

OYSTER RIVER COOPERATIVE SCHOOL BOARD	Policy Code: JLCJ Category: Priority
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## Concussions and Head Injuries

The Oyster River School Board recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and other recreational activities. The Board acknowledges that the risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed. The Board recognizes that the majority of concussions will occur in "contact" or "collisions" sports. However, this policy applies to the safety of all District students.

### **Academic Issues in Concussed Students**

In the event a student is concussed, regardless of whether the concussion was a result of a school-related or non-school-related activity, school District staff should be mindful that the concussion may affect the student's ability to learn. In the event a student has a concussion, that student's teachers and administrators should be notified. Teachers should report to the school nurse if the student appears to have any difficulty with academic tasks that the teacher believes may be related to the concussion. The school nurse will notify the student's parents and treating physician. Administrators and District staff will work to establish a protocol and course of action to ensure the student is able to maintain his/her academic responsibilities while recovering from the concussion.

Section 504 accommodations may be developed in accordance with applicable law and Board policies.

Consistent with the National Federation of High School (NFHS) and the New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association (NHIAA), the District will utilize recommended guidelines, procedures and other pertinent information to inform and educate coaches, youth athletes, and parents/guardians of the nature and risk of concussions or head injuries, including the dangers associated with continuing to play after a concussion or head injury.

Annually, the district will distribute a head injury and concussion information sheet to all parents/guardians of student-athletes in competitive sport activities prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition.

For purposes of this policy, "student-athlete" means a student involved in any intramural or competitive sports program, sponsored by ORCSD conducted outside the regular teaching day between schools in grades 5 through 12, including all NHIAA sanctioned activities, or any other District-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the Board or administration. All coaches, including volunteers, will complete training as recommended and/or provided by NHIAA, New Hampshire Department of Education and/or other pertinent organizations. Additionally, all coaches of competitive sport activities will comply with NHIAA recommended procedures for the management of head injuries and concussions.

### **Athletic Director or Administrator in Charge of Athletic Duties**

Updating: Each spring, the athletic director or designee shall review any changes that have been made in procedures required for concussion and head injury management or other serious injury by consulting with the NHIAA or the District's on-call physician, if applicable. If there are any updated procedures, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.

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**Identified Sports:** Identified sports include all NHIAA-sanctioned activities, including cheer/dance squads, and any other district-sponsored sports or activities as determined by the district.

**Coach Training:** All coaches shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once every two years by one of the following means: (1) through viewing the NHIAA sport-specific rules clinic; or (2) through viewing the NHIAA concussion clinic found on the MHSAs Sports Medicine page at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org).

**Parent Information Sheet:** On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be distributed to the student-athlete and the athlete's parent/guardian prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition. This information sheet may be incorporated into the parent permission sheet that allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics.

**Coach's Responsibility:** A student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury or other serious injury in a practice or game shall be immediately removed from play.

**Administrative Responsibilities:** The Superintendent or his/her designee will keep abreast of changes in standards regarding concussion, explore staff professional development programs relative to concussions, and will explore other areas of education, training and programs.

### **Removal From Play and Protocol For Return To Play**

Any coach, official, licensed athletic trainer, or health care provider who suspects that a student-athlete has sustained a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall immediately remove the student-athlete from play. A student-athlete who has been removed from play shall not return to play on the same day or until he/she is evaluated by a physician, physicians' assistant in consultation with a physician, or nurse practitioner and receives medical clearance and written authorization from the aforementioned health professionals to return to play. The student-athlete shall also present written permission from a parent/guardian to return to play. The athletic director will then review and make the final decision if the athletic student can return to play. In the event of multiple concussions, the athletic trainer will speak with the medical providers to ensure family and students understand all risks for continuation.

### **Concussion Awareness and Education**

To the extent possible, the Board encourages the administration to implement concussion awareness and education into the District's physical education and/or health education curriculum. The administrative decision will take into account all relevant considerations, including time, resources, access to materials, and other pertinent factors.

### **Legal References**

- RSA 200:49, Head Injury Policies for Student Sports
- RSA 200:50, Removal of Student-Athlete
- RSA 205:51, School Districts; Limitation of Liability
- RSA 200:52, Definitions