

**HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS**

The Hamilton-Wenham Regional School District seeks to prevent concussions and provide a safe return to activity for all students after an injury, particularly a head injury. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, the HWRSD will abide by the following procedures, developed to comply with the Massachusetts General Law Ch. 111, §222 and 105 CMR 201.000 regarding students who incur head injuries while involved in extracurricular athletic activities, including but not limited to interscholastic sports. The law mandates that all MIAA schools develop regulations to implement the policies specified in the law including: 1. educating coaches, athletes and their parents about concussions, 2. the documentation of student athlete's past head injuries, and 3. requirements for taking a student athlete out of play or practice, and certification for "return to play." These procedures are designed to ensure that concussed athletes are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive follow-up care and necessary academic assistance, and are fully recovered prior to returning to athletic activity. The procedures herein will be administered by the High School Athletic Director and the High School Nurse under the direction of the High School Principal.

**The Hamilton Wenham Regional High School plan for compliance with MGL Ch. 111, §222 and 105 CMR 201.000**

**I. EDUCATING: (201.007)**

- a. Prior to each athletic season, the athletic department will issue a parent communication, and post information on-line regarding the date of the Mandatory Pre-Season Athletic Meeting. Handouts will be available and discussion will take place in the general assembly to detail information about Concussion Education available at [www.cdc.gov/concussions/signssymptoms.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussions/signssymptoms.html) or <http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>
- b. The athletic department will be responsible for communicating with parents with limited English proficiency.
- c. At the mandatory meeting, prior to each season, the athletic director will verbally remind all parents and students to go online to educate themselves on concussions.
- d. As provided within the online parent consent form to participate in athletics, each parent and student will sign off that they have been made aware of how to obtain the online concussion information and have reviewed the information.
- e. The athletic department requires our coaches and trainers to take the National Federation of High Schools' online course yearly and submit certificate of completion.
- f. Documentation of updated physical examination must be submitted prior to participation. An up-to-date physical will be defined as the student having a physical within thirteen months of any given point during the season. An out of date physical will render the student-athlete ineligible to participate in practices or games.

**II. COLLECTING HISTORY: (201.006)**

- a. The online registration will include a mandatory section that stipulates any student athlete with a previous head injury file that information with the athletic trainer prior to the start of the season. When a student-athlete's registration information states there have been two or more concussions in their past, extra medical clearance related to specifically to head injuries will be required.
- b. The online registration will include a mandatory section that stipulates that parents are required to provide any information on previous head injuries.
- c. A trainer will review a report of all online submissions for previous head injuries for doctor's clearance.
- d. The Athletic Director (through Family ID) will compile the list of noted previous head injuries and provide to each coach and the Head Trainer.
- e. The Athletic Director will be responsible to contact parents who do not complete medical forms prior to the student athlete's participation.

### III. HEAD INJURY DURING PARTICIPATION: (201.006)

- a. The HWRHS coaches, trainer and high school nurse will be educated to understand the following policy for game/practice situations: If a student has suffered, or is suspected of having suffered, a concussion during a game or practice, the student **MUST** be removed from play. The law is clear that a student who may have signs or symptoms of a concussion may not return to the same game or practice. It also requires that student-athletes be certified for return to play by a physician. Documentation for return to play must be given to the nurse as well as to the athletic director and trainer.
- b. The coach will communicate the nature of the injury directly to the parent in person or by phone immediately after the practice or competition in which a student has been removed from play for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion or loss of consciousness. The coach must also provide this information in to the parent, whether by paper or electronic format, by the end of the next business day.
- c. The coach or his or her designee will communicate, by the end of the next business day, with the athletic director and school nurse that the students has been removed from practice or competition for a head injury, suspected concussion, signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loss of consciousness.
- d. The nurse will notify the guidance department and the administration, and the guidance counselor will contact the teachers of the student-athlete. The guidance counselor will be the point person to communicate between parents and teachers. Guidance will also provide assistance, if necessary, to families with limited English proficiency.
  - i. When a student is suspected of having sustained a concussion, the trainer will fill out the Department of Public Health "Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form" and provide this form to the Athletic Director and Nurse.
  - ii. When the school trainer is not present at the game or practice, the team's Head Coach will fill out the Department of Public Health "Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form" and provide this form to the Athletic Director and Nurse.
- e. At the time of a head injury, the trainer will record the incident on the appropriate state form.
- f. At the end of the year, the athletic director will utilize the compiled information to submit all information collected to the state as required by law.

### IV. PROTOCOL FOR RETURN TO PLAY: (201.010 (E) (1) )

- a. Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion will have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular activities. The written plan shall include instructions for students, parents and school personnel as provided in 105 CMR 201.010.

- b. A doctor must provide medical clearance for full return to academics and return to play.
  - c. Gradual re-entry to academics: The school nurse, guidance counselor and administrators will determine if assistance is required and begin the process of implementing any necessary accommodations for a return to academics.
  - d. Once a student-athlete receives a doctor's clearance for full return to academics and return to play:
    - i. The nurse will forward the Medical Clearance and Authorization Form to the guidance counselor to distribute to teachers for appropriate academic participation
    - ii. The student-athlete must then complete no less than a five-day graduated return to play program as directed by the athletic trainer. If he/she shows no recurrence of symptoms, the athlete may return to athletic participation.
- c. Anytime a student-athlete shows signs or symptoms during the graduated return to play program, the student must stop the program immediately and remain inactive for twenty-four hours. The graduated re-entry process would then begin again at day one. If signs or symptoms appear again, the student must stop immediately and see a doctor for additional written clearance to be able to resume the return to play program.
- d. This plan is an **individualized plan** and alterations may be made as deemed necessary per the athletic trainer in conjunction with the overseeing physician.

#### Record Maintenance:

The school, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for 3 years or at a minimum until the student graduates:

- Signature verifying completion of annual training (On-Line Reporting through Family ID)
- Department pre-participation head injury/concussion reporting forms (On-Line Reporting through Family ID)
- Department report of head injury during sports season forms
- Department post-sports related head injury medical clearance and authorization forms
- Graduated re-entry plans for return to full academic and extra curricular activities

This information can also be found in the athletic handbook which can be found on the athletic tab of the Hamilton-Wenham Regional High School website, [www.hwschools.net](http://www.hwschools.net).

Penalties, including but not limited to, personal sanctions and forfeitures of games, may be incurred for failing to comply with the school district's policy on head injuries.

Review and revision of the protocol established for head injuries and concussions will be completed every two years by the following committee; athletic director, school nurse, athletic trainer, director of guidance and the high school associate principal. This group will advise the Superintendent of any necessary changes to this policy. The next review date is **November 2, 2018** or as required by state law.