

Students

Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries 1

The Superintendent or designee shall develop and implement a program to manage concussions and head injuries suffered by student athletes. ² The program shall:

1. Comply with the concussion protocols, policies, and by-laws of the Illinois High School Association, including its *Protocol for NFHS Concussion Playing Rules* and its *Return to Play Policy*. ³ These specifically require that:
 - a. A student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion in a practice or game shall be removed from participation or competition at that time.
 - b. A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury may not return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer.
 - c. If not cleared to return to that contest, a student athlete may not return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided his or her school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.
2. Inform student athletes and their parents/guardians about this policy in the *Agreement to Participate* or other written instrument that a student athlete and his or her parent/guardian must sign before the student is allowed to participate in a practice or interscholastic competition. ⁴

¹ Each school board must adopt a policy regarding student athlete concussions and head injuries that is in compliance with the protocols, policies, and by-laws of the Illinois High School Association (IHSA) (105 ILCS 5/10-20.53, added by P.A. 97-204). This requirement applies to elementary school districts even if they have no student athletes.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention explains that a concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that alters the way the brain normally functions. See www.cdc.gov/concussion/. The CDC website contains excellent resources for the recognition, response, and prevention of concussions, including the opportunity to order or download free educational materials on concussions that can be distributed to parents, students, and coaches.

² The IHSA's by-laws define a *student-athlete* as "[a] student who has participated in one or more practices and/or athletic contests in any sport offered by or under the auspices of a high school." See

www.ihsa.org/AbouttheIHSA/ConstitutionBylawsPolicies.aspx.

A school board for a high school or unit district may want to add the definition as follows: "A *student athlete* is a student who has participated in one or more practices and/or athletic contests in any sport offered by or under the auspices of a high school."

A sample program is provided in 7:305-AP, *Administrative Procedure - Program for Managing Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries*.

³ The *Protocol for NFHS Concussion Playing Rules* contains concussion information and provides instructions when a student athlete sustains an apparent concussion. The *Return to Play Policy* addresses the requirements for returning a student athlete to play after he or she exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors of a concussion. Available at:

www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/SchoolResources.aspx.

⁴ School districts must include information about concussions in the student athlete agreement, contract, code, or written instrument that a student athlete and his or her parent/guardian are required to sign before participating in a practice or interscholastic competition. IHSA drafted a sample *Concussion Information Sheet*, also known as *Sign off (DOC)*. It has been incorporated into 7:300-E1, *Agreement to Participate*. It can be used to inform student athletes and parents, and it is available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/ParentGuardianResources.aspx.

3. Provide coaches and student athletes and their parents/guardians with educational materials from the Illinois High School Association regarding the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries, including the risks inherent in continuing to play after a concussion or head injury. ⁵
4. Include a requirement for staff members to notify the parent/guardian of a student who exhibits symptoms consistent with that of a concussion. ⁶

LEGAL REF.: 105 ILCS 5/10-20.53.

CROSS REF.: 4:170 (Safety), 7:300 (Extracurricular Athletics)

Policy Reviewed: December, 2011 Policy Adopted: January, 2012

⁵ IHSA has produced educational materials on concussions for coaches, parents/guardians, student athletes, and the school and health care providers on concussions that are available at:
www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement.aspx.

⁶ This provision is optional.

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Administrative Procedure - Program for Managing Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries

Definitions

Concussion - A type of traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that alters the way the brain normally functions. A concussion can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. These injuries may or may not cause a loss of consciousness. See *Concussion in Sports*, www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html. This site contains excellent resources for the recognition, response, and prevention of concussions. The Illinois High School Association (IHSA) website contains comprehensive resources that State law requires schools use to educate coaches, student athletes, and parents/guardians. These are available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/SchoolResources.aspx.

Student athlete - A student who has participated in one or more practices and/or interscholastic athletic contests in any sport offered by or under the auspices of a high school. This definition is from the IHSA’s by-laws, www.ihsa.org/AbouttheIHSA/ConstitutionBylawsPolicies.aspx. All Illinois school boards, even those that currently have no *student athletes*, are required to adopt a student athlete concussion and head injury policy that is in compliance with IHSA protocols, policies, and by-laws (105 ILCS 5/10-20.53, added by P.A. 97-204). This administrative procedure implements Board policy 7:305, *Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries*.

Actor	Action
Superintendent or designee	<p>Identify the staff members who are responsible for student athletes, including Building Principals, and require that they comply with IHSA concussion protocols, policies, and by-laws, including its <i>Protocol for NFHS Concussion Playing Rules</i>, and its <i>Return to Play Policy</i>. Available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/SchoolResources.aspx.</p> <p>Hold the identified staff members responsible for implementing this procedure.</p>
Building Principals	<p>Instruct coaches, trainers, and other staff members who are responsible for student athletes to review and abide by the IHSA protocols, policies, and by-laws regarding concussions and head injuries. Available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement.aspx.</p> <p>Require that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (e.g., loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) in a practice or game is removed from participation or competition at that time. 2. A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury is not allowed to return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer. 3. If not cleared to return to that contest, a student athlete is not allowed to return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided his or her school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice

Actor	Action
	<p>medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.</p> <p>Place all written information concerning an injury to a student athlete, including without limitation, a return-to-play clearance from a student's physician or an athletic trainer, in the student's school student record.</p>
<p>Building Principals, Coaches, and Trainers (and other staff members who are responsible for student athletes)</p>	<p>Inform student athletes and their parents/guardians about Board policy 7:305, <i>Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries</i> by referring to it in exhibit 7:300-E1, <i>Agreement to Participate</i>, or other agreement, contract, code, or written instrument that a student athlete and his or her parent/guardian are required to sign before the student is allowed to participate in a practice or interscholastic competition.</p> <p>Inform student athletes and their parents/guardians about concussions and head injuries by:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Giving them a copy of the IHSA's <i>Concussion Information Sheet</i> at the time they sign exhibit 7:300-E1, <i>Agreement to Participate</i>, or other agreement, contract, code, or written instrument that a student athlete and his or her parent/guardian are required to sign before the student is allowed to participate in a practice or interscholastic competition. The <i>Concussion Information Sheet</i>, also known as <i>Sign off (DOC)</i>, is at www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/ParentGuardianResources.aspx. 2. Use educational material provided by IHSA to educate student athletes and parents/guardians about the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries, including the risks inherent in continuing to play after a concussion or head injury. See www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement.aspx. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention offers free printed educational materials on concussions that can be ordered or downloaded and distributed to parents, students, and coaches. Available at: www.cdc.gov/concussion/. <p>Follow the IHSA concussion management guidelines. Available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement.aspx. These guidelines, in summary, require that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (e.g., loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) in a practice or game shall be removed from participation or competition at that time. 2. A student athlete who has been removed from an interscholastic contest for a possible concussion or head injury may not return to that contest unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer. 3. If not cleared to return to that contest, a student athlete may not return to play or practice until the student athlete has provided his or her school with written clearance from a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois or a certified athletic trainer working in

Actor	Action
	<p>conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois.</p> <p>Learn concussion symptoms and danger signs. Available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/CoachingResources.aspx.</p> <p>Understand before the season begins how to respond if a student athlete exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (e.g., loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) in a practice or game.</p> <p>Do not assess a head injury; instead, take the student athlete out of play and seek the advice of a health care professional.</p> <p>Inform the student athlete's parent/guardian about a possible concussion and give the parent/guardian a fact sheet on concussion. Available at: www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/ParentGuardianResources.aspx.</p>

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Exhibit - Agreement to Participate 1

On District letterhead

Each student and his or her parent/guardian must read and sign this *Agreement to Participate* each year before being allowed to participate in interscholastic sport(s) or intramural athletics. The completed *Agreement* should be returned to the Coach.

Student name (printed) _____

1. I wish to participate in the interscholastic sport(s) or intramural athletics that are circled: baseball, basketball, cheerleading, cross country, field hockey, football, golf, gymnastics, lacrosse, soccer, softball, swimming/diving, tennis, track, volleyball, wrestling, other (identify sports) _____. (Another *Agreement* must be signed if the student later decides to participate in a sport not circled above.)
2. Before I will be allowed to participate, I must provide the School District with a certificate of physical fitness (if participating in interscholastic sport(s), the Pre-Participation Physical Examination Form serves this purpose), show proof of accident insurance coverage, and complete any forms required by the Illinois High School Association (IHSA).
3. I agree to abide by all conduct rules and will behave in a sportsmanlike manner. I agree to follow the coaches' instructions, playing techniques, and training schedule as well as all safety rules.
4. I understand that Board policy 7:305, *Student Athlete Concussions and Head Injuries*, requires, among other things, that a student athlete who exhibits signs and symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or head injury must be removed from participation or competition at that time and that such student will not be allowed to return to play unless cleared to do so by a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer.
5. I am aware that with participation in sports comes the risk of injury, and I understand that the degree of danger and seriousness of risk vary significantly from one sport to another with contact sports carrying the highest risk. I am aware that participating in sports involves travel with the team. I acknowledge and accept the risks inherent in the sport(s) or athletics in which I will be participating and in all travel involved. I agree to hold the District, its employees, agents, coaches, School Board members, and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, claims, or demands of any kind and nature whatsoever that may arise by or in connection with my participating in the school-sponsored interscholastic sport(s) or intramural athletics. The terms hereof shall serve as a release and assumption of risk for my heirs, estate, executor, administrator, assignees, and for all members of my family.

Student signature

Date

1 This form is intended for students participating in interscholastic sports or intramural athletics. At a minimum, schools should: (1) fully inform and warn students and their parents/guardians of risks inherent in a sport, (2) should assist their understanding and appreciating these risks, and (3) document these efforts. The form's waiver of liability and hold harmless language should be reviewed with the board attorney. The district may not be able to waive gross negligence or recklessness its part but the waiver language in this form serves to alert the student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) to the seriousness of potential injuries and may discourage lawsuits.

To be read and signed by the parent/guardian of the student:

1. I am the parent/guardian of the above named student and give my permission for my child or ward to participate in the interscholastic sport(s) or intramural athletics indicated. I have read the above *Agreement to Participate* and understand its terms.
2. I acknowledge having received the attached *Concussion Information Sheet*.
3. I understand that all sports can involve many **risks of injury**, and I understand that the degree of danger and seriousness of risk vary significantly from one sport to another with contact sports carrying the higher risk. I am aware that participating in sports involves travel with the team. In consideration of the School District permitting my child to participate, I agree to hold the District, its employees, agents, coaches, Board members and volunteers harmless from any and all liability, actions, claims or demands of any kind and nature whatsoever that may arise by or in connection with the participation of my child in the sport(s) or athletics. I assume all responsibility and certify that my child is in good physical health and is capable of participation in the above indicated sport or athletics.

Parent/Guardian signature

Date

Emergency Contact Information

Name: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Day phone number: _____ Evening phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____ Other: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Day phone number: _____ Evening phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____ Other: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Day phone number: _____ Evening phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____ Other: _____

Name: _____ Relationship to student: _____

Day phone number: _____ Evening phone number: _____

Cell phone number: _____ Other: _____

Concussion Information Sheet

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headaches• “Pressure in head”• Nausea or vomiting• Neck pain• Balance problems or dizziness• Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision• Sensitivity to light or noise• Feeling sluggish or slowed down• Feeling foggy or groggy• Drowsiness• Change in sleep patterns	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Amnesia• “Don’t feel right”• Fatigue or low energy• Sadness• Nervousness or anxiety• Irritability• More emotional• Confusion• Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays)• Repeating the same question/comment
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Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Appears dazed• Vacant facial expression• Confused about assignment• Forgets plays• Is unsure of game, score, or opponent• Moves clumsily or displays incoordination• Answers questions slowly• Slurred speech• Shows behavior or personality changes• Can’t recall events prior to hit• Can’t recall events after hit• Seizures or convulsions• Any change in typical behavior or personality• Loses consciousness

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially

vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all IHSA member schools are required to follow this policy.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

Adapted by the Illinois High School Association from the CDC and the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport, Document created 7/1/2011.

