

Concussion Management Policy

The purpose of this policy is to safeguard student athletes by (1) educating student athletes, school personnel and parents/guardians about concussions, (2) requiring that a student athlete be removed from play when a concussion is suspected and requiring a licensed health care professional to provide clearance for the student athlete to return to play or practice, and (3) implementing the concussion management requirements specified by the Illinois High School Association and Illinois Elementary School Association.

This policy applies to athletic play occurring in Diocese-sponsored sports programs provided by elementary, middle and high schools regardless whether the sports program *is intramural, interscholastic, afterschool or provided during the summer (e.g. summer sports camp)*. This policy applies regardless of whether the sports activity or program is offered by or through a Diocese consultant, vendor or partner.

Concussion Signs and Symptoms

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal brain function. A student athlete does not have to lose consciousness to have suffered a concussion. Signs and symptoms of a concussion include the following

Signs Observed by Others	Symptoms Reported by Athlete
Appears dazed or stunned	Headache or "pressure in head"
Appears confused	Nausea
Forgets sports plays	Balance problems or dizziness
Is unsure of game, score, opponent	Sensitivity to light or noise
Moves clumsily	Double or fuzzy vision
Answers questions slowly	Feeling sluggish or slowed down
Loses consciousness (even briefly)	Feeling foggy or groggy
Shows behavior or personality changes	Does not "feel right"
Can't recall events prior to hit or fall	Concentration or memory problems
Can't recall events after hit or fall	Confusion

Removal and Return to Play

Any player who exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game or practice and shall not return to play until cleared in writing by a licensed health care professional. If a health care professional is not immediately available at the athletic event or practice and an injured student athlete has any of the

described signs, symptoms or behaviors of a concussion, s/he shall be promptly taken to a facility for appropriate medical evaluation and care.

A player must be removed from an *interscholastic* athletics practice or competition immediately if one of the following persons believes the player might have sustained a concussion during the practice or competition:

- a coach;
- a physician;
- a game official;
- an athletic trainer;
- the student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student;
- the student; or
- any other person deemed appropriate under the school's return-to-play protocol.

A student removed from an *interscholastic* athletics practice or competition may not be permitted to practice or compete again following the force or impact believed to have caused the concussion until:

- the student has been evaluated by a treating physician (chosen by the student or the student's parent or guardian) or an athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician;
- the student has successfully completed each requirement of the "return-to-play" and "return to learn" protocols established for the student to return to play;
- the treating physician or athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician has provided a written statement indicating that, in the physician's professional judgment, it is safe for the student to return to play and return to learn; and
- the student and the student's parent or guardian have acknowledged that the student has completed the requirements of the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols necessary for the student to return to play; have provided the treating physician's or athletic trainer's written statement and have signed a consent form indicating that the person signing has been informed and consents to the student participating in returning to play in accordance with the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols and understands the risks associated with the student returning to play and returning to learn and will comply with any ongoing requirements in the "return-to-play" and "return-to-learn" protocols. A sample acknowledgement is found in the link below:
[http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Post-concussion%20Consent%20Form%20\(RPT-RTL\).pdf](http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Post-concussion%20Consent%20Form%20(RPT-RTL).pdf)
- A coach of an *interscholastic* athletics team may not authorize a student's return to play or return to learn.

Licensed Health Care Professional

For purposes of this policy, licensed health care professional means physicians licensed to practice medicine in all its branches in Illinois and certified athletic trainers.

Concussion Policy/Fact Sheet

Information on the school's concussion and head injury policy must be a part of any agreement, contract, code, or other written instrument that a school requires a student-athlete and his/her parents or guardian to sign before participating in practice or *interscholastic* competition. The IHSA/IESA has provided a Concussion Information Sheet and Sign-Off Form that schools may

use to notify athletes and their parents/guardian about the dangers of concussions and head injuries.

<http://www.iesa.org/documents/general/IESA-ConcussionSign-Off.pdf>

The parent/guardian of each student athlete and the student athlete shall receive annually a concussion information sheet and they shall submit written verification(s) that they have read the information. A student athlete may not participate in practice or competition prior to the school's receipt of this written verification.

Each school shall also use education materials provided by the Illinois High School Association, and Illinois Elementary School Association see links below, to educate coaches, student-athletes, and parents/guardians of student-athletes about the nature and risk of concussions and head injuries, including continuing play after a concussion or head injury.

<http://www.ihsa.org/Resources/SportsMedicine/ConcussionManagement/ConcussionResources.aspx>

<https://www.iesa.org/activities/concussion.asp>

Concussion Oversight Teams (COT)

Each school shall form a Concussion Oversight Team (COT). The COT's primary function will be to develop return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols for students believed to have experienced a concussion. The protocols should be based on peer-reviewed scientific evidence consistent with guidelines from the Center for Disease Control and Prevention. These teams can contain a range of individuals based on the resources available to the school in their community or neighborhood but must include one person who is responsible for implementing and complying with the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols.

Per the law, each concussion oversight team must include to the extent practicable at least one physician. If a school employs an athletic trainer, the athletic trainer must be a member of the school concussion oversight team to the extent practicable. If a school employs a nurse, the nurse must be a member of the school concussion oversight team to the extent practicable. At a minimum, a school shall appoint a person who is responsible for implementing and complying with the return-to-play and return-to-learn protocols adopted by the concussion oversight team. A school may appoint other licensed healthcare professionals to serve on the concussion oversight team.

Coaches Training

All *interscholastic* coaches and licensed officials will need to complete a training program of at least two hours on concussions. Coaches, nurses, and game officials must provide the school with proof of successful completion of the training. Training must be completed every two years. Head coaches and assistant coaches must complete the required training. Compliant courses are available on the IHSA and IESA websites. *IESA member schools may access the course through the IESA Member Center. It is recommended all elementary schools with athletics join the IESA-\$75 dues-to allow access to these materials.*

Emergency Action Plan

Each school must also develop a school-specific emergency action plan for *interscholastic* athletic activities to address the serious injuries and acute medical conditions in which the condition of the student may deteriorate rapidly. There are certain provisions the plan must include and it must be reviewed by the COT before being approved by the school. The plan

must be distributed to appropriate personnel, posted at the school, and reviewed annually. Links to sample information may be found below on the IESA website and on the IHSA website.

http://www.ihsa.org/documents/forms/current/Emergency_Action_Plan_Form.pdf

Guidelines

The Superintendent or designee is authorized to issue Guidelines for the effective implementation of the requirements of this Policy.

Compliance

Failure to abide by this Policy or Guidelines will subject employees to discipline up to and including dismissal.

Some Additional Resources

<http://www.ihsa.org/documents/sportsMedicine/Concussion%20Protocols.pdf>

<http://www.iesa.org/documents/general/IESA-ConcussionInfo.pdf>

http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/schools/tbi_returning_to_school-a.pdf

http://www.cdc.gov/headsup/pdfs/policy/rtp_implementation-a.pdf

<http://www.ihsa.org/multimedia/articulate/2015-16/concussion/presentation.html>

http://www.catholicmutual.org/Portals/0/Docs/Risk%20Mgmt/CARES/Healthcare/Concussion%20CARE_S.pdf