

## **Concussion Management**

The Schools are committed to ensuring the health and safety of our student athletes. The Athletic Director of Dover Sherborn High School shall be the person responsible for compliance of these policies and protocols.

### **Definition of a Concussion**

A concussion is a type of head injury that changes the way the brain normally works. Concussions are caused by either a direct blow to the head, neck or body or whiplash injury when the head is snapped back and then forward. Concussions involve a rapid onset of short-lived complex disturbance in brain function that resolves spontaneously and may result in long-term neuropathological impairment. Injury occurs when the brain slams into the skull and then “bounces” off the opposite side of the skull. The brain may also rotate inside the skull, causing further damage. A concussion usually does not show structural injury when the brain is imaged. It instead involves damage at the cellular level and causes change in both cellular chemicals and activity that lead to decreased cerebral blood flow.

### **Signs and Symptoms of a Concussion in Sports**

Symptoms reported by student athlete: Headache or “pressure” in head, nausea, balance problems and dizziness, double vision, sensitivity to light, sensitivity to noise, feeling sluggish or slowed down, feeling foggy or groggy, does not “feel right”. Signs of deteriorating neurological function: A student athlete should be taken to the emergency room if any of the following signs/symptoms are present: Headache worsens, seizures, can’t focus, looks very drowsy or can’t be awakened, repeated vomiting, slurred speech, can’t recognize people or places, increased confusion or irritability, weakness or numbness in arms or legs, neck pain, unusual behavior, significant irritability, any loss of consciousness greater than 30 seconds.

### **Protocol for Concussion Management**

Dover Sherborn Athletic Department requires annual training in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury, including second impact syndrome, and keep documentation of said training on file for the following persons:

- Extracurricular Athletic Activities Supervisors
- Coaches
- Certified Athletic Trainers
- Volunteers
- School Physicians
- School Nurses
- Athletic Directors
- Parent(s)/guardian(s) of a student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity by way of the parent(s)/guardian(s) signature on Permission and Consent Forms.
- Students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity by way of the student’s signature on Permission and Consent Forms.

Pre-season baseline imPACT tests are scheduled for all student athletes on contact sports teams. Student athletes are tested in their freshmen and junior years.

Dover Sherborn coaches, athletic trainers, and volunteers will be given instruction to teach form, techniques, and skills that minimize sports-related head injury.

Documentation of a student's history of head injuries, including concussions, is collected with preseason participation forms and kept on file with the school nurse.

Documentation of an annual physical examination of students participating in extracurricular athletic activities consistent with 105 CMR 200.000 is kept in the student's health record, which is on file in the school nurse's office.

Student athletes without preseason participation forms on files will not be able to participate.

### **Evaluation Guidelines**

Any time a concussion is suspected during practice or game, the student-athlete will be removed from participation and will not be allowed to participate that same day.

Parents/guardians will be notified of a head injury by the coach and/or athletic trainer so the parent/guardian may take the student to a medical provider for appropriate medical evaluation and treatment. All head injuries and suspected concussions will be reported to the school nurse, and the athletic trainer.

Evaluation and clearance by the family's medical provider will be required.

The student-athlete will not return to play without the note from the medical provider and only after completion of the Return to Play Protocol followed by the Athletic Trainer.

The school nurse and guidance counselors will notify academic teachers of the affected student-athlete and provide guidelines for concussion accommodation plans.

### **Return to Play Protocol**

In order to safely return to sport participation, the following progression will be followed with the Athletic Trainer:

- 1) Student athletes show no signs of symptoms of a concussion for a minimum of 24 hours including normal eating habits, sleeping habits, school work productivity without pain relief medication.
- 2) Student athletes will be retested using the ImPACT software to assure normal neurological function.
- 3) After successful results at retest, student-athletes will be ImPACT tested after exertion tests.
- 4) After successful exertion ImPACT tests are complete, non-contact sport specific exertion ImPACT testing is performed.
- 5) Student athletes who have been cleared by a physician, and have successfully completed the ImPACT progression may return to full practice and game participation.
- 6) Student athlete's parent/guardian will be notified.