

**Loudoun County Public Schools
Division of Athletics**



Concussions in High School Sports—LCPS Guidelines for Parents, Athletes, & Staff
IMPORTANT INFORMATION—READ CAREFULLY

Loudoun County Public Schools—Student Athlete Concussion Guidelines:

Effective July 1, 2011, the Code of Virginia was amended to include Section 22.1-271.5 directing Virginia school divisions to **develop and distribute guidelines for policies dealing with concussions** in student-athletes, and requiring Loudoun County Public Schools (LCPS) to obtain written acknowledgment from students and parents of information regarding the **identification and LCPS handling of suspected concussions** in student athletes.

1. Concussion Facts:

- A concussion is a **brain injury** caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the **head, face, neck, or body** 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. **An athlete does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion.**
- Concussions occur most frequently in football, but girls' lacrosse, girls' soccer, boy's lacrosse, wrestling and girls' basketball follow closely behind. **All athletes are at risk.**
- Concussion symptoms may last from a few days to **several months.**
- A concussion can affect a student's **ability to do schoolwork and other activities.**
- An athlete **may not return to sports while still having symptoms** from a concussion as they are at risk for prolonged symptoms and further injury.
- A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others **may develop over the next several days or weeks.**
- Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, **the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly** and the consequences of a seemingly mild second concussion can be **very severe, and even result in death** (i.e. "Second Impact Syndrome").

2. Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT)

In an effort to provide for the safety of our student athletes, LCPS has implemented the **Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT)** program as a tool to assist in the evaluation of concussions. ImPACT is widely used and the most scientifically validated computerized concussion evaluation tool. Given the inherent difficulties in concussion management, it is important to manage concussions on an individualized basis and to perform baseline testing and/or post injury testing. This type of concussion assessment can help to objectively evaluate the concussed athlete's post-injury condition and track recovery for safe return to play, thus preventing the cumulative effects of concussion.

A "Baseline" ImPACT evaluation is conducted by the LCPS Athletic Trainer with assistance from the Athletic Director and Coaches trained to administer baseline testing.

3. Concussion Signs Observed by Parents, Coaches, and Students:

- Athlete appears dazed or stunned • Is confused about what to do • Forgets plays • Is unsure of game, score or opponent
- Moves clumsily • Loses consciousness • Shows behavior or personality changes • Can't recall events prior to hit • Can't recall events after hit

4. Concussion Signs and Symptoms:

- Athlete feels Headache or "pressure" in head • Nausea or vomiting • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or fuzzy vision • Bothered by light or noise • Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion

5. Actions if a Student Athlete Suffers a Suspected Concussion Event:

- Student Athlete **shall be immediately removed from play**, be it a game or practice, and **may not** return to play or practice on that same day. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for further injury, and even a risk of death. **WHEN IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT.**
- Student Athlete **must be evaluated by an Approved Healthcare Professional and be cleared** before returning to play or practice. The healthcare professional's written diagnosis indicating the athlete's status shall be provided to the Athletic Trainer for further clearance. **Approved Healthcare Professionals include MD-Medical Doctor, DO-Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, PA-Physician Assistant, CNP-Certified Nurse Practitioner, ATC-Certified Athletic Trainer, and/or Neuropsychologist.**
- Approximately 48 hours after a suspected concussion, the Student Athlete will be ImPACT evaluated again. Once an athlete is asymptomatic, they may **begin a progression of activities in a step-wise fashion** to allow the brain to re-adjust to exertion. **REST IS THE BEST TREATMENT FOR CONCUSSION.**

6. "Steps" the Student Athlete Must Follow After Clearance by a Medical Professional:

If symptoms occur during any of the following Steps, the athlete must cease activity and be re-evaluated and cleared once again by their healthcare provider.

- **Step 1** No physical activity until asymptomatic. Athlete must remain asymptomatic in order to progress to the next Step. If symptoms return during any of the Steps, the student athlete must return to the previous Step.
- **Step 2** Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight lifting.
- **Step 3** Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
- **Step 4** Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight training can begin. If after Step 4, there are no symptoms of concussion, the athlete will be given a cognitive test before going on to **Step 5**. If the athlete does not clear on the second ImPACT evaluation, they will repeat the Steps above and have another ImPACT evaluation after **Step 4**.
- **Step 5** Full Contact practice or training.
- **Step 6** Game-play with release from **Approved Healthcare Professional (MD- Medical Doctor, DO- Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine, PA- Physician Assistant, CNP- Certified Nurse Practitioner, ATC- Certified Athletic Trainer, or Neuropsychologist).**

7. What Must be Done by Student Athletes, Parents, and LCPS Staff?

- All parties must learn to **recognize the Signs and Symptoms** of concussion.
- Teach student athletes to **immediately inform the Athletic Trainer and Coach** if they experience such symptoms.
- Teach student athletes to **tell the Athletic Trainer and Coach** if they suspect that **at teammate has a concussion.**
- **Ask Teachers to monitor** any decrease in grades or changes in behavior that could indicate a concussion.
- **Report concussions to the Athletic Trainer and Coaches** to help with monitoring injured student athletes as they move to the next sports season.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION—PLEASE READ CAREFULLY

Indicate your agreement by signing below and return the signed form to your student's school. Keep a copy for your records.

I have received and read the **Loudoun County Public Schools Student Athlete--Concussion Guidelines** and grant my consent and permission for the Student Athlete to participate in the **Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing (ImPACT)** program including Baseline and Post-Concussion Cognitive Testing. Furthermore, I acknowledge, understand, and certify by my signature below that I agree to the protocols of the LCPS concussion program for the Student Athlete's best welfare and safe participation in sports for Loudoun County Public Schools.

Student Athlete (Type or Print)

Student Athlete Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian (Type or Print)

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

**CONCUSSION AND IMPACT TESTING
PROTOCOL
2014 - 2015**

FALL 2014 – The following sports will be ImPact tested:

Football – freshmen, juniors & any new athlete to the program
Cheer – freshmen, juniors & any new athlete to the program
Volleyball – freshmen, juniors & any new athlete to the program

WINTER – 2014 - 2015 – The following will be ImPact tested:

Wrestling – freshman, juniors & any new athlete to program
Gymnastics – freshman, juniors & any new athlete to program
Basketball (boy's & girl's) – freshmen, juniors & any new athlete to program

SPRING 2015 – The following will be ImPact tested:

Soccer (boy's & girl's) – freshman, juniors & any new athletes to program
Lacrosse (boy's & girl's) – freshmen, juniors & any new athletes to program
Baseball/Softball – freshmen & any new athletes to program

If an athlete is suspected of a concussion, they will be remove immediately from practice or play and cannot return to practice or play that day. An approved licensed healthcare professional will evaluate the athlete.

STEPS THE STUDENT ATHLETE MUST FOLLOW AFTER CLEARANCE BY A MEDICAL PROFESSIONAL:

If symptoms occur during any of the following steps, the athlete must cease activity and be re-evaluated and cleared by their health care provider.

STEPS:

1. No physical activity until asymptomatic.
2. Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight lifting.
3. Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
4. Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight training may begin.
***If, after Step 4, there are no symptoms of concussion, the athlete will be given a cognitive test before going on to Step 5.**
5. Full contact practice or training.
6. Game play with release from Medical Professional.

The student athlete must remain asymptomatic to progress to the next step. If symptoms return during any of the steps, the student athlete must return to the previous step.

LCPS Post-Concussion Instructions For Home and School

Name: _____ has been evaluated with a concussion that occurred on _____.
Following these instructions can help speed recovery and prevent further injury.

Common Symptoms:

It is common to have one or more of the symptoms below following a concussion:

- Headache
- Dizziness
- Loss of balance
- Nausea
- Sensitivity to light/sound
- Fatigue
- Visual problems
- Feeling foggy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Irritability
- Drowsiness
- Nervousness
- Sadness
- Trouble falling asleep

When to Immediately Seek Medical Care

If you observe any of the symptoms below, go to the emergency department **immediately**:

- Headache that worsens
- Seizures
- Neck pain
- Unusual behavior change
- Very drowsy
- Vomiting
- Slurred speech
- Significant irritability
- Can't recognize people or places
- Increasing confusion
- Weakness/numbness in arms/legs
- Less responsive than usual

It is **OK** stay in bed and take pain medicine as prescribed by your physician.

It is **OK** to go to sleep and there is no need to wake up every hour.

DO NOT drive while you have symptoms.

DO NOT participate in PE or sports.

Returning to School/Daily Activities

The key to recovery is **REST!** Both physically and mentally. Avoid activities that worsen symptoms or that might cause another head injury as these may prolong recovery.

Avoid:

- Physical activities (PE, sports, exercise).
- Mental activities (homework, watching TV, video games, texting).

School Personnel

School personnel should be aware of the following symptoms:

- Increased problems paying attention, concentrating, remembering or learning new information.
- Needing longer time to complete a task.
- Increasing irritability and less able to cope with stress.

Returning to Sports

The student-athlete should **NEVER** return to PE, sports or physical activity until they have been evaluated by an approved, licensed healthcare professional (MD, DO, PA, CNP, Certified Athletic Trainer or Neuropsychologist). Once symptoms have resolved, the student-athlete may begin the post-concussion gradual return to play protocol. If the student-athlete remains asymptomatic throughout the protocol and has **WRITTEN** clearance from their healthcare professional, they may return to full activity.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact:

Print Name/Title: _____ **Phone #:** _____

Signature: _____ **Date:** _____