

Management of Concussions and Other Head Injuries

The Board recognizes that concussions are serious and could result in significant brain damage and/or death if not recognized and managed properly. The Board further acknowledges that a student may suffer a concussion during any activity during the school day or outside of school. The Board adopts this policy to promote the safety of all students, regardless of where or when the head injury occurred.

Training

Annual training must be completed by extra-curricular and athletics-related school personnel (including volunteers) identified by the Concussion Management Team (CMT). They must be made aware of this policy and protocols related to the management of concussive injuries and must participate in concussion awareness training that includes (1) recognizing signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussion and (2) including instruction in the use of graduated school and activity reentry protocols. This training must be consistent with protocols as identified or developed by Maine Department of Education (DOE).

Prior to the beginning of each school year, non-athletics related school personnel (for example, physical education teachers, school nurses, personnel with recess duty) identified by the District's CMT, must be made aware of this school policy and protocols related to the management of concussive injuries and must participate in concussion awareness training that includes recognizing signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussion. This training must be consistent with protocols as identified or developed by Maine DOE.

Student And Parents/Guardians

Prior to participating in any school athletic activity, all students will be provided information including:

1. The risk of concussion and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion is suspected;
2. The signs, symptoms and behaviors associated with concussion; and
3. The school administrative unit's protocols for removal of the student from the activity when the student is suspected of having sustained a concussion, evaluation, referral and medical clearance, and graduated school and activity reentry protocols.

The student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) must sign a statement acknowledging that they received and read this information before the student is allowed to participate in any school athletic activity.

Management Of Concussion

It is the responsibility of all school personnel to act in accordance with this policy when that person recognizes that a student may be exhibiting signs, symptoms and/or behaviors consistent with a concussion.

- Any student suspected of having a concussion must be immediately removed from participation. The student is prohibited from returning to the school activity until a thorough evaluation has been conducted by school health personnel trained in concussion recognition. In the absence of available school health personnel, the student will be directed to their primary care provider for further assessment.
- School health personnel will assess the student and determine if referral to a higher level of care is needed.
 - o If a referral is necessary, the student and the parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed of the referral to a licensed health care provider for a medical evaluation for possible concussion or brain injury before the student is allowed to begin a graduated return to school and return to activity protocol.
- If referral to a licensed health care provider was made, the student will require written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider qualified and trained in concussion management. The student is also required to complete the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol as determined by the CMT.
 - o The medical clearance note is to be interpreted as clearance to start the graduated school reentry protocol.
- A member of the CMT will notify school personnel with a legitimate educational interest of possible symptoms, cognitive and/or academic issues that may be experienced by a student who has suffered a concussion, including but not limited to difficulty with concentration, organization, long-and-short term memory, and sensitivity to bright lights and sounds.
- School personnel shall accommodate the graduated school reentry protocol in all academic activities as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the student's health care provider trained in concussion management and appropriate designated school personnel (e.g. 504 Coordinator, school nurse).
- No student is permitted to return to full participation in extra-curricular school activities (e.g., competition, games, performances) until they have fully returned to their academic program and have completed the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol. Each phase in the progression of this protocol takes at least 24 hours. Return to learn and return to play may occur at the same time.

Medical Clearance

Once a referral to a health care provider has been made by the school nurse, athletic trainer, or other school health professional, the student must receive written medical clearance. The

medical clearance allows a student to begin the graduated return to school and return to activity protocol.

Concussion Management Team

The superintendent will appoint a concussion management team, including a school administrator to be responsible, under the administrative supervision of the superintendent, to make recommendations related to implementation and review of this policy. The Concussion Management Team for RSU 9 consists of the Director of Athletics, high school nurse, and the high school athletic trainer. The team shall oversee and implement this policy and related protocols for concussion based on the currently accepted best practices. The team, under the direction of the superintendent, shall identify the school personnel who shall be trained in concussion signs and symptoms and the school activities covered by this policy. This is to include all coaches of any athletic program.

Any RSU 9 staff member who receives concussion training is not qualified to diagnose a concussion; that can only be done by a certified athletic trainer or a doctor. Coaches can only refer to medical personnel, for the diagnoses, upon suspicion of a concussion.

Collection And Reporting Of Concussion Data

The Board recognizes how serious concussions are and the need for improved understanding of concussions and their impact on learning and school attendance. The school administrative unit will track the number of concussions, activity associated with the injury, number of school days missed, and other information determined necessary by the CMT. The CMT will review this data and make recommendations to the Board as needed.

LIST OF DEFINITIONS

Concussion: A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur from a fall or a blow to the head or body that causes the head and brain to quickly move back and forth. Some causes of concussion may include, but are not limited to, motor vehicle accidents, slips and falls, bumps to the head, and sports collisions.

Concussion Management Team: A Concussion Management Team (CMT), appointed by the superintendent or head of school, may include, but is not limited to the following: school administrator, school nurse, athletic administrator, athletic trainer, school counselor, school physician, and school-based health center staff. The CMT shall oversee the implementation, graduated school reentry protocols, and make recommendations related to implementation and review of this policy. This team may be combined with another existing student support team within the school or school administrative unit.

Concussion Awareness Training: A program designed to provide school personnel, volunteers, and administrators with evidence-based information in recognizing a possible concussion, responding to the injury, and managing concussion.

Graduated school reentry: Graduated school reentry is a gradual and coordinated return to school academics and activities protocol following a concussion. It is an individualized, flexible plan developed by the Concussion Management Team or designee with input from the student, parents, medical provider.

Medical clearance: Medical clearance includes a written statement from a licensed health care provider who is trained and experienced in the recognition and management of concussion such as medical doctor (MD), doctor of osteopathy (DO), nurse practitioner (NP), physician's assistant (PA), certified athletic trainer (AT), which allows a student to start the school's graduated school and activity reentry protocol.

School activity: Any organized program, event, or pursuit that takes place under the auspices of a school and is designed to promote learning, development, or engagement among students such as classroom activities, band, athletics, chorus, clubs, recess, drama, that take place before, during, or after the school day.

School health professional: School personnel who also hold a professional health-related license such as a registered nurse (RN) or certified athletic trainer (AT).

School personnel: School personnel include any persons working within and on behalf of the school in a supervisory role to students during school-sponsored activities including volunteers in a student supervisory role, such as athletic coaches.

Legal Reference: Title 20-A MRSA§254(17)

Adopted: October 23, 2012

Previous Revision: December 13, 2022

Revised: October 14, 2025