

GIBBSBORO SCHOOL
37 Kirkwood Road, Gibbsboro, NJ 08026

CONCUSSION TESTING & RETURN TO PLAY POLICY

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. The Board believes a concussion testing and return-to-play policy for student-athletes suspected of sustaining a concussion will protect the student-athlete 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 concussions can cause more serious health problems. Therefore, the Board requires strict adherence to this Policy in the event a student-athlete sustains a head injury or an injury that could cause a concussion.

If it is suspected a student-athlete sustained an injury that could cause a concussion or if signs observed by others or symptoms reported by the student-athlete are those signs and symptoms of a concussion, the student-athlete will be immediately removed from the activity and the student-athlete will not be allowed to return to practice or play until the pupil receives a medical examination conducted by the pupil's physician. The pupil's physician must make a determination on the presence/absence of a concussion.

If the student-athlete is concussed or injured, the physician will appropriately treat the student-athlete and shall be required to provide a medical release, without limitations, indicating when the pupil is able to return to the activity. **A student-athlete 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 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 determines the student-athlete is not concussed or injured, the physician shall be required to provide a medical release, without limitations, with a return-to-play date. 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. All medical examinations conducted by the student-athlete's physician when the student-athlete is suspected of sustaining a concussion shall be reviewed by the school physician for clarification if needed.

Student-athletes that have sustained a concussion may return to full game play when he/she meets the following criteria:

1. Medical release with no limitations from the student-athlete's physician and confirmed by the school physician for clarification if needed.
2. The student-athlete 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
3. Completion of the Return-to-Activity Progression (a. through f. below) which is based on recommendations in the Zurich Consensus Statement from the 3rd 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 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 will be required to drop back to the previous step of activity where the student-athlete had no symptoms and try to progress again after twenty-four hours of rest has passed.

This Policy has been reviewed and approved by the school district's physician prior to Board of Education approval. A copy of this Policy will be provided to the parents or guardians of all student-athletes prior to their participation in a school-sponsored interscholastic athletic program. **Parent or guardians shall be required to acknowledge receipt of this Policy.**