

Head Injury and Concussion Policy

Effective: 5/20/2017

In compliance with Utah State Board of Education Rule R277-614, Capstone Classical Academy has established this Head Injury and Concussion Policy to provide education about concussions for coaches, school personnel, parents, and scholars. This policy outlines procedures for staff to follow in managing concussions and school policy related to 'return to play' issues following a concussion.

Capstone seeks to provide a safe return to activity for all scholars following any injury, but particularly after a concussion. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, procedures have been developed to aid in ensuring that concussed scholars are identified, treated and referred appropriately and that they receive appropriate follow-up medical care during the school day and are fully recovered prior to returning to activity.

School administration, physical education specialists and applicable school committees must review this protocol annually. Any changes or modifications to this policy will be reviewed with and given to athletic department staff, including coaches, and other appropriate school personnel in writing.

All appropriate staff must attend a yearly in-service meeting in which procedures for managing sporting event-related concussions are discussed.

Recognition of Concussion

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with the normal function of the brain. It occurs when the brain is rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. What may appear to be only a mild jolt or blow to the head or body can result in a concussion. A concussion can occur even if a player or scholar in an activity is not knocked out or does not lose consciousness. (NFHS, "Suggested Guidelines for Management of Concussion in Sports.")

Common signs of a sports-related concussion that can be observed by others, are that a scholar:

Appears dazed or stunned

Is confused

Forgets plays

Is unsure of game, score, and/or opponent

Moves clumsily (has altered coordination)

Has balance problems

Experiences a personality change

Responds slowly to questions

Forgets events prior to hit

Forgets events after the hit

Experiences a loss of consciousness of any duration

Common symptoms of a sports-related concussion that are reported by the scholar include:

Headache

Fatigue

Nausea or vomiting

Double vision; blurry vision

Sensitive to light or noise

Feeling sluggish

Feeling “foggy”

Problems concentrating

These signs and symptoms following a witnessed or suspected blow to the head or body are indicative of probable concussion. Any scholar who exhibits these signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) shall/will be immediately removed from the contest, game, or practice and shall will not be permitted to return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional.

Management and Referral Guidelines for All Staff

The following situations indicate a medical emergency and require activation of the Emergency Medical System:

1. Any scholar with a witnessed loss of consciousness (LOC) of any duration should be spine boarded and transported immediately to the nearest emergency department via emergency vehicle.
2. Any scholar who has symptoms of a concussion, and who is not stable (i.e., condition is worsening), is to be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department via emergency vehicle.
3. A scholar who exhibits any of the following symptoms should be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department, via emergency vehicle.

Deterioration of neurological function

Decreasing level of consciousness

Decrease or irregularity in respirations

Any signs or symptoms of associated injuries, spine or skull fracture, or bleeding

Mental status changes including lethargy, difficulty maintaining arousal, confusion or agitation.

Seizure activity

4. A scholar who is symptomatic but stable may be transported by his or her parents. The parents should be advised to contact the scholar's primary care provider, or seek care at the nearest emergency department, on the day of the injury.

Guidelines and Procedures for Coaches and Mentors Supervising Contests and Games:

Recognize Concussion:

All educators and agents of Capstone should become familiar with the signs and symptoms of concussion that are described above.

Educators and agents of Capstone shall/will have appropriate training about recognizing and responding to traumatic head injuries, consistent with the employees' responsibilities for supervising scholars and athletes.

Remove from Activity

Any scholar who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion (such as loss of consciousness, headache, dizziness, confusion, or balance problems) as described above, shall/will be immediately removed from the sporting event and shall will not return to play until cleared by an appropriate health care professional. When in doubt, sit them out!

Refer the Athlete/Scholar for Medical Evaluation:

The agent of Capstone is responsible for notifying the scholar's parent(s) of the injury and appropriate processes.

Contact the parent(s) to inform them of the injury. Depending on the injury, either an emergency vehicle will transport or parent(s) will pick the scholar up at the event for transport (see Management and Referral Guidelines Section II).

A medical evaluation is required before returning to play.

In the event that a scholar's parent(s) cannot be reached, and the scholar is able to be sent home (rather than directly to MD), the Capstone Classical Academy agent should do the following:

The Capstone agent should insure that the scholar will be with a responsible individual who is capable of monitoring the scholar and understanding the home care instructions, before allowing the scholar to go home.

The Capstone agent should continue efforts to reach a parent.

If there is any question about the status of the scholar, or if the scholar cannot be monitored appropriately, the scholar should be referred to an emergency department for evaluation. A Capstone Classical Academy agent should accompany the scholar and remain with the scholar until a parent arrives.

The Capstone agent shall provide for supervision of other scholars for whom he or she is responsible when accompanying the injured scholar.

Scholars with suspected head injuries should not be permitted to drive home.

If the injury occurs at a formal athletic or away contest, Capstone agents should seek assistance from the host site athletic trainer (ATC) or team physician, if available, at an away contest if the injury occurs at a formal athletic contest.

Return to Play (RTP) Procedures After Concussion

Return to activity and play is a medical decision. The scholar must meet all of the following criteria in order to progress to activity:

Asymptomatic at rest and with exertion (including mental exertion in school) AND

Have written clearance from the scholar's primary care provider or concussion specialist (scholar must be cleared for progression to activity by a physician other than an Emergency Room physician, if diagnosed with a concussion).

Once the above criteria are met, the scholar will be progressed back to full activity following the stepwise process detailed below. An agent of Capstone must/ will closely supervise this progression. If the school does not have an athletic trainer, then the coach must have a very specific plan to follow as directed by the athlete's physician).

Progression is individualized, and will be determined on a case-by-case basis. Factors that may affect the rate of progression include previous history of concussion, duration and type of symptoms, age of the scholar, and sport/activity in which the scholar was injured. An athlete/scholar with a prior history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a collision or contact sport may be progressed more slowly.

Stepwise Process:

Step 1. Complete cognitive rest. This may include staying home from school or limiting school hours (and studying) for several days. Activities requiring concentration and attention may worsen symptoms and delay recovery.

Step 2. Return to school full-time.

Step 3. Light exercise. This step cannot begin until the scholar is no longer having concussion symptoms and is cleared by a physician for further activity. At this point the athlete may begin walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight lifting.

Step 4. Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 5. Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight training can begin.

Step 6. Full contact practice or training.

Step 7. Play in game. A scholar must be cleared by a physician before returning to play.

The scholar should spend one to two days at each step before advancing to the next. If post-concussion symptoms occur at any step, scholar must stop the activity and the treating physician must be contacted. Depending upon the specific type and severity of the symptoms, the scholar may be told to rest for 24 hours and then resume activity at a level one step below where he or she was at when the symptoms occurred. This resumption of activity could be considerably simplified for a scholar injured during recess compared to a scholar injured at a game or formal practice.

Potential Problem Areas

While current Utah law designates that a scholar may be returned to play by “an appropriate health care provider”, Capstone, in its sole discretion, may limit the credentials from which it will accept clearance in its sole discretion. Generally, scholars will be required to provide a note from his/her their health care provider before being allowed to return to play. This is a very important decision and will be made after careful consideration by the athletic director, director, Director, and parent(s). The school's liability carrier may also be consulted.

Capstone Classical Academy will not allow scholars who are clearly having concussion symptoms to return to play even if given clearance by a health care provider.

See Utah Code R277-614