

4. SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURIES

It is the policy of the district that any student-athlete who is removed from a sporting competition or event, including practices, by a referee or member of the coaching staff due to a head trauma, resulting in a possible concussion, must obtain a release from a medical doctor before being allowed to participate in any practices or games, including the game from which they were removed. The exception to this policy is if a licensed medical practitioner, such as a medical or osteopathic doctor, is present at said sporting event and can clear (which shall be in writing) the player during the contest, then said player may continue his/her participation.

A. As defined in this act:

1. "Athlete" means a secondary-school-age individual who is participating in a sport which is individual- and/or team-based, outside of school or within school and either competitive or in an organized practice; and
2. "Health care provider" means an individual who is registered, certified, licensed or otherwise recognized by the state to provide medical or psychological treatment and who is trained and experienced in the evaluation, management and care of concussions.

B. The State Department of Health shall create a concussion management section on its website to provide the guidelines necessary for each school district board of education and youth sports organization to develop their own policies and procedures pertaining to, but not limited to:

1. A concussion and head injury information sheet for game officials, team officials, athletes, parents or guardians and other persons having care or charge of athletes of the signs and symptoms of concussion or head injury and the risk of continuing to practice or compete in an athletic event or activity after sustaining a concussion or head injury;
2. "Return to Learn" guidelines for teachers and relevant school personnel pertaining to athletes who are returning to the classroom after sustaining a concussion or head injury;
3. "Graduated Stepwise Return to Athletic Participation" guidelines for team officials pertaining to athletes returning to practice or competition after a concussion or head injury; and
4. Links to one or more free online concussion training programs as provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS) or a comparable program or resource.

The Department shall periodically review the guidelines and update it accordingly.

C. Each school district board of education and youth sports organization or association shall develop policies and procedures pursuant to subsection B of this section to inform and educate their respective coaches, game officials, team officials, athletes and their parents or guardians of the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including continuing to

play after concussion or head injury. On an annual basis, information regarding concussion and head injuries shall be disseminated to the athlete and his/her parent or guardian. Acknowledgment and understanding of the information shall be completed by the athlete and the athlete's parent or guardian and maintained by the school or the youth sports organization or association prior to the athlete's participation in practice or competition.

1. On an annual basis, game officials and team officials shall undergo concussion training provided by the CDC, the NFHS or a comparable program or resource. A record of completion of the training course shall be readily available upon request.
 2. If any game official or team official responsible for the care and safety of an athlete in an athletic event becomes aware or suspects an athlete is exhibiting signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with having sustained a concussion or head injury, they shall remove the athlete from the practice or competition.
 3. If an athlete is removed from practice or competition as provided in paragraph 2 of this subsection, the athlete shall not, on the same day the athlete is removed, be permitted to return to that practice or competition or to participate in any other practice or competition, unless deemed eligible pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 4 of this subsection.
 4. An athlete who has been removed from participation as provided in paragraph 2 of this subsection may not participate until the athlete is evaluated by a health care provider and receives written clearance to return to participation from that health care provider. The health care provider may be a volunteer. A health care provider, game official or team official, whether volunteer or employee, shall not be liable for civil damages for injury, death or loss to person or property allegedly arising from any act or omission in providing services or performing duties unless the acts or omissions constituting gross negligence or willful or wanton misconduct.
- D. Respective governing boards shall establish the following minimum penalties for a violation of paragraph 2 of subsection C of this section for those individuals set forth in paragraph 1 of subsection C of this section:
1. First violation shall be additional concussion recognition and management education as predetermined by the governing board;
 2. Second violation shall be suspension from the sport until appearance before the governing board; and
 3. Monetary fines shall not be considered as a penalty.
- E. The Department shall promulgate rules necessary to implement the provisions of this act.