

## **East Moriches Concussion Management School Policy**

The Board of Education of East Moriches School District recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activity and can have serious consequences if not managed carefully. Therefore the District adopts the following policy to support the proper evaluation and management of head injuries.

Concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury. Concussions occur when normal brain functioning is disrupted by a blow or jolt to the head. Recovery from a concussion will vary. Avoiding re-injury and over exertion until fully recovered are the cornerstones of proper concussion management.

While district staff will exercise reasonable care to protect students, head injuries may still occur. Physical education teachers, coaches, nurses and other appropriate staff will receive training to recognize the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion. This training will be completed biannually. The Athletic Coordinator will organize the training and maintain completion records. Any student exhibiting those signs, symptoms or behaviors while participating in a school sponsored class, extracurricular activity or interscholastic activity shall be removed from the game or activity and be evaluated as soon as possible by an appropriate healthcare professional. The nurse will notify the student's parent or guardian and recommend appropriate monitoring to parents /guardians.

If a student sustains a concussion at a time other than when engaged in a school sponsored activity, the district expects the parent/legal guardian to report the condition to the nurse so that the district can support the appropriate management of the condition.

The student shall not return to school or activity until authorized to do so by an appropriate healthcare professional. The school's chief medical officer will make the final decision on return to activity including physical education class and after-school sports. Any student who continues to have signs or symptoms upon return to activity must be removed from play and reevaluated by their healthcare provider. The school physician or ancillary staff must clear students participating in interscholastic athletics that sustain a concussion prior to participation. All other students who are suspected to have or sustain a concussion prior to participation. All other students who are suspected or sustain a concussion must be cleared by a licensed physician prior to returning to activity.

Concussion is a common consequence of trauma to the head in contact sports.

Concussion can occur from collisions or falls in all forms of athletic activity.

Injured athletes should be medically assessed to prevent the possibility of catastrophic brain injuries.

Repeated concussions may cause cumulative brain injury in an individual injured over months or years.

While any sport has a risk for injury, a balance must be reached between competition and ensuring athlete's safety. Due to competition and enthusiasm over the sport, athletes, coaches and spectators frequently lose their objectivity when it comes to concussion management. This fact coupled with the insidious nature of head trauma and the multitude of symptoms head injury victims may or may not present put physicians in the sometimes unpopular position of requiring diagnostic testing (CT scan, neurology consults etc) before allowing an athlete to return to participation.

Staff members should make sure that participation areas are clear of debris, safe, adequate space is provided and plans and rules are implemented to create a safe environment. Symptoms of concussion include:

- Persistent low grade headache
- Lightheadedness
- Fatigue
- Intolerance to bright lights or loud noises
- Visual disturbance
- Anxiety
- Sleep disturbance

Other features of concussion frequently observed:

- Vacant stare or confused facial expression
- Slow to answer questions or follow instructions
- Confusion or easy distraction with regard to normal activities
- Disorientation (unaware of time, date or place)
- Slurred or incoherent speech (incomprehensible statements)
- Stumbling, inability to walk a straight line
- Memory deficits
  - Repeatedly asking the same questions or inability to memorize or recall three words or objects within 5 minutes
- Emotional outbursts out of proportion to circumstances (distracted, crying)
- Any period of loss of consciousness

The Board will appoint a Concussion Management Team (CMT) annually at the re-organization meeting that will include, but not limited to the Athletic Coordinator, Nurse and Building Administrator.

Information regarding Mild Traumatic Brain Injury will be posted on the District Website.

Approved: June 27, 2012

I/We have read, discussed and understand the above information concerning East Moriches Union Free School District's Concussion Management School Policy.

Student Name (Print Clearly) \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_