

Concussions received by participants in sports activities are an ongoing concern at all levels. Recent interest and research in this area has prompted reevaluations of treatment and management recommendations from the high school to the professional level. In order to ensure the safety of our student athletes NWCS has developed the following Concussion Response Policy.

Definition of Concussion: "Concussion" means a complex pathophysiological process affecting the brain caused by a traumatic physical force or impact to the head or body, which may:

- (A) include temporary or prolonged altered brain function resulting in physical, cognitive, or emotional symptoms or altered sleep patterns; and
- (B) involve loss of consciousness.

Responsible Individuals

At every activity under the jurisdiction of NWC in which the activity involved carries a potential risk for concussion, there should be a designated individual who is responsible for identifying student-athletes with symptoms of concussion injuries. That individual should be a physician or an advanced practice nurse, athletic trainer, neuropsychologist, or physician assistant with appropriate training in the recognition and management of concussion in athletes. In the event that such an individual is not available, a supervising adult approved by the school district with appropriate training in the recognition of the signs and symptoms of a concussion in athletes could serve in that capacity. When a licensed athletic trainer is available such an individual would be the appropriate designated person to assume this role. The individual responsible for determining the presence of the symptoms of a concussion is also responsible for creating the appropriate documentation related to the injury event. After it is established that an student does in fact have a concussion the NWC Athletic Director, Designated Team Trainer, or their designated representative is the person responsible to ensure that all aspects of the Return to Play Protocol are followed before the student returns to full participation.

Concussion Response Policy

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a ding, getting your bell rung, or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily

- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Cannot recall events prior to hit or fall
- Cannot recall events after hit or fall

Symptoms Reported by Athlete

- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not feel right

HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

1. Seek medical attention right away. A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.
2. Keep your child out of play. Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon while the brain is still healing risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.
3. Tell your child's coach about any recent concussion. Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

Response to Suspected Concussion

A student shall be removed from an interscholastic athletics practice or competition immediately if one of the following persons believes the student might have sustained a concussion during the practice or competition:

- (1) a coach
- (2) a physician

- (3) a licensed health care professional
- (4) the student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student.

Return to Activity/Play Protocol Following a Concussion

A student removed from an interscholastic athletics practice or competition by a doctor, trainer, or coach under suspicion of having a concussion may not be permitted to practice or compete again until they have completed each of the following 5 steps:

- (1) the student has been evaluated by a licensed Health Care Provider as defined by the WIAA to be a Medical Doctor, Doctor of Osteopathy, Advanced Registered Nurse Practitioner, Physician's assistant, or Licensed Certified Athletic Trainer using Neuro Cognitive testing with Impact or similar program before the athlete can be released for exercise stress testing.
- (2) the treating physician has provided a written statement indicating that, in the physician's professional judgment, it is safe for the student to return to play.
- (3) The athlete has successfully completed exercise stress testing known as the Return to Activity Progression.
- (4) The student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student have signed the Return to Play Form.
- (5) The coach receives a signed copy of the Return to Play Form.

5 Steps of the Return to Play Protocol

Once an athlete no longer has signs, symptoms, or behaviors of a concussion and has completed the first three steps of the return to play protocol, he or she should proceed in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to re-adjust to exercise. In most cases, the athletes will progress one step each day dependent on the judgement of the athletic trainer or health care professional in charge. The return to activity progression may proceed following medical clearance. The student is not allowed to compete until they have completed all four steps of the Return to Play protocol under the oversight of the NWCS Athletic Director, Official Team Trainer, or their designated representative.

Step 1: Light Aerobic Exercise

The Goal: only to increase an athlete's heart rate.

The Time: 5 to 10 minutes.

The Activities: exercise bike, walking, or light jogging.

Absolutely no weightlifting, jumping or hard running.

Step 2: Moderate Exercise

The Goal: limited body and head movement.

The Time: Reduced from typical routine.

The Activities: moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and moderate intensity weightlifting

Step 3: Non-contact Exercise

The Goal: more intense but non-contact

The Time: Close to Typical Routine

The Activities: running, high-intensity stationary biking, the player's regular weightlifting routine, and non-contact sport-specific drills. This stage may add some cognitive component to practice in addition to the aerobic and movement components introduced in Steps 1 and 2.

Step 4: Practice

The Goal: Reintegrate in full contact practice.

Step 5: Play

The Goal: Return to competition

It is important to monitor symptoms and cognitive function carefully during each increase of exertion.

Athletes should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are not experiencing symptoms at the current level. If symptoms return at any step, an athlete should stop these activities as this may be a sign the athlete is pushing too hard. Only after additional rest, when the athlete is once again not experiencing symptoms for a minimum of 24 hours, should he or she start again at the previous step during which symptoms were experienced.

The Return to Play Progression process is best conducted through a team approach and by a health professional who knows the athlete's physical abilities and endurance. By gauging the athlete's performance on each individual step, a health care professional will be able to determine how far to progress the athlete on a given day. In some cases, the athlete may be able to work through one step in a single day, while in other cases it may take several days to work through an individual step. It may take several weeks to months to work through the entire 5-step progression.

Northwest Christian Schools

Student/Parent Concussion and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness Form

Northwest Christian School believes participation in athletics improves physical fitness, coordination, self-discipline, and gives students valuable opportunities to learn important social and life skills.

With this in mind it is important that we do as much as possible to create and maintain an enjoyable and safe environment. As a parent/guardian or student you play a vital role in protecting participants and helping them get the best from sport.

Player and parental education in this area is crucial which is the reason for the Concussion Management and Sudden Cardiac Arrest Awareness pamphlet you received. Refer to it regularly.

AGREEMENT (Separate item on FamilyID)

This form must be signed annually by the parent/guardian and student prior to participation in Northwest Christian School athletics. If you have questions regarding any of the information provided in the pamphlet, please contact the athletic director at your school.

I HAVE RECEIVED, READ AND UNDERSTAND THE INFORMATION PRESENTED IN THE CONCUSSION RECOGNITION AND SUDDEN CARDIAC ARREST AWARENESS GUIDES.