

Student Sports Concussion and Head Injuries

Concussion and Head Injury Management in Student Sports

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that alters the neurological functioning of the brain. Concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and other recreational activities. The risk of catastrophic injuries or death are significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed.

The Bellevue School District has implemented an innovative team approach to manage head injuries and concussion in district athletic programs. The ImPACT (Immediate Post Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing) program will assist team physicians/athletic trainers in evaluating and treating head injuries (e.g., concussion). ImPACT is used to help determine the severity of head injury and when the injury has fully healed.

The process of managing head injuries/concussions will be shared by the following groups:

A. District Athletic Director Duties:

1. **Updating:** Each spring, the District Athletic Director, will review the use of the current system for evaluating concussions in consultation with the district's lead nurse and building athletic directors. The purpose of the review is to make a recommendation regarding continued use of the ImPACT system. The District Athletic Director will be charged with continuing the district contract with ImPACT by May 30 if no change in procedure is in place.

B. Building Athletic Director Duties:

1. **Updating:** Each spring, building athletic directors will review any changes that have been made in forms required for concussion and head injury management through consultation with the WIAA and the ImPACT program medical administrator. If there are any updated forms, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.
2. **Identifying Sports:** By June 30 of each year, the athletic director or administrator in charge will identify competitive sport activities in the district for which compliance with the concussion and head injury policy is required. A list of competitive sports activities and the district's policy and procedure 3422 will be distributed to all coaching staff and volunteers at the beginning of each new school year.
3. **Communication with School Officials:** Athletic Directors, upon receiving notification of a head injury/concussion, will communicate with the school nurse as a means to establish any assistance the student athlete will need in the classroom during their recovery.

C. Coach Training:

All coaches will undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once every two years by one of the following means:

1. through attendance at a WIAA or similar clock hour presentation which uses WIAA guidelines; or
2. by completing WIAA online training; and
3. completing a training on the ImPACT program, to be led by each school's Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC).

D. Parent Information Sheet:

On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet will be signed and returned by the student athlete and the athlete's parent and/or

guardian prior to the student athlete's initiating practice or competition. This information sheet is incorporated into the parent permission sheet which allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics.

- E. **Coach's Responsibility:** A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game will be immediately removed from play. A coach will follow guidelines in F. to have a student further participate in the sport.
- F. **ATC Responsibility:** With assistance from the athletic directors, the ATC's will administer ImPACT testing for the athletes at their school.
 - 1. The computerized baseline exam is given to athletes before beginning contact sport practice or competition. It takes about 30-45 minutes to complete.
- G. **Return to Play After Concussion or Head Injury:** A student athlete who has been removed from play may not return to play until the athlete is:
 - 1. Evaluated through the ImPACT protocol; and
 - 2. The results of the tests are reviewed by ImPACT physicians, licensed and trained in the evaluation and management of concussions; and
 - 3. The student receives written clearance to return to play after a complete review of test results, interview with the athlete, coach, and family.
 - a. If a concussion is suspected, the athlete will be required to re-take the test. Both the preseason and post-injury test data is used to help evaluate the injury. Test data will enable health professionals to determine when return-to-play is appropriate and safe for the injured athlete. Parents/guardians will be promptly contacted with all relevant details regarding return to play.