# ABINGTON HIGH SCHOOL

# **CONCUSSION POLICY**

Pursuant to Mass. Gen. L. c. 111, Section 222 ("Section 222") and accompanying regulations (105 CMR 201 et seq.) the Abington Public Schools have developed this policy to address the identification and proper handling of suspected head injury in students participating in school-based athletics and marching band.

Medical management of sports-related concussion is evolving. In recent years, there has been a significant amount of research into sports-related concussion in high school athletes. Abington High School has established this protocol to provide education about concussion for athletic department staff and other school personnel. This protocol outlines procedures for staff to follow in managing head injuries, and outlines school policy as it pertains to return to play issues after concussion.

Abington High School seeks to provide a safe return to activity for all athletes after injury, particularly after a concussion. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, procedures have been developed to aid in insuring that concussed athletes are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up medical care during the school day, including academic assistance, and are fully recovered prior to returning to activity.

This protocol will be reviewed on a two year basis, by the AHS administration, guidance, athletic director and medical staff. Any changes or modifications will be reviewed and given to athletic department staff and appropriate school personnel in writing.

The Athletic Director of Abington High School shall be the person responsible for the implementation of these policies and procedures in coordination with school administration, school nurse and the guidance department. The Athletic Director is required to review this policy every two years.

All athletic department staff will attend a yearly in-service meeting in which procedures for managing sports-related concussion are discussed. Coaches are required to instruct students in form, technique and skills that minimize sports-related head injury and are directed to discourage and prohibit students from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health and safety of students, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon.

Students who engage and unreasonably dangerous behavior while participating in extracurricular athletic activities will be subject to the code of conduct and possible disciplinary consequences.

**Training:** The following personnel shall be required to participate in training in the prevention and recognition of a sports-related head injury: coaches, certified athletic trainers if applicable, volunteers, school physician, school nurses, athletic director, marching band director (including those volunteers), parents of students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity, and students who participate in an extracurricular athletic activity.

In accordance with Section 222 and accompanying 105 CMR 201.008, online training programs will be offered through the athletic department at no charge to the individual. This training shall include recognizing sports-related head injury including second impact syndrome. Individuals who participate in the training shall submit documentation verifying the completion of the training to the Athletic Director. Such documents shall be maintained by the Athletic Director for three years.

Documentation of a student history of head injuries, including concussions, is kept on file each athletic season with the completion of the parental consent form for each athlete. (See Department of Public Health Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for Extracurricular Activities)

This Pre-participation information required on the Department of Public Health form concerning head injuries and concussions is included in the Abington High School's parental consent form required of each athlete and kept on file in the athletic office.

Documentation of an annual physical examination of students participating in extracurricular athletic activities consistent with 105 CMR 200.00 is kept in the student's health record, which is on file in the Abington High School nurses office.

#### Prerequisites to Participation in Student Athletic or Marching Band

At or before the start of each sport season or band season, students/parents shall provide the following information:

- 1. Documentation of the students' annual physical examination;
- 2. A completed *Pre-participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting for Extra-Curricular Activities ("Pre-Participation Form")* which shall include:
  - a. A comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history, any history regarding head, face or cervical spine injury and/or any history of co-existent concussion injuries; and
  - b. Signatures of both the parent and the student
- 3. A certification of completion for any Athletic Department approved online course or a signed acknowledgement as to their receipt of Department approved written materials. Certification for completion of the online course is valid for one school year. If the student/parent fails to provide any of the above information, the student will not be permitted to participate in the activity/sport, including but not limited to try-outs or practices.

#### Removal from Athletic Activities due to Head Injury

Any student who during a practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, shall be removed from the practice or competition immediately and may not return to practice or competition that day. Parents will be notified so the parent may take the student to a medical provider for appropriate medical evaluation and treatment.

The student must provide a completed Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance

and Authorization Form to the Nurse and Athletic Director prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity.

# **Procedures for Returning to the Activity**

If a student is diagnosed with a concussion, school personnel, including but not limited to the teachers, school nurse, guidance counselor, along with parents shall develop a written graduated entry plan for return to full academics and extracurricular activities. The guidance counselor in coordination with the school nurse will coordinate the writing and approval process of the written graduated entry plan.

Accommodations may include, as appropriate: provision for physical or cognitive rest; graduated return to classroom studies; estimated time intervals for resuming activities; assessments by the school nurse; periodic medical assessment by a physician until the student is authorized to full classroom and extracurricular activities. The school physician and/or student's physician may be consulted as appropriate in devising the graduated entry plan.

## **Reporting Requirements**

All coaches are required to report any student's head injury or suspected concussion sustained in practice or competition to the students parents so follow up by a medical provider for evaluation and treatment can provided. The parent shall be informed of the injury immediately after the practice or competition in which it occurred and notification must be provided in writing no later than the end of the next business day.

The coach must also notify the Athletic Director of the injury and removal from play by the end of the next business day. The coach must also complete a *Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form* and provide it to the Athletic Director, parent and school nurse.

If a student sustains a head injury outside of the extracurricular activity, the parent must complete the **Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form** and return to the Athletic Director.

The Athletic Director shall disseminate to coaches and band directors copies of the Pre-Participation Form for all of the teams and band. All forms that indicate a history of head injury shall be provided to the school nurse. The Athletic Director shall copy any forms that indicate a history of head injury, batch them by team or band grouping, and provide them to the team's physician and the team's certified athletic trainer, if any.

#### **Conclusion**

All coaches, volunteers, trainers etc. who are involved with Abington High School athletes and band members are responsible to follow the procedures and protocols associated with this policy. Failure to do so will result in, but not limited dismissal.

The relevant student portions of this policy shall be reproduced for annual publication in the student handbook.

## Forms:

Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting For Extra-Curricular Activities Form

Department Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form