



# POLICY

**Haddonfield  
Board of Education**

# PROGRAM

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## **2431.4 PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SPORTS-RELATED CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES (M)**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a blow or motion to the head or body that disrupts the normal functioning of the brain and can cause significant and sustained neuropsychological impairments including, but not limited to, problem solving, planning, memory, and behavioral problems. In order to ensure safety, it is imperative that students participating in athletic competition, coaches, and parents are educated about the nature and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries. Allowing a student to return to athletic competition before recovering from a concussion increases the chance of a more serious brain injury.

For the purpose of this Policy and Regulation 2431.4, programs of athletic competition shall include high school interscholastic athletic programs, middle school interscholastic athletic programs where school teams or squads play teams or squads from other school districts, intramural athletic programs within a school or among schools in the district, and any cheerleading program or activity in the school district.

The school district shall adopt an athletic head injury safety training program. The program shall be completed by the school physician, any individual who coaches in an athletic competition, an athletic trainer involved in any athletic competition, and the school nurse. The training program shall be in accordance with guidance provided by the New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) and the requirements of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.2.

The school district shall annually distribute the NJDOE-developed educational fact sheet regarding sports-related concussions and other head injuries to all parents of students participating in any athletic competition or practice and shall obtain a signed acknowledgement of the receipt of the fact sheet by the student and their parent in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.2(c).

A student who participates in an athletic competition or practice and who sustains or is suspected of sustaining a concussion or other head injury shall be immediately removed from athletic competition or practice. A student removed from athletic competition or practice shall not participate in further athletic competition or practice until they are evaluated by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and receives written clearance from a physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions to return to athletic competition or practice; and the student returns to regular school activities and is no longer experiencing symptoms of the injury when conducting those activities in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.4.

The return of a student to athletic competition or practice shall also be in accordance with the graduated, six-step “Return to Play Progression” recommendations and any subsequent changes



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or other updates to these recommendations as developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The Board shall revise this Policy and Regulation 2431.4 whenever the CDC changes or otherwise updates the “Return to Play Progression” recommendations.

The school district shall provide a copy of this Policy and Regulation 2431.4 to all youth sports team organizations that operate on school grounds. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.5, the school district shall not be liable for the injury or death of a person due to the action or inaction of persons employed by, or under contract with, a youth sports team organization that operates on school grounds, if the youth sports team organization provides the school district proof of an insurance policy of an amount of not less than \$50,000 per person, per occurrence insuring the youth sports team organization against liability for any bodily injury suffered by a person and a statement of compliance with this Policy and Regulation 2431.4.

Pursuant to N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.5 and for the purpose of this Policy, a “youth sports team organization” means one or more sports teams organized pursuant to a nonprofit or similar charter or which are member teams in a league organized by or affiliated with a county or municipal recreation department.

This Policy and Regulation 2431.4 shall be reviewed and approved by the school physician annually and updated as necessary to ensure it reflects the most current information available on the prevention, risk, and treatment of sports-related concussions and other head injuries in accordance with N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.3.

Emergency Action Plan When a Concussion is suspected:

1. Once a Haddonfield Memorial High School student-athlete is suspected to have suffered a concussion he/she will be removed from play immediately and ensure that he/she is evaluated by an appropriated health care professional.
2. The coach or athlete trainer will notify the parents about the possible concussion and give them information on concussions.
3. The student-athlete will be kept out of play the day of the injury and until a health care profession says he/she is symptom free and gives clearance to return to activity.
4. The Zurich Guidelines for Return-to-Play after a concussion will be implemented. A return-to-sports clearance that is inconsistent with our concussion guidelines will not be accepted and the matter will be referred to our school physician.

The Haddonfield School District follows a stepwise activity progression based on recommendations in the Zurich Consensus Statement from the 4th International Congress on Concussion in Sport as follows. The return to play timing is case dependent. An extended return



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to play progression may be necessary if the athlete is held out for an extended period of time and requires reconditioning for sport participation.

#### Zurich Return to Activity Progression

Step 1: No activity

Step 2: Light exercise

Step 3: Sport-Specific Activities without the threat of contact from others

Step 4: Non-Contact training involving others

Step 5: Unrestricted training

Step 6: Full game play

#### ImPACT Testing

Haddonfield Memorial High School student-athletes perform baseline and post-concussion neuropsychological testing using the ImPACT (Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) software program to assist in the management of head injuries. The 20-minute program is set up in a “video-game” format. It tracks neurocognitive information such as memory, reaction time, brain processing speed and concentration. We conduct a post-concussive test once the athlete is asymptomatic and continue to test the athlete until their scores return to normal. Please note that this program is used only as a tool in making return to play decisions. Additional information about ImPACT can be found at [www.impacttest.com](http://www.impacttest.com).

#### Notification

Student-athletes and parents will be informed of the Haddonfield School District’s Concussion Management Policy prior to participation in interscholastic sports. An informational brochure will be included on the sports packet. Information on Concussions will also be available on the Haddonfield School District website.

#### Education

All Haddonfield School District coaches will be required to take the NFHS “Concussion in Sports – What you Need to Know” (free on-line course on [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com))

The School district shall provide a copy of this Policy and Regulation 2431.4 to all youth sports team organizations that operate on school grounds. In accordance with the provisions of N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.5, the school district shall not be liable for the injury or death of a person due to the action or inaction of persons employed by, or under contract with, a youth sports team organization that operates on school grounds, if the youth sports team organization provides the school district proof of an insurance policy in the amount of not less than \$50,000 per person, per occurrence insuring the youth sports team organization against liability for any bodily injury suffered by a person and a statement of compliance with the school district’s Policy and Regulation 2431.4 – Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries.



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N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.1; 18A:40-41.2; 18A:40-41.3; 18A:40-41.4; 18A:40-41.5

BOE Revised Date: 3/24/2022  
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### **R 2431.4 PREVENTION AND TREATMENT OF SPORTS-RELATED CONCUSSIONS AND HEAD INJURIES**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head or body. Allowing a student-athlete or cheerleader to return to play before recovering from a concussion increases the chance of a more serious brain injury that can result in severe disability and/or death. The following procedures shall be followed to implement N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.1 et seq. and Policy 2431.4.

A. Athletic Head Injury Safety Training Program

1. The school district will adopt an Athletic Head Injury Program
2. This Training Program shall be completed by the school physician, any individual who coaches in an athletic competition, an athletic trainer involved in any athletic competition, and the school nurse.

B. Prevention

1. The school district may require pre-season baseline testing of all student-athletes and cheerleaders before the student begins participation in an interscholastic athletic program or activity or cheerleading program. The baseline testing program shall be reviewed and approved by the school or team physician trained in the evaluation and management of sports-related concussions and other head injuries.
2. The Principal or designee will review educational information for students participating in athletic competition or practice on the prevention of concussions.
3. All school staff members, students participating in athletic competition shall be annually informed through the distribution of the NJDOE Concussion and Head Injury Fact Sheet and Parent/Guardian Acknowledgement Form and other communications from the Principal and coaches on the importance of early identification and treatment of concussions to improve recovery.

C. Signs or Symptoms of Concussion or Other Head Injury

1. Possible signs of concussions can be observed by coaches, licensed athletic trainer, school or team physician, school nurse, or other school staff members. Possible signs of a concussion may be, but are not limited to,:
  - a. Appears dazed, stunned, or disoriented;
  - b. Forgets plays, or demonstrates short-term memory difficulty;



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- c. Exhibits difficulties with balance or coordination;
  - d. Answers questions slowly or inaccurately; and/or
  - e. Loses consciousness.
2. Possible symptoms of concussion shall be reported by the student participating in athletic competition or practice to coaches, athletic trainer, school or team physician, school nurse, and/or parent. Possible symptoms of a concussion, may be, but not limited to:
- a. Headache;
  - b. Nausea/vomiting;
  - c. Balance problems or dizziness;
  - d. Double vision or changes in vision;
  - e. Sensitivity to light or sound/noise;
  - f. Feeling sluggish or foggy;
  - g. Difficulty with concentration and short-term memory;
  - h. Sleep disturbance; or
  - i. Irritability.
- D. Medical Attention for a Student Suspected of a Concussion or Other Head Injury
- a. A staff member supervising the student during the athletic competition or practice shall immediately contact the school physician, athletic trainer, or school nurse to examine the student.
    - (1) The school physician, athletic trainer, or school nurse shall determine if the student has sustained or may have sustained a concussion or other head injury. The school physician, athletic trainer, or school nurse shall determine if emergency medical responders shall be called to athletic competition or practice.
    - (2) In the event the school physician, athletic trainer, or school nurse determine the student did not sustain a concussion or



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other head injury, the student shall not be permitted to participate in any further athletic competition or practice until written medical clearance is provided in accordance with E. below.

2. The staff member supervising a student who has been removed from athletic competition or practice in accordance with D.1. above or another staff member shall contact the student's parent and the Principal or designee as soon as possible after the student has been removed from the athletic competition or practice.
  - a. A parent shall monitor their student for symptoms of a concussion or other head injury upon receiving such notification.

### E. Medical Examination and Written Medical Clearance

1. A student who was removed from athletic competition or practice in accordance with D.1. shall not participate in further athletic competition or practice until:
  - a. The student is examined by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions;
  - b. The student receives written medical clearance from a physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions to return to competition or practice; and
  - c. The student returns to regular school activities and is no longer experiencing symptoms of the injury while conducting those activities.
2. The student's written medical clearance from a physician must indicate a medical examination has determined:
  - a. The student's injury was not a concussion or other head injury, the student is asymptomatic at rest, and the student may return to regular school activities and is no longer experiencing symptoms of the injury while conducting those activities; or
  - b. The student's injury was a concussion or other head injury and the student's physician will monitor the student to determine when the student is asymptomatic at rest and when the student may return to regular school activities and is no longer experiencing symptoms of the injury while conducting those activities.



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3. The student's written medical clearance must be reviewed and approved by the school physician.
  4. The student may not begin the graduated return to athletic competition and practice protocol in F. below until the student receives a medical examination and provides the required written medical clearance.
  5. A written medical clearance not in compliance with the provisions of E. will not be accepted.
- F. Graduated Return to Competition and Practice Protocol
1. The return of a student to athletic competition and practice shall be in accordance with the graduated, six-step "Return to Play Progression" recommendations and any subsequent changes or updates to those recommendations as developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
    - a. Back to Regular Activities (Such as School)

The student is back to their regular activities (such as school) and has the green-light from the student's physician approved by the school physician to begin the return to play process. A student's return to regular activities involves a stepwise process. It starts with a few days of rest (two-three days) and is followed by light activity (such as short walks) and moderate activity (such as riding a stationary bike) that do not worsen symptoms.
    - b. Light Aerobic Activity

Begin with light aerobic exercise only to increase the student's heart rate. This means about five to ten minutes on an exercise bike, walking, or light jogging. No weight lifting at this point.
    - c. Moderate Activity

Continue with activities to increase the student's heart rate with body or head movement. This includes moderate jogging, brief running, moderate-intensity stationary biking, and/or moderate-intensity weightlifting (less time and/or less weight from their typical routine).
    - d. Heavy, Non-Contact Activity





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Add heavy non-contact physical activity, such as sprinting/running, high-intensity stationary biking, regular weightlifting routine, and/or non-contact sport-specific drills (in three planes of movement).

e. Practice and Full Contact

The student may return to practice and full contact (if appropriate for the athletic competition) in controlled practice.

f. Athletic Competition

The student may return to athletic competition or practice.

2. It is important for a student's parent(s) and coach(es) to watch for concussion symptoms after each day's "Return to Play Progression" activity. A student should only move to the next step if they do not have any new symptoms at the current step.
3. If a student's symptoms return or if they develop new symptoms, this is a sign that a student is pushing too hard. The student should stop these activities and the student's health care provider should be contacted. After more rest and no concussion symptoms, a student can start at the previous step if approved by the student's healthcare provider and provides written medical clearance to the school physician.

G. Temporary Accommodations for Student's Participating in Athletic Competition with Sports-Related Head Injuries

1. The concussed brain is affected in many functional aspects as a result of the injury. Memory, attention span, concentration, and speed of processing significantly impact learning. Further, exposing the concussed student to the stimulating school environment may delay the resolution of symptoms needed for recovery. Accordingly, consideration of the cognitive effects in returning to the classroom is also an important part of the treatment of sports-related concussions and head injuries.
2. To recover, cognitive rest is just as important as physical rest. Reading, studying, computer usage, testing, texting, and watching movies if a student is sensitive to light/sound can slow a student's recovery. The Principal or designee may look to address the student's cognitive needs as described below. Students who return to school after a concussion may need to:
  - a. Take rest breaks as needed;



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- b. Spend fewer hours at school;
- c. Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments (all courses should be considered);
- d. Receive help with schoolwork;
- e. Reduce time spent on the computer, reading, and writing; and/or
- f. Be granted early dismissal from class to avoid crowded hallways.

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