

GAINESVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

# Concussion policy & procedure

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**By GISD Sports Medicine Staff**

**8/1/2016**

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# **Gainesville ISD Guidelines for Sports Concussion Management**

## **Introduction**

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that there are approximately 300,000 cases of mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI) or concussions annually in the United States as the result of participation in sports. The Sports Concussion Institute estimates that 10 percent of athletes in contact sports suffer a concussion during a season. A 2006 report estimated that there were 92,000 cases of concussions in American high School sports annually, and that these rates seem to be increasing. Also of concern is the risk of repeated concussions and second impact syndrome to our young athletes. These two problems can have long lasting, and even terminal effects, on the individual. In order to have a standard method of managing concussions for GISD athletes, the following guidelines are intended to serve as a written protocol for concussion management.

## **What is a Concussion?**

**Concussion** - A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI). Concussions are the common result of a blow to the head or body which causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. This injury causes brain function to change which results in an altered mental state (either temporary or prolonged). Physiologic and/or anatomic disruptions of connections between some nerve cells in the brain occur. Concussions can have serious and long-term health effects, even from a mild bump on the head. Symptoms include, but are not limited to, brief loss of consciousness, headache, amnesia, nausea, dizziness, confusion, blurred vision, ringing in the ears, loss of balance, moodiness, poor concentration or mentally slow, lethargy, photosensitivity, sensitivity to noise, and a change in sleeping patterns. These symptoms may be temporary or long lasting.

## **Prevention Strategies**

1. Insist that safety comes first.
2. Teach and practice safe playing techniques.
3. Teach athletes the dangers of playing with a concussion.
4. Encourage athletes to follow the rules of play and to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
5. Make sure athletes wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards).
6. All headgear must be NOCSAE certified.
7. Make sure the headgear fits the individual, and are secured properly to the individual.
8. For all sports that require headgear, a coach or appropriate designate should check headgear before use to make sure air bladders work and are appropriately filled. Padding should be checked to make sure they are in proper working condition.

## Evaluation for Concussion

1. At time of injury administer one of these assessment tests:
  - a. Sports Concussion Assessment Tool – Appendix A
  - b. Graded Symptom Checklist (GSC) – Appendix B
2. **Athlete does not return to a game or practice if he/she has any symptoms that would indicate the possibility of suffering a concussion.**
3. Doctor Referral
4. Home Instructions
5. Return to Play Guidelines for Parents
6. Parent Informed Consent and Athlete's Participation Form
7. **Note - If in doubt, athlete is referred to doctor and does not return to play.**

## Concussion Management

1. School modifications
  - a. Notify school nurse and all classroom teachers of the student that he/she has a concussion.
  - b. Notify teachers of post concussion symptoms.
  - c. Student may need special accommodations such as limited computer work, reading activities, testing, assistance to class, etc. until symptoms subside.
  - d. Student may only be able to attend school for half days or may need daily rest periods until symptoms subside.
2. Student must be symptom free before begin return to play protocol.

## Return to Play Guidelines

1. Activity progressions
  1. Treating physician clearance to begin activity.
  2. Light aerobic exercise with no resistance training
  3. Sport specific activity
  4. Non-contact training drills with resistance training
  5. Full contact training drills (must have physician clearance)
  6. **Note – Athlete progression continues as long as athlete is asymptomatic at current level. If the athlete experiences any post concussion symptoms, you wait 24 hours and start the progressions again at the beginning.**
2. Treating physician clearance (Not an Emergency Room Doctor)
3. Athletic Trainer clearance.

## **Gainesville ISD Preseason Parental Information and Consent Form for Concussions**

### **What is a concussion?**

A concussion is an injury to the brain. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to either the head or the body that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. The resulting injury to the brain changes how the brain functions in a normal manner. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up immediately after the injury or may not appear for hours or days after the injury. Concussions can have serious long-term health effects, and even a seemingly mild injury can be serious. A major concern with any concussion is returning to play too soon. Having a second concussion before healing can take place from the initial or previous concussion can lead to serious and potentially fatal health conditions.

### **What are the symptoms of a concussion?**

Signs and symptoms of a concussion are typically noticed right after the injury, but some might not be recognized until days after the injury. Common symptoms include: headache, dizziness, amnesia, fatigue, confusion, mood changes, depression, poor vision, sensitivity to light or noise, lethargy, poor attention or concentration, sleep disturbances, and aggression. The individual may or may not have lost consciousness.

### **What should be done if a concussion is suspected?**

1. Immediately remove student from practice or game
2. Seek medical attention right away
3. Do not allow the student to return to play until proper medical clearance and the GISD Return to Play guidelines have been followed. The permission for return to play will come from the appropriate health care professional and/or professionals, not to include an Emergency Room Doctor.

If you have any questions concerning concussions or the return to play policy, you may contact the athletic administrator at your school.

### **What should the athlete know about playing with a concussion?**

Teach athletes it's not smart to play with a concussion. Rest is the key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes, parents, and other school or league officials wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Don't let your athlete convince you that they're "just fine."

### **What are the risks of returning to activity too soon after sustaining a concussion?**

Prevent long-term problems. If an athlete has a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. Don't let them return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short time period (hours, days, weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term problems.

## **What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion?**

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of a concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries. And concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for the student-athlete's safety.

## **Liability Provisions**

The student and the student's parent or guardian or another person with legal authority to make medical decisions for the student understands this policy does not:

1. waive any immunity from liability of a school district or open-enrollment charter school or of district of charter school officers or employees;
2. create any liability for a cause of action against a school district or open-enrollment charter school or against district or charter school officers or employees;
3. waive any immunity from liability under Section 74.151, Civil Practice and Remedies Code;
4. create any liability for a member of a concussion oversight team arising from the injury or death of a student participating in an interscholastic athletics practice of competition, based only on service on the concussion oversight team.

## **Parental Consent**

**By signing this form, I understand the risks and dangers related with returning to play too soon after a concussion. Furthermore, in the event that my son/daughter is diagnosed with a concussion, I give my consent for my son/daughter to participate in and comply with the Gainesville ISD return to play protocol. The undersigned, being a parent, guardian, or another person with legal authority, grants this permission. If I refuse to consent to the GISD protocol, the child WILL NOT be allowed to participate in Gainesville ISD Athletics.**

**Athlete's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's or Guardian's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent's or Guardian's Signature** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## **GISD Return to Play Guidelines for Parents**

### **General Information for Parents**

**Teach that it is not smart to play with a concussion.** Rest is the key after a concussion. Sometimes athletes, parents, and other school or league officials wrongly believe that it shows strength and courage to play injured. Discourage others from pressuring injured athletes to play. Do not let your athlete convince you that they are “just fine.”

**Prevent long-term problems.** If an athlete has a concussion, their brain needs time to heal. Don't let them return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional, experienced in evaluating for a concussion, says they are symptom-free and it's OK to return to play. A repeat concussion that occurs before the brain recovers from the first—usually within a short time period (hours, days, weeks)—can slow recovery or increase the chances for long-term problems.

Gainesville ISD has developed a protocol for managing concussions. This policy includes a multidiscipline approach involving athletic trainer clearance, physician referral and clearance, and successful completion of activity progressions related to their sport. The following is an outline of this procedure. Your son/daughter **MUST PASS** all of these steps in order to return to sport activity after sustaining a concussion.

1. All athletes who sustain head injuries are required to be evaluated by their primary care physician or a Concussion Management Doctor member. They must have a normal physical and neurological exam prior to being permitted to progress to activity. This includes athletes who were initially referred to an emergency department (Emergency Room Doctor can not clear athlete).
2. The student will be monitored daily at school by the athletic trainer and/or school nurse. The Athletic Trainer will follow up and maintain contact with the treating physician. His/her teachers will be notified of their injury and what to expect. Accommodations may need to be given according to physician recommendations and observations.
3. The student must be asymptomatic at rest and exertion.
4. Once cleared to begin activity, the student will start a progressive step-by-step procedure outlined in the following steps. The progressions will advance at the rate of one step per day. (Disclaimer: Some students progress at different rates.) The progressions are:
  - a. Treating physician clearance to begin activity
  - b. Light aerobic exercise with no resistance training
  - c. Sport specific activity
  - d. Non-contact training drills with resistance training
  - e. Full contact training drills

**Note – Athlete progression continues as long as athlete is asymptomatic at current activity level. If the athlete experiences any post concussion symptoms, he/she will wait 24 hours and start the progressions again at the beginning.**
5. **Upon completion of the return to play protocol, the physician of record must provide a written statement that in the physician's professional judgment it is safe for the athlete to return to play.**

6. Once the student has completed steps 1 through 6, he/she may return to their sport activity with no restrictions.

**The athlete named below has completed the required return to play protocol for a concussion. By signing this form, I understand the dangers related with returning to play too soon after a concussion. Furthermore, I certify that my son/daughter has successfully completed the GISD return to play protocol and I give my permission for him/her to return to sport activity. The undersigned, being a parent, guardian, or another person with legal authority, grants this permission.**

Athlete's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Parent of Guardian's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Parent or Guardian's Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **GISD Return to Play Guidelines Information for Treating Physician**

Gainesville ISD has developed a protocol for managing concussions. This policy includes a multidiscipline approach involving athletic trainer clearance, physician referral and clearance, and successful completion of activity progressions related to their sport. The following is an outline of this procedure. The injured athlete must complete and successfully pass all of these steps in order to return to sport activity after having a concussion.

### **Steps:**

1. All athletes who sustain head injuries are required to be evaluated by their primary care physician or a Concussion Management Doctor member. They must have a normal physical and neurological exam prior to being permitted to progress to activity. This includes athletes who were initially referred to an emergency department (Emergency Room Doctor cannot clear athlete).
2. The student will be monitored daily at school by the athletic trainer and/or school nurse. The Athletic Trainer will follow up and maintain contact with the treating physician. His/her teachers will be notified of their injury and what to expect. Accommodations may need to be given according to physician recommendations and observations.
3. The student must be asymptomatic at rest and exertion.
4. Once cleared to begin activity, the student will start a progressive step-by-step procedure outlined in the following steps. The progressions will advance at the rate of one step per day. (Disclaimer) Some students progress at different rates. The progressions are:
  - a. Treating physician clearance to begin activity
  - b. Light aerobic exercise with no resistance training
  - c. Sport specific activity
  - d. Non-contact training drills with resistance training
  - e. Full contact training drills

**Note – Athlete progression continues as long as athlete is asymptomatic at current activity level. If the athlete experiences any post concussion symptoms, he/she will wait 24 hours and start the progressions again at the beginning.**
5. **Upon completion of the return to play protocol, the physician of record must provide a written statement that in the physician’s professional judgment it is safe for the athlete to return to play.**
6. Once the student has completed steps 1 through 6, he/she may return to their sport activity with no restrictions.

**Gainesville ISD**  
**Authorization for the Release of Medical Information**

The Family Educational Right to Privacy Act Of 1974 (FERPA) is a federal law that governs the release of a student’s educational records, including personal identifiable information (name, address, social security number, etc.) from those records. Medical information is considered a part of a student athlete’s educational record. Also, the Health Insurance Portability and Accounting Act of 1996 (HIPAA) allows the disclosure of information from treating physicians.

This authorization permits the athletic trainers, team physicians, and athletic staff (including coaches) of the Gainesville ISD to disclose information concerning my medical status, medical condition, injuries, prognosis, diagnosis, and related personal identifiable health information to the authorized parties listed below. This information included injuries or illnesses relevant to past, present, or future participation in athletics.

The purpose of a disclosure is to inform the authorized parties of the nature, diagnosis, prognosis or treatment concerning my medical condition and any injuries or illnesses. I understand once the information is disclosed it is subject to re-disclosure and is no longer protected.

I understand that the Gainesville ISD will not receive compensation for its disclosure of the information. I understand that I may refuse to sign this authorization and that my refusal to sign will not affect my ability to obtain treatment. I may inspect or copy any information disclosed under this authorization.

I understand that I may revoke this authorization at any time by providing written notification to the head athletic trainer. I understand revocation will not have any effect on actions Gainesville ISD has taken in reliance on this authorization prior to receiving the revocation. This authorization expires six years from the date it is signed.

**Date of Birth**\_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name of Student**\_\_\_\_\_

**Student Signature**\_\_\_\_\_

**Printed Name of Parent**\_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature**\_\_\_\_\_

## Symptoms for Concussion Referral

### Head Injury Symptoms needing a Referral to a Physician

1. Loss of consciousness on the field
2. Amnesia
3. Increase in blood pressure
4. Cranial nerve deficits
5. Vomiting
6. Motor deficits subsequent to initial on-field exam
7. Sensory deficits subsequent to initial on-field exam
8. Balance deficits subsequent to initial on-field exam
9. Cranial nerve deficits subsequent to initial on-field exam
10. Post-concussion symptoms that worsen
11. Additional post-concussion symptoms as compared with those on the field
12. Athlete is symptomatic at the end of the game
13. Deterioration of neurological function\*
14. Decreasing level of consciousness\*
15. Decrease or irregularity in respiration\*
16. Decrease or irregularity in pulse\*
17. Unequal, dilated or unreactive pupils\*
18. Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries , spine or skull fracture or bleeding\*
19. Mental status changes: lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion, or agitation\*
20. Seizure activity\*

**Note: \* indicates that the athlete needs to be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department.**

## Home Instructions for Concussions

\_\_\_\_\_ has sustained a concussion during \_\_\_\_\_ today. To make sure he/she recovers please follow the following important recommendations:

1. Please review the items outlined on the **Physician Referral Checklist**. If any of these problems develop, please call 911 or your family physician.
2. Things that are OK to do:
  - a. Take acetaminophen (Tylenol)
  - b. Use ice packs on head or neck as needed for comfort
  - c. Eat a light diet
  - d. Go to sleep (rest is very important)
  - e. No strenuous activity or sports
  - f. Return to school
3. Things that should not be allowed:
  - a. Eat spicy foods
  - b. Watch TV
  - c. Listen to MP3 player or talk on telephone
  - d. Read
  - e. Use a computer
  - f. Bright lights
  - g. Loud noise
4. Things that do not need to be done:
  - a. Check eyes with a flashlight
  - b. Wake up every hour
  - c. Test reflexes
5. Have student report to clinic or athletic training room at \_\_\_\_\_ tomorrow for a follow-up exam

Further recommendations:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Instructions provided to: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Instructions provided by: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_ Time: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact Number: \_\_\_\_\_

## Gainesville ISD Concussion Letter to Teacher

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Teacher,

\_\_\_\_\_, is returning to school after having sustained a concussion. A concussion is a complex injury to the brain caused by movement of the brain within the skull. Please observe this student during class. He/she may still be suffering from post concussion syndrome and may not be able to participate at their normal level. Some things you may notice are headaches, dizziness, nausea, lethargy, moodiness, blurred vision, poor concentration, mentally slow, depression, or aggression. These symptoms may be temporary or long lasting.

Because these symptoms may linger for an unspecified period of time, you may need to modify school work until he/she is symptom free. Also, if you see anything unusual, please notify me as soon as possible, or contact the school nurse. I will keep you informed of any medical updates that are pertinent to the classroom. The school nurse is aware of the injury, and you may consult with her at any time. Also his/her counselors and the appropriate administrators are aware of the injury.

You are an important member of the team that is treating \_\_\_\_\_ for their head injury. The physician and I only get a small snapshot of his daily activity. Therefore, any information that you can pass along to us is both appreciated and necessary to the successful treatment of the concussion.

If you have any further questions, please contact me.

Brian E. Welch, M.Ed, LAT, ATC, PTA, ITAT

Head Athletic Trainer

Gainesville ISD

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## References

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