



Concussion Plan

Montgomery County Public Schools (MCPS) Guidelines and Procedures Regarding Concussions/Head Injuries

MCPS guidelines and procedures for student-athletes who sustain head injuries/concussions conform to recommendations by the Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the National Federation of High Schools (NFHS), the Maryland Public Secondary Schools Athletics Association (MPSSAA), and the Maryland State Department of Education (MSDE). Information and forms referenced in the MCPS Concussion Plan are located under Concussions in the Health and Safety section of the MCPS Athletics web page at the following address: (<http://www.montgomeryschoolsmd.org/departments/athletics>).

The MCPS Concussion Plan includes the following elements:

- A. Education
 - 1. Coaches
 - 2. Student-Athletes/Parents/Guardians
- B. Baseline Testing
- C. Athletic Trainers
- D. Procedures
 - 1. General Procedures
 - 2. Coach Procedures
 - 3. Nurse Procedures
- E. Return-to-Play
- F. Forms and Documents
- G. Limitations on Full Contact

Attachment A: MPSSAA document: *High School Student-Athlete Probable Head Injury Flow Chart*

Attachment B: MSDE document: *Recommendations: Identification of Collision, Contact, and Non-Contact Sports and Recommended Concussion Injury Mitigation and Limitations of Contact Exposure.*

A. Education

- 1. *MCPS coaches will:*
 - a) Review annually the MCPS Concussion Plan.
 - b) Receive training and instruction regarding head injuries in *Care and Prevention of Athletic Injuries*, a course required for coaching certification at Maryland public schools.
 - c) Complete every two years the NFHS Coaches' Education Course: *Concussions in Sports*.
 - d) Review *Coach Resource Materials* in the *Health and Safety* section of the MCPS Athletics web page.

- e) Have available at practices and contests the MCPS *Concussion Quick Reference Card*.
- f) Receive relevant guidance and information at school and systemwide coaches' meetings.
- g) Inform parents/guardians and student-athletes of guidelines and procedures regarding concussions.
- h) Present a PowerPoint to student-athletes on health and safety information, including concussions.

2. *Student-athletes and parents/guardians will:*

- a) Receive information describing the MCPS *Concussion Plan* during the online registration process for athletics.
- b) Receive information published by the CDC on symptoms and procedures regarding concussions (*Head's Up—A Fact Sheet for Parents*) during the registration process for athletics.
- c) Be encouraged to review additional health and safety materials regarding concussions in the *Health and Safety* section of the on the MCPS Athletics web page
- d) Complete the MPSSAA forms *Pre-participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form* and *Concussion Awareness (Parent/Student-Athlete Acknowledgement Statement)* during the online registration process for athletics.
- e) Receive verbal instruction from coaches at practices (student-athletes) and/or parent/guardian preseason meetings regarding concussions.
- f) Indicate during the online registration process for athletics that they have reviewed safety and health-related information made available by the school system, including concussions.

B. Baseline Testing

1. All MCPS student-athletes will participate in baseline concussion testing at the beginning of the season. Student-athletes must take a baseline test every two years.
2. Parents/guardians will receive information describing the MCPS *Baseline Testing Plan* during the online registration process for athletics.
3. Details regarding ImPACT baseline concussion testing are described in the *Baseline Testing Plan* in the *Health and Safety* section of the MCPS Athletics web page.

C. Athletic Trainers

1. Athletic trainers are assigned to all 25 MCPS high schools.
2. Athletic trainers will be available at practices and contests. The “home” team athletic trainer will assist with injuries sustained by both the home and visiting team.
3. Athletic trainers will assist in implementing baseline concussion testing and “gradual return-to-play” protocol after a student-athlete is cleared by to resume participation after a concussion.

D. Procedures

1. *General Procedures*

- a) Any student-athlete who exhibits signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion shall be removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until cleared by an authorized health care provider—the clearance must be signed.
- b) The student-athlete's parents/guardians shall be informed that their child may have suffered a concussion and shall be advised to take their child to an authorized health care provider as soon as possible. The parent/guardian will be issued the MPSSAA form *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*.
- c) Appropriate school personnel, including administrators, athletic director, athletic trainer, and school nurse, will be informed of the injury. Appropriate follow-up will be initiated, including potential academic accommodations.
- d) If the student-athlete suffered a concussion, he/she may begin a supervised gradual return to play process on the date indicated on the form *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*.
- e) The student-athlete's gradual return to full activity is supervised by school staff over a five-day period, according to the MPSSAA form *Graduated Return to Play Protocol*. Generally, the school athletic trainer will supervise gradual return to play protocol.
- f) The student-athlete may resume full participation after he or she successfully completes a supervised, gradual return-to-play protocol.

2. *Coach / Athletic Trainer / Athletic Director Procedures*

When a student-athlete suffers a potential concussion:

- a) The coach or athletic trainer removes the student-athlete from the practice or contest.
- b) The coach, designee, or athletic trainer calls 911 and/or student-athlete's parent/guardian (Emergency Cards must always be available for this purpose).
- c) In instances when it is fairly clear that the student-athlete has suffered a concussion, the coach/designee/athletic trainer calls emergency personnel (911) and the student-athlete's parents/guardians.
- d) In instances where the student-athlete displays only mild symptoms, the coach/designee/athletic trainers calls the parent/guardian, and asks whether the parent/guardian wants to pick the student-athlete up immediately or whether to call 911.
- e) If the parent/guardian cannot be contacted, the coach/designee/athletic trainer calls the emergency contact person designated on the Emergency Medical Card.
- f) A coach/designee/athletic trainer should remain with the student-athlete at all times until either a parent/guardian or emergency personnel arrive.
- g) A student-athlete should not be allowed to go home unless accompanied by a parent/guardian or an adult designated by the parent/guardian.
- h) The coach or athletic trainer presents to the parent/guardian the MPSSAA form *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*. This form provides instructions to

parents/guardians, including that the parent/guardian or student-athlete must take the form to an appropriate health care provider, and bring the completed form to the school nurse as soon as possible after the injury.

- i) The coach follows school protocol in notifying appropriate school staff that a potential concussion (or serious injury) has occurred. At a minimum, the coach notifies the athletic director the afternoon or evening after the practice or contest ends when a student-athlete has been removed from participation because of a potential concussion. The athletic director then informs the athletic trainer and school nurse (unless the athletic trainer is already aware).
- j) The coach, with assistance from the athletic trainer, completes and submits a *Student Accident Report* (MCPS Form 525-2) to the athletic director the next school day.
- k) The athletic director informs the school nurse of the injury on or before the start of the next school day following the injury.
- l) The school nurse follows-up with the student-athlete, and notifies the athletic director when the student-athlete may resume participation. The athletic director informs the athletic trainer and coach.
- m) The athletic director and the athletic trainer retain copies of the completed *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury* and the athletic trainer enters on the applicable database that a concussion has occurred.
- n) If the injury was a concussion, the coach and athletic trainer initiate procedures described in the form *Graduated Return to Play Protocol*.

3. ***Nurse Procedures***

- a) The school nurse implements follow-up procedures described in the [High School Student-Athlete Probable Head Injury Flow Chart](#). (Attachment A)
- b) These procedures include separate courses of action based on whether the injury occurred during the school day or after school.
- c) These procedures also include separate courses of action based on whether or not the student-athlete has suffered a concussion.
- d) After following the procedures described in the flow chart, the student-athlete may resume a supervised gradual return to play once the nurse returns to the athletic director a copy of the medical clearance (*Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*).

E. Return-to-Play

1. Student-athletes who are removed from a practice or contest because they exhibit signs or symptoms consistent with a concussion must have written medical clearance before they may return to play. The medical clearance shall be indicated on the MPSSAA form titled *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*.
2. The form is given to parents/guardians of student-athletes who have potentially suffered a concussion, and includes procedures on how the student-athlete may obtain clearance to resume participation. The form must be completed and signed by a licensed health care provider (LHCP).
3. The completed form is returned to the school nurse when the student-athlete returns to school.

4. The form includes two separate clearances. If a student-athlete has not suffered a concussion, the LHCP indicates such on the form and there is no need for a follow-up examination.
5. If the form indicates that the student-athlete has suffered a concussion, the student-athlete may not resume participation until receiving clearance from a LHCP (indicated in Section 2 of the form).
6. The school nurse informs the athletic director when the student-athlete may initiate a gradual return to play program, and provides a copy of the completed form *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*. The athletic trainer informs the coach and athletic trainer.
7. The coach or athletic trainer monitors *Gradual Return to Play Protocol* over a five-day period.
8. If the student-athlete remains symptom-free, he or she may return to full participation after the five-day gradual return-to-play period.
9. The school files and retains copies of all of the forms associated with the student-athlete's concussion for a period of five years.

F. Forms and Documents

1. ***Concussion / Baseline Testing Information for Student-Athletes and Parents/guardians***
 - a) *Concussion Information for Parents*
 - b) *Baseline Testing Information for Parents*
 - c) *Head's Up – A Fact Sheet for Parents*
 - d) *Head's Up – A Fact Sheet for Students*
2. ***Concussion / Baseline Testing Forms***
 - a) *Consent Form – ImPACT Baseline Concussion Testing**
 - b) *Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Report Form for Extracurricular Activities**
 - c) *Concussion Awareness (Parent/Student-Athlete Acknowledgement Statement) form**
 - d) *Medical Clearance for Student-Athlete Suspected Head Injury*
 - e) *Graduated Return to Play Protocol*

** Forms completed during the online registration process for athletics.*
3. ***Concussion Administrative Information***
 - a) *MCPS Concussion Plan*
 - b) *MCPS Baseline Testing Plan*
 - c) *Concussions in Sports (NFHS online course)*
 - d) *High School Student-Athlete Probable Head Injury Flow Chart (Attachment A)*

G. Limitations on Full Contact

1. The MSDE has categorized sports in one of three categories: collision, contact, and non-contact. In turn, the MSDE has provided recommendations on limiting exposures to head

injuries in collision and contact sports, including basketball, field hockey, football, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, soccer, and wrestling.

2. MCPS coaches of basketball, field hockey, football, boys' lacrosse, girls' lacrosse, soccer, and wrestling will follow MSDE recommendations included in the document *Identification of Collision, Contact, and Non-Contact Sports and Recommended Concussion Injury Mitigation and Limitations of Contact Exposure*. (Attachment B)