

## Montville Township Board of Education

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### District Policy

#### **2431.4- CONCUSSION TESTING AND RETURN-TO-PLAY**

Section: Program  
Date Created: January, 2011  
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The Board of Education adopts this Policy as a measure to protect the safety, health, and welfare of pupils participating in school-sponsored interscholastic athletic programs and cheerleading. The Board believes a concussion testing and return-to-play policy for student-athlete or cheerleaders suspected of sustaining a concussion will protect the student-athlete or cheerleader from risk of more serious health problems.

A concussion is a brain injury that is caused by a direct or indirect blow or jolt to the head or to the body, or from the head striking an object such as the ground or another person. Some people have obvious symptoms of a concussion, such as passing out, headache, dizziness, or double vision, while others do not. With rest, most people fully recover from a concussion; however, on rare occasions concussion can cause more serious health problems. Therefore, the Board requires strict adherence to this Policy in the event a student-athlete or cheerleader sustains a head injury or an injury that could cause a concussion.

If it is suspected a student-athlete or cheerleader sustained an injury that could cause a concussion or if signs observed by others or symptoms reported by the student-athlete or cheerleader are those signs and symptoms of a concussion, the student-athlete or cheerleader will be immediately removed from the activity. The Athletic Director will be notified. All symptoms of head trauma sustained by an athlete or cheerleader must be reported to the coach, and the coach will be responsible for reporting and injuries to the Athletic Trainer immediately. This includes, but is not limited to, headache, dizziness, light-headedness, feeling “foggy,” nausea, vomiting, sensitivity to light or sound, balance problems, vision problems, confusion, and memory problems. The student-athlete or cheerleader will not be allowed to return to practice or play until he/she can be evaluated by the Athletic Trainer or School Physician at which time the appropriate medical course of action will be determined. If symptoms don’t resolve while under direct supervision or begin to worsen, the athlete or cheerleader will be referred to the hospital emergency department for further evaluation.

School personnel (Athletic Director/Building Administrator, Licensed Athletic Trainer, School Nurse, Coach, etc.) will make contact with the student-athlete’s or cheerleader’s parent/guardian and inform him/her of the suspected sports-related concussion or head injury.

School personnel (Athletic Director/Building Administrator, Licensed Athletic Trainer, School Nurse, Coach, etc.) will provide the student-athlete with District Board of Education approved suggestions for management/medical

checklist to give to their parent/guardian and physician or other licensed healthcare professional trained in the evaluation and management of sports-related concussions and other head injuries (attached with this policy).

A student-athlete or cheerleader who is removed from competition or practice under suspicion of having suffered a concussion, shall not participate in full sports activity until he/she is evaluated by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, and receives written clearance without limitations, indicating when the pupil is able to return to activity, from a physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions to return to competition or practice.

A student-athlete or cheerleader diagnosed with a concussion shall be required to complete a symptom-free week (seven days) initiated on the first asymptomatic day before initiating the Return-to-Activity Progression outlined in this Policy. The student-athlete or cheerleader shall be monitored during this time period for any reoccurrence of concussion symptoms. The asymptomatic period for any concussion may be adjusted at the discretion of the school physician.

If the physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussions determines the student-athlete or cheerleader is not concussed or injured, the physician shall be required to provide a medical release, stating limitations, with a return-to-play date. The student-athlete or cheerleader shall follow up with the District's athletic trainer. The school physician shall review all medical examinations conducted by the student-athlete's or cheerleader's physician when the student-athlete or cheerleader is suspected of sustaining a concussion. Physician clearance notes that are inconsistent with this concussion policy may not be accepted by the district and will be referred to the school physician, who will determine final clearance and determine if the concussion policy criteria have been properly followed.

The Board will require, as part of the required medical examination for every pupil wishing to participate in a contact/collision sport or activity, as determined by the Supervisor of Athletics, an initial computerized, non-invasive, concussion assessment (ImPACT) prior to the beginning of a sport or activity. The Athletic Trainer must sign off that a student has received a baseline assessment prior to the first practice. Results of all baseline ImPACT testing will provide data that could be helpful in the event it is suspected a student-athlete or cheerleader subsequently sustained by a concussion. If it is suspected that a student athlete or cheerleader sustained a concussion, he/she will be required to complete post-injury ImPACT testing to assist in determining the extent of the injury, monitor recovery, and assist in making safe return-to-play decisions. The school physician will review the results of all post-injury ImPACT testing. Post-injury ImPACT testing will be shared with the student-athlete's or cheerleader's physician with consent of the student-athlete's or cheerleader's parent or guardian. The baseline test shall be administered to each athlete or cheerleader prior to the start of the athletic season and is valid for a period of two years at which time the athlete or cheerleader will be required to update the baseline test.

A student-athlete or cheerleader who has sustained a concussion may return to full game play when he/she meets all of the following criteria:

1. Medical release with no limitations from a physician trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and confirmed by the school

- physician; and
2. ImPACT testing results have satisfactorily approached baseline levels and have been approved by a physician trained in the evaluation of management of concussions, and/or school physician if he/she is concussion trained.
  3. The student-athlete or cheerleader must complete a symptom-free week (seven days) initiated on the first asymptomatic day before initiating the Return-to-Activity Progression outlined below (exceptions to this provision must be approved by the school physician); and
  4. Completion of the Return-to-Activity Progression (a. through f. below) which is based on recommendations in the Zurich Consensus Statement from the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Concussion in Sport 2009 and is recommended by the New Jersey State Interscholastic Athletic Association:
    - a. Step 1 – No activity with complete physical and cognitive rest;
    - b. Step 2 – Light aerobic exercise which includes walking, swimming, or stationary cycling keeping the intensity less than seventy percent maximum percentage heart rate and no resistance training;
    - c. Step 3 – Functional exercises such as increased running intensity, agility drills, and non-contact, sport specific drills;
    - d. Step 4 – Non-contact practice activities and training drills involving progression to more complex training drills. Student-athlete or cheerleader may initiate progressive resistance training;
    - e. Step 5 – Full normal training activities following medical clearance; and
    - f. Step 6 – Return-to-Play.

Each step outlined above shall be separated by twenty-four hours. If any concussion symptoms occur during the Return-to-Activity Progression, the student-athlete or cheerleader will be required to drop back to the previous step of activity where the student-athlete or cheerleader had no symptoms and try to progress again after twenty-four hours of rest has passed.

Temporary Accommodations for Student-athletes or cheerleaders with Sports-Related Head Injuries include:

1. Rest is the best “medicine” for healing concussions or other head injuries. 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. Exposing the concussed student-athlete or cheerleader to the stimulating school environment may delay the resolution of symptoms needed for recovery.
2. 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.
3. Mental exertion increases the symptoms from concussions and affects recovery. To recover, cognitive rest is just as important as physical rest. Reading, studying, computer usage, testing, texting—even watching movies if a student is sensitive to light/sound—can slow a student’s recovery.
4. Students who have sustained a concussion may need time off from school. Once they have returned to school after sustaining a concussion, they are to be excused from physical education class until cleared.

The following accommodations may be necessary:

- a. Spend fewer hours in school
- b. Take frequent breaks as needed.
- c. Be excused from testing; if able to test, additional time should be added.
- d. Reduced workload - limited time reading, writing and working on computers
- e. Additional time on projects
- f. Be granted early dismissal to avoid crowded hallways

The Montville Township Board of Education recognizes the importance of employing the services of an athletic trainer. As health care providers who work under the supervision of a licensed physician, athletic trainers serve as an extension of the physician and play a key role in a concussion education and management program. The Montville Township Board of Education recognizes that the District's athletic trainer must play a central role in the school's concussion education and management program.

The Montville Township Board of Education will adopt an Interscholastic Head Injury Training program to be completed by the District Physician, Licensed Athletic Trainer, all Coaches, all School Nurses, and other appropriate District personnel pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 18A:40-41.2*. This training program must include *at a minimum*:

1. The recognition of the symptoms of head and neck injuries, concussions, risk of secondary injury, including the risk of second impact syndrome; and
2. Description of the appropriate criteria to delay the return to sports competition or practice of a student-athlete or cheerleader who has sustained a concussion or other head injury.

This Policy shall be reviewed and approved by the school district's physician prior to Board of Education approval. It shall be reviewed annually and updated as necessary to ensure that it reflects the most current information available on the prevention, risk, and treatment of sports-related concussions and head injuries pursuant to *N.J.S.A. 19A:40-41.3*. A copy of this Policy will be provided to the parents or guardians of all student-athletes or cheerleaders prior to their participation in a school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program. A New Jersey Department of Education Concussion and Head Injury fact sheet will be distributed to every student-athlete or cheerleader who participates in interscholastic sports. Parents or guardians shall be required to acknowledge receipt of this Policy and the accompanying NJ DOE fact sheet. This signed acknowledgement will be kept on file for future reference.

The school district shall also provide a copy of this Policy 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:

1. 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
- 2. A statement of compliance with the school district’s Policy 2431.4 “Prevention and Treatment of Sports-Related Concussions and Head Injuries.”

New Jersey Interscholastic Athletic Association Concussion Policy

Zurich Consensus Statement from the 3<sup>rd</sup> International Congress on Concussion in Sport, 2009.

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