

MANAGING THE CARE OF STUDENTS WITH ATHLETIC CONCUSSIONS

Research has estimated that 5-10% of high school or college contact sports athletes sustain a concussion each year. These estimates likely understate the true incidence of concussion. In one investigation over 50% of high school football athletes did not report their injury to a parent, coach, or medical professional. A concussion is an alteration of mental status resulting from the brain being jolted inside of the skull due to a blow to the head or body. Among the many symptoms associated with concussion, headache, dizziness, confusion, amnesia, nausea, and disorientation are commonly reported. Loss of consciousness, however, occurs in less than 10% of all injuries and is not an indicator of concussion severity. Also, following the injury, the athlete may experience other difficulties such as sensitivity to light and sound, forgetfulness, fatigue and emotional changes such as anxiety or depression.

Most athletes who sustain a concussion can fully recover as long as the brain has had time to heal before sustaining another hit; however, relying only on an athlete's self-report of symptoms to determine injury recovery is inadequate as many high school athletes are not aware of the signs and symptoms of injury, the severity concussive injuries pose, or they may feel pressure from coaches, parents, and/or teammates to return to play as quickly as possible. One or more of these factors will likely result in under-diagnosing the injury and a premature return to play. Research has shown that young concussed athletes who return to play before their brain has healed, are highly vulnerable to more prolonged post-concussion syndrome or, in rare cases, a catastrophic neurological injury known as Second Impact Syndrome. Therefore, we encourage the following care when an athlete sustains a concussion in a school-sponsored sporting event.

1. When the concussion occurs, the injured athlete should visit the local hospital emergency room or review their condition with their primary care physician to ensure there is not a need for emergency medical care.
2. Subsequently, a care team consisting of the student's primary care physician and parents, along with the athletic trainer, head coach and athletic director should monitor the symptoms of the injury.

Concussion is one of the most complex injuries faced by medical professionals as the signs and symptoms are not always straightforward and the effects and severity of the injury can be difficult to determine. The injury results in no structural changes in brain tissue, generally making traditional neuro-diagnostic tests such as CT, MRI and EEG insensitive. Therefore, we encourage a third step in the concussion care process.

3. Engage the injured athlete in a battery of tests that include a combination of self-report symptoms, balance, and neuro-cognitive testing. The combined assessment will provide a more sensitive and objective evaluation of the effects of the concussion that will help better determine when it is safe for the athlete to return to play.

ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

A student may withdraw from a Commonwealth charter school at any time and enroll in the school district in which said student resides. To maintain enrollment stability, encourage promotion based on academic standards, and discourage social promotion, the school district will consult with the student's charter school regarding placement and eligibility for graduation and enroll the student at the grade level the school district determines appropriate.

The time of the school year when enrollment is sought shall be a factor in determining the student's grade level placement. The school district may determine that a student seeking enrollment after the mid-point of the academic year may not be eligible for promotion or graduation in that academic year.

SOURCE: Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education

ADMISSION OF TRANSFER STUDENTS

The school district will enroll and place students who have left Commonwealth charter schools by adhering to the same policies and procedures in place for any other student enrolling in the school district including, but not limited to, examination of the course of study and level of academic attainment of the student when determining the student's appropriate grade placement or eligibility for high school graduation.

To the same extent provided for other students enrolling in the school district, students who enroll in the school district from a Commonwealth charter school shall be subject to the graduation requirements of the school district, may have certain graduation requirements waived, and may make-up certain graduation requirements.

LEGAL REFS.: Chapter 12, Section 11 of the Acts of 2010

SOURCE: MASC February 2011

ANIMALS IN SCHOOL

No animal shall be brought to school without prior permission of the building Principal.

The NAHANT School District is committed to providing a high quality educational program to all students in a safe and healthy environment.

School Principals, in consultation with the Health Services Providers in each building, shall utilize the Department of Public Health publication "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and review student health records to determine which animals may be allowed in the school building. The decision of the Principal shall be final.

Educational Program

Use of animals to achieve specific curriculum objectives may be allowed by the building Principal provided student health and safety is not jeopardized and the individual requesting that the animal be brought to school is responsible for adhering to the "Guidelines for Animals in Schools or on School Grounds" and any other conditions established by the Principal to protect the health and well-being of students.

Student Health

The health and well-being of students is the District's highest priority. Animals may cause an allergic reaction or otherwise impair the health of students. No animals may be brought to school or kept in the school, classroom, office or common area that may negatively impact the health of any student who must utilize that area. Animals that cause an allergic reaction or impair the health of students shall be removed from the school immediately so that no student shall have his/her health impaired and each student shall have full access to available educational opportunities.

Animals Prohibited from School

Rabies is a growing problem and any fur-bearing animal is susceptible to this very serious fatal disease. Infected animals can transmit this disease to students and staff. Based on the Massachusetts Departments of Health and Education recommendations the following animals are prohibited from schools within the NAHANT School District.

Wild Animals and Domestic Stray Animals - Because of the high incidence of rabies in bats, raccoons, skunks, foxes and other wild carnivores, these animals should not be permitted in school buildings under any circumstances (including dead animals).

Fur-Bearing Animals (pet dogs,* cats, wolf-hybrids, ferrets, etc.) - These animals may pose a risk for transmitting rabies, as well as parasites, fleas, other diseases and injuries.

Bats - Bats pose a high risk for transmitting rabies. Bat houses should not be installed on school grounds and bats should not be brought into the school building.

Poisonous Animals - Spiders, venomous insects and poisonous snakes, reptiles and lizards are prohibited for safety reasons.

reassignment of the person having custody and control of the animal to a different classroom. This will also apply if an individual on school transportation suffers an allergic reaction. In this case, an alternate plan will be developed in coordination with appropriate school, District, and transportation staff including the involvement of the parents/guardian of the student.

When a student will be accompanied by a service animal at school or in other District facilities on a regular basis, such staff member or such student's parent or guardian, as well as the animal's owner and any other person who will have custody and control of the animal will be required to sign a document stating that they have read and understood the foregoing.

The Superintendent of Schools or his/her designee shall be responsible for developing procedures to accommodate a student's use of an assistance animal in District facilities and on school transportation vehicles.

SOURCE: MASC February 2011