

TRUMBULL PUBLIC SCHOOLS
BOARD OF EDUCATION
POLICY MANUAL

SECTION: **5000**
CATEGORY: **Students**
POLICY CODE: **5141.7/Concussions**

CONCUSSIONS

Policy Statement

The Trumbull Board of Education is concerned about the health and safety of its students. To this end we have developed this policy to protect our students and/or student athletes from returning to school too early following a concussion. All Board of Education employees should recognize that concussions are serious injuries that need to be taken care of properly. Coaches and athletic trainers will be responsible to recognize concussions among student athletes and will follow state law and school district regulations before returning any athlete with a suspected concussion to play. Recent research has illuminated the need for guidelines in this area, as there could be long-term complications by allowing a student to return to his/her prior activities too soon. It is the intent of this policy to establish guidelines for the District regarding potential complications of concussion, especially Second-Impact Syndrome.

The objectives of this policy are to ensure safe and consistent management of students who have sustained a concussion. In order to facilitate this objective there needs to be collaboration among the students, parents/guardians, school nurses, students' physicians or other licensed health care professionals, coaches, athletic trainers, teachers, and administrative staff.

The District shall implement the "Concussion Education Plan and Guidelines for Connecticut Schools" developed by the State Board of Education per the stipulations of Public Act 14-66. The Board recognizes that a student may not participate in any intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic athletic activity unless the student and his/her parent/guardian have completed the concussion education plan of the State Board of Education and its contributing organizations to such plan. Prior to participating in any intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic athletic activity, a student must (1) read written materials, (2) view online training videos, or (3) attend in-person training regarding the District's concussion education plan provided by the State Board of Education. The District will utilize an online version of the "Concussion Education Plan & Consent Form" developed by the State Board of Education with parents/guardians of student athletes in intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic activities. Each season of play, the consent form must be returned to the appropriate school activity, signed by the parents/guardians, attesting to the receipt of such form and authorizing the student athlete to participate in the athletic activity.

Adopted: 10/4/2011
Revised: 2/16/2016

References

- Connecticut Public Act 14-66, "An Act Concerning Youth Athletics and Concussions"
- Connecticut General Statutes §§ 10-149b, 10-149c

Regulations

All intramural sports, sports club, and interscholastic coaches/advisers, athletic trainers, and physical education teachers shall complete an initial training course and annual follow-up training regarding concussions, as developed by the State Board of Education pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §10-149b. For the school year commencing July 1, 2011, and each school year thereafter, each intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic coach/adviser shall annually review current and relevant information regarding concussions, except during a year when such coach/adviser is required to complete the refresher course for reissuance of his/her coaching permit whereby participation in the refresher course will suffice to satisfy the annual review requirement. Beginning July 1, 2015, and each school year thereafter, each intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic coach/adviser shall complete a refresher course not later than 5 years after completion of the initial training course as a condition of the reissuance of a coaching permit in accordance with Connecticut General Statute §10-149b and thereafter retake such refresher course at least once every five years as condition of reissuance of a coaching permit.

Anyone who is in violation of state law regarding student athletes and concussions, including provisions for mandated training, and protocols for return to play, may be subject to revocation of his/her coaching permit(s) pursuant to Connecticut General Statute §10-145b(i).

For purposes of this policy and its regulations, “licensed health care professional,” as defined by Public Act 14-66, means “a physician licensed pursuant to chapter 370, a physician assistant licensed pursuant to chapter 370, an advanced practice registered nurse licensed pursuant to chapter 378, or an athletic trainer licensed pursuant to chapter 375a.”

I. Concussion Management

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI) that is caused by a blow to the head or body, causing the brain to move rapidly inside the skull. This may result in altered mental function and a wide range of signs and symptoms. Athletes who continue to play while still experiencing symptoms of concussion are at a significant risk for re-injury, permanent brain injury, and even death. All intramural sports, sports club, and interscholastic coaches and advisers, athletic trainers, school nurses, and physical education teachers will be educated about the signs and symptoms of concussion.

1. If a suspected concussion occurs during a school-sponsored intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic athletic activity, the coach/adviser, athletic trainer and/or physical education teacher at the event will be able to identify the symptoms of a concussion.
2. If a suspected concussion presents to the coach/adviser, athletic trainer, and/or physical education teacher at such an event, the affected student will be informed about his or her suspected concussion. If a student sustains a head injury that results in suspicious symptoms, he or she will not be allowed to continue the activity until cleared by a licensed health care professional.

3. The student's parents/guardians will be informed of the incident immediately; if immediate notification is not possible or practical then the parents/guardians should be notified as promptly as possible by the coach/adviser, athletic trainer, school nurse, and/or physical education teacher and instructed to follow up with a licensed health care professional. The student must be cleared to fully participate in academic and non-academic activities by a licensed health care professional.
4. If a suspected concussion occurs during school or a school-sponsored event that is not an intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic athletic activity, and if a trained coach/adviser, athletic trainer, school nurse, and/or physical education teacher is not present, then the other personnel in charge of the classroom or event will contact the building administrator in charge for further guidance about evaluation of the student's suspected concussion.
5. If, at any time during school or during any type of school-sponsored event, a student presents confusion, unusual behavior or unusual responsiveness, deteriorating condition, loss of consciousness, or other evidence of neck or spine injury, the student should be referred at once for emergency care.
6. In the event that a student suffers a concussion during school, after school hours, or at home, the school nurse should be notified promptly in accordance with building-based guidelines.

II. Concussion Recognition: Baseline and Post-Injury Screening

A baseline neurological/cognitive screening test administered under the direction of the Athletic Director will be offered to students playing high-risk contact sports, first by sport (priority set by the Athletic Director) and second to all other student athletes who request the screening test. Parents of student athletes may request a baseline neurological/cognitive screening test. Appropriate parental consents must be obtained before an initial neurological/cognitive screening test will be administered.

For students who have had a baseline concussion screening test and then sustain a head injury during intramural sports, sports club, or interscholastic athletic activities, a second concussion screening test will be conducted as soon after the injury as deemed appropriate and feasible by the athletic trainer. The results of the baseline and the second concussion screening test will be provided to the students to take to his/her licensed health care professional to assist the licensed health care professional in assessing and treating the head injury.

Both the baseline and post-injury screening will be used as opportunities to educate students, staff, and parents/guardians about Second-Impact Syndrome, a potential severe health consequence of re-injury following a concussion and early return to play.

As the Trumbull School District is an educational institution and not a health care facility, further testing with this screening tool will not be conducted unless the school athletic trainer determines that a special circumstance exists and warrants such additional testing.

III. Academic Compliance – Concussions

When a building administrator becomes aware that a student has suffered a concussion during school, after school hours, or at home, the administrator will collaborate as appropriate with the student, the student's parents/guardians, other school staff, and the student's licensed health care professional to develop the most appropriate academic plan for the student, in accordance with appropriate District policy and state and federal law.

IV. Return to Athletic Play After Concussion

All intramural sports, sports club, and interscholastic coaches/advisers, athletic trainers, school nurses, and physical education teachers will follow Connecticut General Statute §10-149c in regulating a student's removal from and return to practice or play based upon a head injury or concussion.

1. Following a concussion, "students should be performing at their academic baseline before returning to sports, full physical activity, or other extracurricular activities" (Halstead et al., "Returning to Learning Following a Concussion," *Pediatrics* 132.5 (Nov. 2013): 956).
2. A student who has been removed from an activity due to a concussion may not return to that activity until the student is evaluated by a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and receives a written clearance to return to the activity from that health care professional.
3. The final decision regarding whether a student can participate in interscholastic athletic play will be made by the athletic trainer, provided the athletic trainer receives the written clearance from the student's licensed health care professional for the student to return to the activity. A coach/adviser will not, under any circumstance, override the athletic trainer's decision. For an interscholastic athlete at the middle school level, it will be the responsibility of the student's parent(s)/guardian(s) to make the student accessible for assessment at the athletic trainer's location.
4. After medical clearance, the return to activity by the student should follow a progressive protocol with provisions for delayed return to activity based on return of any signs or symptoms.

V. Forms

Forms to support documentation of concussions will be developed and reviewed periodically by building and District administrators.