



# Lawrence Public Schools

## Policy

**Section J: STUDENTS**

**JLCG**

**Subject: HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS**

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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Lawrence Public Schools is committed to ensuring the health and safety all students. The following concussion policy utilizes the latest in medical research to prevent and treat head injuries. It is in compliance with M.G.L. c. 111, § 222: *Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities*, enacted in June 2011.

- The policy and procedure addresses sports-related head injuries occurring in extracurricular athletic activities, but may be applied to all head injuries in students.
- Review of this policy and procedure shall occur at least every two years, with revisions completed as needed.
- The Lawrence Public Schools' Concussion Policy will be available on the Lawrence Public Schools' website.
- The person responsible for overseeing the policy for Lawrence Public Schools is the Supervisor of Athletics/Athletic Director
- All persons as specified in the Department of Public Health Regulations 105 CMR 201.008 shall be required to annually participate in a mandatory prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury training program approved by the Department of Public Health. Participation requirements for athletes and parent/guardians are as stated in the Department of Public Health Regulations 105 CMR 201.009.

Definition of Concussion - A concussion is a brain injury which results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion.

Extracurricular Athletic Activity – An organized school sponsored athletic activity generally occurring outside of school instructional hours under the direction of a coach, athletic director, JROTC Instructor, or band leader.



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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

Lawrence Public Schools' Concussion Procedures will address the following but are not limited to:

- Training
- Physical Examinations
- Suspected Head Injury/concussion
  - Management
  - Referral
  - Return to Extracurricular Activity
  - Return to Academic Activity
  - District Accommodation and 504 Plans
- All Forms, Record Keeping, Notification, and Documentation

Legal Ref.: M.G.L. c. 111, § 222

DPH Regulations 105 CMR 201.008 and 201.009

*First Reading:*

*Second Reading:*

*Adoption: 1/24/2012*

*Proposed Reconsideration: 1/2017*



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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

**I.** **Training Program** - The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires annual training on sports-related concussions, including second-impact syndrome, for coaches, certified athletic trainers, volunteers, school nurses, school and team physicians, athletic directors, parents/legal guardians for students participating in extracurricular activities, and any student participating in extracurricular athletics.

- A. At Lawrence Public Schools, school personnel involved in extracurricular athletics are required to complete free, on-line training (either National Federation of High Schools or the CDC's Heads Up Concussion Training) or attend a training event organized by the athletic department and approved by MDPH.
- B. The required training should be done each year
- C. While not required by MDPH, Lawrence Public Schools can also arrange training to guidance counselors, physical education teachers, and other school personnel
- D. Coaches, Athletic Trainers, the Athletic Director, and School Nurses shall be required to attend training on Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities to be presented by the school nurse. An attendance list will be kept as a record of this training.
- E. Each school shall maintain a record of completion of through annual training for all persons specified by 105 CMR 201.007 (A)

### **II.** **Participation Requirements for Students and Parents/Guardians**

- A. Pre-participation Requirements
  - 1. Each year Lawrence Public Schools shall provide current Department-approved training, written materials, or a list and internet links for Department-approved on-line courses to all students who plan to participate in extracurricular athletic activities and their parents/guardians in advance of the student's participation
  - 2. All students who plan to participate in extracurricular activities and their parent/ guardian shall satisfy the following pre-participation requirements;
    - a. Each year before the student begins practice or competition, the student and the parent/guardian shall:
      - i. Complete current Department-approved training regarding head injuries and concussions in extracurricular activities; and





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### **IV. Exclusion from Play**

Any student athlete, who during practice or competition, sustains a head injury or suspected concussion, exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, shall be removed from practice/competition immediately and may not return to practice/ competition that day. The student shall not be permitted to return to practice or competition unless and until the student provides medical clearance and authorization as specified in 105 CMR 201.011. If an athlete sustains a sports-related head injury, including a suspected concussion, the athletic trainer or coach will notify the parent/guardian immediately following the practice/competition. Within 24 hours, the coach, athletic director, or athletic trainer will notify the school nursing staff. This procedure is the same for all home and away athletic events.

The coach or his/her designee shall complete a MDPH Report of Head Injury Form upon identification of a student athlete with a head injury or suspected concussion that occurs during practice or competition. The completed Report of Head Injury Form shall be turned in to the school nurse by the close of the business the following day.

Each student, who is removed from practice/competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion, shall have a written gradual reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular activities. The development of a gradual re-entry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities may include, but is not limited to the following professionals: teachers, guidance counselor, school nurse, athletic trainer, parent/guardian, evaluation team facilitator, and physician that is managing student's recovery. The written plan shall include instructions for students, parents, and school personnel, addressing but not limited to:

- Physical and Cognitive Rest, as appropriate
- Gradual Return to Play (see Appendix)
- Gradual Return to Full Academics (see Appendix)
- Frequency of assessments
- A plan for communication and coordination among all parties involved

The student must be completely symptom free and medically cleared as defined in 105 CMR 201.011 in order to begin the Gradual Return to Play Protocol (RTP). Progress will be individualized and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. The certified athletic trainer will administer the RTP. Progression through the steps is to be approved by the athletic trainer only, and not left up to the coach. If the athlete experiences post-concussion symptoms during any stage, activity **will** cease until symptoms subside. The



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### **POLICY STATEMENT**

athletic trainer will communicate to the school nurse the student is not symptom-free so that the nurse can notify the physician managing the injury

#### **V. Medical Clearance and Authorization to Return to Play**

Each student, who is removed from play for a head injury, suspected concussion, loss of consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall obtain and present to the school nurse a MDPH Post Sports-related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity. This form must be completed by a physician or one of the individuals as authorized by 105 CMR 201.011. The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse, the athletic trainer, and teachers, as appropriate. Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play:

- a duly licensed physician;
- a duly licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
- a duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or
- a duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery

By September 2013, physicians, nurse practitioners, certified athletic trainers, and neuropsychologists providing medical clearance for return to play shall verify that they have received DPH approved training in post traumatic head injury assessment and management or have received equivalent training as part of their licensure or continuing education.

Final authority for return to play shall reside with the student's physician, however, if the school nurse, coach, or certified athletic trainer identifies signs or symptoms of a concussion, following a clearance by student's physician, Lawrence Public Schools retains the right to exclude the student from play until student is re-evaluated by a physician.

#### **VI. Responsibilities of the Athletic Director**

The Athletic Director shall:

- 1) Participate in the development and bi-annual review of the policies and procedures required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries;
- 2) Complete the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.007;



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- 3) Unless school policies and procedures provide otherwise, be responsible for:
  - a. Ensuring that the training requirements for staff, parents, volunteers, coaches, and students are met, recorded, and records are maintained in accordance with 105 CMR 201.016;
  - b. Ensuring that all students meet the physical examination requirements consistent with 105 CMR 200.000: Physical Examination of School Children prior to participation in any extracurricular activity;
  - c. Ensuring that all students participating in extracurricular athletic activities have completed and submitted the DPH Pre-Participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, prior to participation each season;
  - d. Ensuring that student Pre-Participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, are reviewed according to 105 CMR 200.009(A) and shall make arrangements for:
    - i. timely review of all Pre-Participation and Report of Head Injury Forms by coaches so as to identify students who are at greater risk of repeated head injuries
    - ii. timely review of Pre-Participation Forms which indicate a history of head injury and Report of Head Injury forms by (i) the school nurse; and (ii) the school physician, if appropriate; and
    - iii. timely review of accurate, updated information regarding each athlete who has reported a history of head injury or a head injury during the sports season by (i) the team's physician if any, and (ii) the school's certified athletic trainer if any.
  - e. Ensuring that Department Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, are completed by the parent or coach and reviewed by the coach, school nurse, certified athletic trainer, and school physician as specified in 105 CMR 200.009(A);
  - f. Ensuring that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic training technique that endanger the health and safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon; and
  - g. Reporting annual statistics pertaining to disciplinary action for failure to comply with the school district's policy and procedures to the Department of Public Health in accordance with 105 CMR 201.017.

### **VII. Responsibilities of Coaches**

Coaches are required to:

- 1) Complete the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.007;
- 2) Review Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;



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- 3) Complete a Report of Head Injury Form, or school-based equivalent, upon identification of a student with a head injury or suspected concussion that occurs during practice or competition;
- 4) Receive, unless otherwise specified in school policies and procedures, and review forms that are completed by a parent which report a head injury during the sports season, but outside of an extracurricular athletic activity, so as to identify those athletes who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;
- 5) Transmit promptly forms in 105 CMR 201.013(A)(2) and (3) to the school nurse for review and maintenance in the student's health record, unless otherwise specified in school policies and procedures;
- 6) Teach techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injuries; and
- 7) Identify athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice or competition and remove them from play.

Coaches working in the Lawrence Public Schools are expected to be current with the best practices in their sport, which reduce the likelihood of a head injury. In addition coaches are prohibited from teaching or promoting dangerous practices.

Coaches are responsible for communicating promptly with the parent of any student removed from practice or competition as directed in 105 CMR 201.010(C) and with the Athletic Director and school nurse as directed in 105 CMR 201.010(D).

### **VIII. Responsibilities of Certified Athletic Trainers**

Certified Athletic Trainers are required to:

- 1) Participate in the development and bi-annual review of the policies and procedures required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district or school;
- 2) Complete the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.007;
- 3) Review information from Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, which indicate a history of head injury and from Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, to identify students who are at greater risk for repeated head injuries;
- 4) Identify athletes with head injuries or suspected concussions that occur in practice or competition and removing them from play; and
- 5) Participate, if available, in the gradual re-entry planning and implementation for students who have been diagnosed with a concussion.



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Once gradual re-entry plan is successfully completed by student, certified athletic trainer will notify school nurse and provide school nurse with copy of gradual return to play form.

### **IX. Responsibilities of the School Nurse**

School Nurses are required to:

- 1) Participate in the development and bi-annual review of the policies and procedures required by 105 CMR 201.006 for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries within the school district or school;
- 2) Complete the annual training as required by 105 CMR 201.007;
- 3) Review completed Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents, that indicate a history of head injury and follow up with parents as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities;
- 4) Review Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, and follow up with the coach and parent as needed;
- 5) Maintain Pre-participation Forms, or school-based equivalents and Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, in the student's health record;
- 6) Participate in the gradual re-entry planning for students who have been diagnosed with a concussion to discuss any necessary accommodations or modifications with respect to academics, course requirements, homework, testing, scheduling and other aspects of school activities consistent with a graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities after a head injury and revising the health care plan as needed;
- 7) Monitor recuperating students with head injuries and collaborate with teachers to ensure that the gradual re-entry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities required by 105 CMR 201.010(E) is being followed;
- 8) Communicate with the athlete's guidance counselor regarding the athlete's neurocognitive status and recovery status, if needed; and
- 9) Provide ongoing education on head injury and concussions to teachers, staff and students.

### **X. Record Maintenance**

The school, consistent with any applicable state and federal law, shall maintain the following records for three years or, at a minimum, until the student graduates:

- Verification of completion of annual training and receipt of materials;
- Department Pre-Participation forms, or school-based equivalent;
- Department Report of Head Injury forms, or school-based equivalent;



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- Massachusetts Department of Public Health Medical Clearance and Authorization forms, or school-based equivalent;
- Gradual Re-entry plans for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

The school shall make these records available to the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, upon request or in connection with any inspection or program review.

### **XI. Reporting**

Starting school year 2011-2012, schools shall be responsible for maintaining and reporting annual statistics on a Massachusetts Department of Public Health form or electronic format that, at a minimum, report: 1) the total number of DPH Report of Head Injury Forms, or school-based equivalents, received by the school, and 2) the total number of students who incur head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in extracurricular athletic activities.

### **XII. Outreach to Parents**

Because of limited English proficiency, some parents may be unable to communicate with school personnel and may feel isolated from the school community. Lawrence Public Schools makes every attempt to communicate effectively with parents with limited English proficiency. Lawrence Public Schools has Spanish versions available of all required forms, handouts, policies & procedures, as well as translation services available during the school day.

Student Athletes in the Lawrence Public Schools will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular sports until both the parent and student have completed and returned the signed Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form (or school-based equivalent) for Extracurricular Activities before the start of every sports season. In the event the school has not received the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form or other required forms, including documentation of an annual physical examination and documentation that both the student athlete and their parent/guardian have completed the required annual training, Lawrence Public Schools will make attempts to contact parent using the schools typical communication methods to parents (email, mail, telephone, etc.). The student athlete will not be allowed to play or practice until the appropriate required forms are completed, signed, and returned to the Athletic Department.



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### **XIII. Penalties**

The Lawrence Public Schools takes the safety of student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student athletes. The underlying philosophy of these policies is **“when in doubt, sit them out”**. Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact the Superintendent of Schools and also place their complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

***First Reading:***

***Second Reading:***

***Adoption: 1/24/2012***

***Proposed Reconsideration: 1/2017***