

## **Concussion Information to be included in the Student Handbook**

### **CONCUSSIONS**

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

#### **Symptoms may include one or more of the following:**

- Headaches • “Pressure in head” • Nausea or vomiting • Neck pain • Balance problems or dizziness • Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish or slowed down • Feeling foggy or groggy • Drowsiness • Change in sleep patterns • Amnesia • “Don’t feel right” • Fatigue or low energy • Sadness • Nervousness or anxiety • Irritability • More emotional • Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays) • Repeating the same question/comment

#### **Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:**

- Appears dazed • Vacant facial expression • Confused about assignment • Forgets plays • Is unsure of game, score, or opponent • Slurred speech • Moves clumsily or displays incoordination • Answers questions slowly • Shows behavior or personality changes • Cannot recall events prior to hit • Can’t recall events after hit • Seizures or convulsions • Any change in typical behavior or personality • Loses consciousness

#### **What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too soon?**

Students with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young student especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the student suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well

known that adolescent or teenage students will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to student-athlete's safety.

**If you think your child has suffered a concussion:**

Any student even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No student may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the student should continue for several hours. IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all IHSA member schools are required to follow this policy. You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the student sits out. For current and up-to-date information on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>

The Illinois School Code (105 ILCS 5/22-80) mandates that school districts implement the Return to Learn/Return to Play Guidelines when a student is believed to have experienced a concussion. A student must be removed from interscholastic athletics practice or competition immediately if it is believed that the student might have sustained a concussion during the practice or competition. A student believed to have suffered a concussion shall return to the classroom, interscholastic practice or competition only after all statutory prerequisites set forth in 105 ILCS 5/22-80(g) are completed, including without limitation, the Return to Learn/Return to Play protocols developed by the District Concussion Oversight Team and evaluation by a treating physician or an athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician.