

Students

**SUBJECT: CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT**

The Board of Education of the Gouverneur Central School District recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities and can have serious consequences if not managed carefully. Therefore, the District adopts the following Policy to support the proper evaluation and management of head injuries.

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury (MTBI). Concussion occurs when normal brain function is disrupted by a blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Recovery from concussion and its symptoms will vary. Avoiding re-injury and over-exertion until fully recovered are the cornerstones of proper concussion management.

**Testing**

All athletes will be tested for concussion baseline with parental signed approved permission. This test will be performed within the first two weeks of his/her practice. Any student diagnosed with a concussion by a physician will be post tested within that week of the diagnosis.

**Identification of Concussion and Removal from Athletic Activities**

While District staff will exercise reasonable care to protect students, head injuries may still occur. Physical education teachers, coaches, nurses and other appropriate staff will receive training to recognize the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion. Any student exhibiting those signs, symptoms and behaviors while participating in a school sponsored class, extracurricular activity or interscholastic athletic activity shall be removed from the game or activity and be evaluated as soon as possible by an appropriate health care professional. In the event that there is any doubt as to whether a pupil has sustained a concussion, it shall be presumed that he/she has been so injured until proven otherwise. The school nurse will notify the student's parents or guardians and recommend appropriate monitoring to them. If the school nurse is not available at the time signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion are exhibited, the athletic trainer or the coach or staff member in charge of supervising the student will notify the student's parents or guardians and recommend appropriate monitoring to them. If there is any doubt as to whether the student has sustained a concussion, it shall be presumed that the student has been injured until proven otherwise. The District shall notify the student's parents or guardians and recommend appropriate evaluation and monitoring.

If a student sustains a concussion at a time other than when engaged in a school-sponsored activity, the District expects the parent or guardian to report the condition to the school nurse so that the District can support the appropriate management of the condition.

The District may allow credentialed District staff to use validated neurocognitive computerized testing as a concussion assessment tool to obtain baseline and post-concussion performance data. These tools are not a replacement for a medical evaluation to diagnose and treat a concussion. The District must seek authorization from the parent/guardian prior to the testing. Additionally, parents/guardians should be given a copy of the results upon request.

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The student shall not return to school or activity until authorized to do so by an appropriate health care professional. The school's Chief Medical Officer will make the final decision on return to activity including physical education class and after-school sports. Any student who continues to have signs or symptoms of concussion upon returning to activity must be removed from play and reevaluated by their health care provider.

The Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate District staff, including the Chief School Medical Officer, will develop regulations and protocols to guide the return to activity.

**Education**

Concussion education should be provided for all administrators, teachers, coaches, school nurses, and guidance counselors. Education of parents should be accomplished through preseason meetings for sports and/or information sheets provided to parents. Education should include, but not be limited to, the definition of concussion, signs and symptoms of concussion, how concussions may occur, practices regarding prevention of concussions, why concussions are not detected with CT Scans or MRI's, management of the injury and the protocol for return to school and return to activity or interscholastic athletics. The protocols will cover all students returning to school after suffering a concussion regardless if the accident occurred outside of school or while participating in a school activity.

**Concussion Management Team (CMT)**

The District will assemble a concussion management team (CMT). The CMT will consist of the Chief Medical Officer, a school nurse, the Athletic Director or Director of Physical Education, a parent and one or more Board appointed coaches.- The CMT will oversee and implement the District's concussion policy, including the requirement that all school coaches, physical education teachers, nurses, and certified athletic trainers who work with and/or provide instruction to pupils engaged in school-sponsored athletic activities complete training relating to MTBIs. Furthermore, every CMT may establish and implement a program which provides information on MTBIs to parents and persons in parental relation throughout each school year. Parents and persons in parental relation must be made aware of the school district's policy and how these injuries will ultimately be managed by school officials.

**Staff Training/Course of Instruction**

Each school coach, physical education teacher, school nurse and certified athletic trainer who works with and/or provides instruction to students in school sponsored athletic activities shall complete a course of instruction every two (2) years relating to recognizing the symptoms of concussions or MTBIs and monitoring and seeking proper medical treatment for students who suffer from a concussion or MTBI. Training should include, but not be limited to, the definition of MTBI; signs and symptoms of MTBI; how MTBIs may occur; practices regarding prevention and guidelines for the return to school and school activities for a student who has suffered an MTBI, even if the injury occurred outside of school.

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The course can be completed by means of instruction approved by State Education Department (SED) which include, but are not limited to, courses provided online and by teleconference. The CMT will utilize the District's existing system to document all required training and professional development for District staff. Upon completion of the training each year, staff will forward their course completion certificate to the appropriate staff for entry into the system. The system will also use an email to remind staff of the need to complete the training each year. Because concussion symptoms may manifest themselves in any setting, all school staff will be encouraged to take the online training and be alert for students who may display or report concussion symptoms.

**Information to Parents and Students**

The District shall include the following information on MTBIs or concussions in any permission or consent form or similar document that may be required from a parent/person in parental relation for a student's participation in interscholastic sports. Similar information will be provided to all students when they sign up for participation in sports and/or through information provided in physical education, health or mental health classes. Information will include: the definition of MTBI; signs and symptoms of MTBI; how MTBIs may occur; practices regarding prevention; and guidelines for the return to school and school activities for a student who has suffered an MTBI, even if the injury occurred outside of school.

Consistent with the Concussion Management and Awareness Act, information from the New York State Department of Health and the New York State Education Department regarding concussions will be included on the Gouverneur Central School District's website.

**Concussion Management Protocol: Return to Participation Protocol Following a Concussion/Head Injury**

The student shall not return to physical activity (including athletics, physical education class and recess) until he/she has been symptom-free for not less than twenty-four (24) hours, and has been evaluated and received written authorization from a licensed physician. A student athlete who has been tested for concussion baseline will be post tested within that week of the diagnosis. In accordance with Commissioner's Regulations, the School District's Medical Director will give final clearance on a return to activity for extra-class athletics. All such authorizations shall be kept on file in the student's permanent health record. The standards for return to athletic activity will also apply to injuries that occur outside of school. School staff should be aware that students may exhibit concussion symptoms caused by injuries from outside activities and that these visible symptoms also indicate a removal from play.

The District shall follow any directives issued by the student's treating physician with regard to limitations and restrictions on school and athletic activities for the student. The District will also develop a coordinated communication plan among appropriate staff to ensure that the treating physician's orders for post-concussion management are implemented and followed. The school nurse will work to ensure that all the necessary staff get the information they need to care for and work with the injured student.

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The District's Medical Director and other licensed healthcare professionals employed by the District will also formulate a procedure and treatment plan to be utilized by District staff who may respond to students or staff with possible concussions during the school day.

The information contained below is to be used as guidelines and are to be implemented following a concussive event. The Gouverneur Central School District reserves the right to develop more stringent protections at any time, and to act in a manner that is more cautious in protecting the health and well-being of its students.

When a student shows signs or symptoms of a concussion or is suspected to have sustained a brain injury after an evaluation by medical personnel or a coach, at the time of the incident:

- a) The student shall not be allowed to return to play in the current game or practice.
- b) The student's general cognitive status should be determined by the School Nurse, an Athletic Trainer or, if appropriate medical personnel are not available, the coach or District personnel responsible for supervising the student through the use of the Gouverneur Central Schools Student Initial Concussion Checklist.
- c) The student shall not be left alone. The student shall be monitored for a minimum of 2 hours following the injury.
- d) Following the injury, the student shall be instructed to see his/her primary care physician or emergency department physician within 24 hours.
- e) The "Initial Concussion Checklist by Coach or Nurse" and the "Concussion Checklist Physician Evaluation" shall be signed and dated by the primary care or ER physician and returned to the School Nurse at Gouverneur Central Schools.
- f) For the student to return to participation, medical clearance and successful completion of the "Return to Participation Protocol" shall occur.
- g) The school nurse will supervise and document the "Return to Participation Protocol." The School District appointed physician shall have final determination regarding return to participation status.

The cornerstone of proper concussion management is rest until resolution of all symptoms, clearance by the student's treating physician, and then a gradual return to activity. The program involves six steps with each step lasting 24 hours. The six steps of the Return to Participation Protocol are:

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- Step 1 No exertion activity until asymptomatic and has received written authorization from his or her treating physician to resume activity.
- Step 2 Light aerobic exercise (walking or stationary bike, etc.) No resistance training.
- Step 3 Sport/activity specific exercise such as skating, running, etc. Progressive addition of resistance training may begin.
- Step 4 Non-contact training/skill drills.
- Step 5 Full contact training in practice setting (if contact/collision sport as defined by 8 NYCRR Section 135.4).
- Step 6 Return to competition.

If any concussion symptoms recur, the student shall submit to an examination by his/her treating physician, receive written authorization from such physician to resume activity, rest for 24 hours, drop back to the previous step, and then resume the protocol. In addition, the student shall be monitored for recurrence of symptoms with mental exertion (e.g., reading, working on a computer, or test taking.) Upon successful completion of the protocol, return to participation shall be permitted.

In accordance with New York State Education Department (NYSED) guidelines, this Policy will be both reviewed and updated periodically. The Superintendent, in consultation with the District's Medical Director and other appropriate staff, may develop regulations and protocols for strategies to prevent concussions, the identification of concussions, and procedures for removal from and return to activities or academics.

Education Law Sections 207; 305(42), and 2854  
8 NYCRR 135.4 and 136.5  
Concussion Management and Awareness Act  
*Guidelines for Concussion Management in Schools*, SED Guidance Document, 2018

Adopted: 2/27/12  
Revised: 8/26/13, 1/15/19