

2431.4 CONCUSSION TESTING AND RETURN-TO-PLAY (M)

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head or body. In order to ensure the safety of pupils that participate in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, and dance programs, it is imperative that student-athletes, cheerleaders, dancers, coaches, and parents are educated about the nature and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries. Allowing a student-athlete, cheerleader, or dancer to return to play before recovering from a concussion increases the chance of a more serious brain injury.

Every school district that participates in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, or dance programs is required to adopt a policy concerning the prevention and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries among student-athletes, dancers and cheerleaders in accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.1 et seq. For the purpose of this Policy, "interscholastic athletics" shall be Kindergarten through twelfth grade school-sponsored athletic programs where teams or individuals compete against teams or individuals from other schools or school districts. For the purpose of this Policy, "cheerleading and dance programs" shall be ninth through twelfth grade school-sponsored cheerleading and dance programs.

The school district will adopt an Interscholastic Athletic, Cheerleading and Dance Head Injury Training Program to be completed by the team or school physician, licensed athletic trainer(s) involved in the interscholastic athletic program, all staff members that coach an interscholastic sport or cheerleading or dance program, designated school nurses, and other appropriate school district personnel as designated by the Superintendent. This Training Program shall be in accordance with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education and the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.2.

The Principal or designee shall distribute the New Jersey Department of Education Concussion and Head Injury Fact Sheet and Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form to every student-athlete who participates in interscholastic sports, and every cheerleader or dancer who participates in a cheerleading or dance program. The Principal or designee shall obtain a signed acknowledgement of the receipt of the Fact Sheet by the student-athlete or cheerleader's or dancer's parent and keep on file for future reference.



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Prevention of a sports-related concussion and head injuries is an important component of the school district's program. The school district shall require at board expense pre-season baseline testing of all 9th and 11th grade student-athletes, including cheerleaders and dancers, as well as students new to Montgomery High School before the pupil begins participation in an interscholastic athletic or cheerleading or dance program.

Any student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer who exhibits the signs or symptoms of a sports-related concussion or other head injury during practice or competition shall be immediately removed from play and may not return to play that day. Emergency medical assistance shall be contacted when symptoms get worse, loss of consciousness, direct neck pain associated with the injury, or any other sign the supervising school staff member determines emergency medical attention is needed. If available when the student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer is exhibiting signs or symptoms, the pupil will be evaluated by the school or team physician. The Principal or designee shall contact the pupil's parent and inform the parent of the suspected sports-related concussion or other head injury.

Possible signs of a concussion can be observed by any school staff member or the school or team physician. Any possible symptoms of a concussion can be reported by the student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer to: coaches; licensed athletic trainer; school or team physician; school nurse; and/or parent. The Principal or designee shall provide the student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer with Board of Education approved suggestions for management/medical checklist to provide to their parent and physician or other licensed healthcare professional trained in the evaluation and management of sports-related concussions and other head injuries.

A student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer who participates in interscholastic athletics or a cheerleading or program dance and who sustains or is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury shall be required to have a medical examination conducted by their physician or licensed health care provider. The pupil's physician or licensed health care provider shall be trained in the evaluation and management of concussion to determine the presence or absence of a sports-related concussion or head injury.

The pupil's physician or licensed health care provider must provide to the school district a written medical release/clearance for the pupil indicating when the pupil is able to return to the activity. The medical release/clearance must indicate the student-athlete or cheerleader or dancer is asymptomatic at rest and either may return to the interscholastic athletic activity or cheerleading or dance program



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because the injury was not a concussion or other head injury or may begin the district's graduated return to competition and practice protocol outlined in Regulation 2431.4. A medical release/clearance not in compliance with this Policy will not be accepted. The medical release/clearance must be reviewed and approved by the school or team physician. Any student diagnosed with a concussion will be required to submit to annual concussion testing for the remainder of their high school career.

The school district shall provide a copy of this Policy and Regulation 2431.4 to all youth sports team organizations that operate on school grounds. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.5, the school district shall not be liable for the injury or death of a person due to the action or inaction of persons employed by, or under contract with, a youth sports team organization that operates on school grounds, if the youth sports team organization provides the school district proof of an insurance policy in the amount of not less than \$50,000 per person, per occurrence insuring the youth sports team organization against liability for any bodily injury suffered by a person and a statement of compliance with the school district's Policy and Regulation 2431.4 - Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries.

For the purposes of this Policy a "youth sports team organization" means one or more sports teams organized pursuant to a nonprofit or similar charter or which are member teams in a league organized by or affiliated with a county or municipal recreation department.

This Policy and Regulation shall be reviewed and approved by the school physician and shall be reviewed annually, and updated as necessary, to ensure it reflects the most current information available on the prevention, risk, and treatment of sports-related concussion and other head injuries.

N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.1; 18A:40-41.2; 18A:40-41.3; 18A:40-41.4; 18A:40-41.5

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