

Watkins Glen School District Concussion Management Policy

The Board of Education of the Watkins Glen School District recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities 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.

A sports concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that occurs when normal brain functioning is disrupted by a blow or jolt to the head. Recovery from 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, athletic trainers and other appropriate staff will receive training to recognize the signs, symptoms and behaviors consistent with a concussion. Any student exhibiting those signs, symptoms or behaviors while participating in a school sponsored class, extracurricular activity or interscholastic athletic activity shall be removed from the game or activity.

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 school nurse, certified athletic trainer or coach 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 health care professional. This includes but is not limited to the student's primary care physician or the school medical director. In the case of students who participate in interscholastic sports, the school medical director will make the final decision on return to the sport. Any student who continues to have signs or symptoms upon return to activity must be removed from play and re-evaluated by their health care provider.

The Superintendent, in consultation with appropriate district staff, has developed the following protocol to guide the return to activity for those students participating in interscholastic sports. These are as follows:

- Prior to the start of competition in interscholastic sports, all athletes from the following teams will be tested for baseline neuropsychological function using ImPACT.
 - Varsity Football
 - JV/Varsity Girls Soccer
 - JV/Varsity Boys Soccer
 - JV/Varsity Girls Basketball
 - JV/Varsity Boys Basketball
 - Varsity Wrestling

If a student who is not on the above teams sustains a concussion, age-referenced normative baseline data will be used to compare post-injury performance on the ImPACT test to help determine readiness for return to play progression.

- When a suspected concussion occurs, the athlete will be evaluated on the field by the certified athletic trainer if present for the injury. Otherwise, this will be performed by an appropriately educated coach or the school medical director designee.
 - Emergency medical professionals will be called immediately and the athlete will be transported to the hospital if the following conditions are present:
 - There is a concern about patency of the airway, irregular breathing or signs of irregular circulation
 - Loss of consciousness
 - Suspected skull fractures
 - Numbness, tingling or loss of strength in the extremities
 - Tenderness to touch of the neck or spine
- When a concussion is suspected, the athlete will be immediately removed from the game, practice or activity and will not be allowed to return on the same day. If there is a certified athletic trainer on premises, they will be called to evaluate the athlete on the sideline or in the athletic training room. If the certified athletic trainer is not on premises, the coach will be responsible for alerting the certified athletic trainer of the school medical designee of the injury as soon as possible so the injury can be properly managed.
- The athlete's parent or guardian will be notified by the coach and/or the certified athletic trainer of the school medical director designee of the injury and will be supplied with information on closely monitoring the athlete's condition over the next 24-48 hours.
- The athlete's condition will be serially evaluated by the certified athletic trainer or school medical director designee on subsequent days until the symptoms are resolved.
- The athlete must be cleared by the school physician before he/she can return to interscholastic sports. A return to play progression will then be supervised by the certified athletic trainer or the school medical director designee and will include the following steps.
 - The athlete will be symptom free for 24 hours
 - Light aerobic activity – briskly walking, stationary biking, elliptical trainer
 - Sport specific exercise – such as running, swimming, agility training
 - Non-contact training drills – running, drills at practice, light resistance training
 - Full contact practice – return to full team practice
 - Return to competition

In the event symptoms re-emerge or newly present during any of the above steps, the activity will be stopped immediately. The progression will be resumed once the athlete is again symptom free for 24 hours at the step previous to the one which provoked symptoms.

- Reasonable academic accommodations will be made for the athlete following a concussion. These can include but are not limited to:
 - Time off from school
 - Shortened school day

- Rests during the school day
- No testing
- Extended time to complete assignments or tests