
- The student-athlete should be monitored for signs of deterioration.
- The student-athlete should be evaluated by a concussion specialist or if at school, by the School athletic trainer.

Return to play will typically follow a medically supervised stepwise process which should be initiated by the concussion specialist in communication with the athletic training staff.

#### Management Procedures

If an athlete sustains a sports-related head injury, including a suspected concussion, the athletic trainer or school nurse must be notified immediately so that concussion assessment can be administered. If an athlete sustains a concussion, the athletic trainer, school nurse, or coach are expected to notify parents and appropriate school staff and follow the protocol established for concussion management.

At away events, when there is no qualified medical professional/licensed athletic trainer available, the coaching staff will typically abide by, "When in doubt, sit them out," as recommended by the Centers for Disease Control.

If any danger signs are exhibited as described above, the School will strive to contact a parent/guardian and will accompany the student-athlete to an Emergency Room by Emergency Medical Service.

#### Post-Concussion – Return To Play

The athlete must meet all of the following criteria in order to progress to activity:

- Symptom-free at rest and with exertion (including mental exertion in school).
- Have written clearance from the appropriate health care provider.
- Once the above criteria are met, the athlete will be progressed back to full activity following a stepwise process that includes:

- Light aerobic exercise (stationary bike, swimming, etc. at <70% PMHR (predicted maximum heart rate)).
- Sport-specific training (running, throwing, catching, body weight exercises).
- Non-contact training drills; weightlifting (full non-contact practice).
- Full-contact practice (controlled contact drills).
- Game play (no activity restrictions).

#### Concussion Prevention Measures

- Make sure that helmets are fitted properly.
- Make sure that athletes are wearing properly fitted mouth guards during all practices and games.
- Practice correct hitting, tackling and soccer heading techniques.
- An athlete should not return to athletic activity if he/she has any symptoms at rest and/or with exertion.

#### Second-Impact Syndrome

Second-Impact Syndrome (SIS) results from an acute brain swelling that occurs when a second concussion is sustained before complete recovery from a previous concussion. Athletes who have mild symptoms or symptoms that have cleared are still at risk for developing brain swelling after a second impact to the head. It is important to note that virtually all of the second-impact syndrome cases that have been reported have occurred in adolescent athletes.