SCOTT COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Concussion Guidelines for Parents and Student-Athletes
IMPORTANT INFORMATION—READ CAFEFULLY

Effective July 1, 2011, Virginia's Student-Athlete Protection Act (Code of Virginia 22.1-271.5) requires Scott County Schools to provide a policy that provides for the identification and proper handling of suspected head concussions in student –athletes. The policy must also include an education component for students and their parents. Our goal is to ensure that our student-athletes are properly diagnosed, given adequate time to heal, and are given support until they are symptom free.

A **concussion** is a brain injury caused by trauma to the head, face, neck, or body which results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness to suffer a concussion. It is important to note that concussions are unique and every concussion should be treated individually. There is no "cookie-cutter" approach to concussion management and each one will be dealt with depending on the symptoms experienced by the student-athlete.

Because concussions are unique to the individual they may manifest themselves differently in each person, but there are some common signs and symptoms to consider if a student-athlete is suspected of having a concussion. These include, but are not limited to:

- Headaches or pressure in the head
- Confusion
- Vomiting
- Dizziness
- Feeling sluggish or fatigued
- Numbness/tingling in arms or legs
- Balance problems
- Pupil changes (change in size or no reaction to light)
- Double vision
- Sensitivity to noise
- Sensitivity to light
- Feeling mentally "foggy" or groggy
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Irritability
- Nervousness
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Drowsiness

Recognizing a concussion is essential to safe concussion management, but they can be exceptionally difficult to diagnose. Symptoms may occur immediately following the trauma to the head or they can occur hours or even days later. These symptoms can also last anywhere from a few minutes to several weeks. Any signs of a concussion should be reported immediately.

More serious signs and symptoms may be present or develop that require emergency medical attention. Seek immediate medical attention if your student-athlete reports any of the following:

- Headaches that worsen
- Repeated vomiting
- Seizures
- Neck pain
- Extreme drowsiness
- Significant irritability
- Unusual behavioral changes
- Slurred speech
- Weakness in arms/legs
- Numbness in arms/legs

Be aware that concussions can occur in any sporting activity, but most frequently in football, soccer, basketball, and baseball. However, **all athletes are at risk.**

Most athletes who experience a concussion can recover completely as long as they do not return to play prematurely. The effects of repeated concussions can be cumulative, and after a concussion, there is a period in which the brain is particularly vulnerable to further injury. If an athlete sustains a second concussion during this period, the risk of permanent brain injury increases significantly and the consequences of a seemingly mild second concussion can be very severe, and even result in death.

Therefore, any student-athlete suspected of having a concussion shall be immediately removed from the game/practice at that time and not return to play or practice until evaluated and cleared by an appropriate licensed health care provider. If a student-athlete is suspected of having a concussion and no health care professional is available to properly diagnose the situation then the student-athlete should be held out of competition until they can be properly evaluated. **If in doubt, they should sit out.**

According to Scott County Schools policy, athletes determined to have suffered a concussion may not return to play or practice on that same day. To return to play or practice they should no longer exhibit any of the signs of a concussion either at rest or *during exertion*, and receive a written medical release from an appropriate health care provider.

Once cleared, the athlete may proceed with activities as prescribed by an appropriate health care provider, to allow the proper recovery.

Please remember that rest is the best treatment for a concussion.

Please acknowledge your receipt, understanding, and agreement with this important information by signing below.

I have read and fully understand the information and risks associated with potential concussions while playing athletics in the Scott County School system.

Student Athlete Name (print):_____

Student Athlete Signature:_____Date:_____

Parent/Guardian Name (print):_____

Parent/Guardian Signature:_____Date:_____

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