

Athletics Department South Carolina Governor's School for Science and Mathematics Concussion Policy

ATTN: Due to the fact that your child resides at GSSM, if your child receives a concussion you will be notified immediately upon diagnosis. According to SC state law a physician or a certified athletic trainer can diagnose a concussion on the sidelines of a game. The proper care will be followed by our protocol.

Education

Members of the GSSM staff will be educated on signs and symptoms of concussion and what should be done to report possible concussions.

Players do not necessarily have to receive a direct blow to the head or suffer from loss of consciousness in order to be diagnosed as having a concussion injury.

Any player who receives or is suspected of receiving a concussion injury will be removed from the event or game. Evaluation of the athlete will be done by an athletic trainer or team physician only, to determine if concussion has been sustained. If it is determined the athlete has sustained a concussion the athlete will not return to play until written release to return has been obtained by the team physician. A specific return to play protocol will be followed by all personnel involved in the care for your child.

A concussion, as defined by the Zurich International Conference on Concussion in Sports, is defined as a complex path physiological process affecting the brain, induced by traumatic biomechanical forces. The majority of concussions (80% -90%) resolve in a short (7-10 days) period although time frame may be longer from one person to the next.

Common Concussion Symptoms:

| Physical | Cognitive | Emotional | Sleep |
|----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|--------------------------|
| Headache | Feeling mentally foggy | Irritability | Trouble falling asleep |
| Dizziness | Feeling slowed down | Sadness | Sleeping more than usual |
| Balance problems | Difficulty concentrating | Nervousness | Sleeping less than usual |
| Nausea/vomiting | Difficulty remembering | More emotional | |
| Fatigue | Difficulty focusing | | |
| Sensitivity to light | | | |
| Sensitivity to noise | | | |

Pre-season ImPACT concussion testing will occur with every incoming NEW athlete. There only needs to be one baseline test taken by each student athlete. Once an athlete has a baseline test, it will be determined by the athletic trainer of when the athlete will need to take a post-concussion test. This typically takes place 24 hours after the initial injury. This allows for a time of rest for the brain.

Depending on the symptoms presented, a student athlete may need to go to the Emergency Room at



Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center or a local hospital if the injury occurs at an away event. Symptoms for this treatment would include, but not limited to: loss of consciousness, asymmetrical pupils or vision problems, extreme headache, or vomiting. If these symptoms are not present, the medical team physician declares that the student athlete should get as much rest as possible without interruptions. This may include going home to rest at the discretion of medical personnel including the nurses as soon as the parent/guardian can get to Hartsville. GSSM has First Aid CPR/AED trained residence life staff that stay in the residence hall with students, but they are not able to provide the personal monitoring that a student diagnosed with a concussion may require. They will be provided an orientation by the athletic trainer to know when a concussion progresses to the next level of needing an emergency room visit. In certain situations/injuries, your student athlete may need rest from all activities including classes and studying.

The athletic trainer in consultation with the nursing staff will advise as to the appropriate return to studies protocol. A student athlete that sustains a brain injury (concussion) will need rest from studying as well. All student athletes are different and there is not one sign or symptom that will determine when they can return to studying or attending class. The trainer/and or nurses often in consultation with a physician decide when the athlete will return to school and regular activities dependent on the symptom score from the ImPACT test that the athlete will take until they return to normal. There may be times when a student will be required to go home to rest.

Dr. Robert Elder is the team physician of the Governor's School and will give written clearance on all athletes prior to return to play following a concussion if the family chooses not to have the student see a physician at home. Once the return to play (RTP) protocol has been followed and the athlete is prepared to return to his/her sport, the team physician or treating physician will give written notice. During this time of recovery, the parent will be involved and allowed to make decisions based upon what they believe is the best care for their child. There have been times when student athletes have gone home and have been cleared by their physician to return to play BUT the athlete will go through the return to play protocol first with the athletic trainer at GSSM.

Jennifer Nesseth MS, ATC, SCAT
Carolina Pines Regional Medical Center
Governor's School for Science and Mathematics
nesseth@gssm.k12.sc.us

Partial List of Resources:

<http://www.schsl.org/2011%20forms/ConcussionReturntoPlay.pdf>
<http://www.schsl.org/2013/concussion.html>
<http://www.scdhec.gov/Health/ChildTeenHealth/Concussions/AthleteConcussionLaw/>
<http://bjsm.bmj.com/content/47/5/250.full.pdf>
<http://www.biausa.org/SC/news.htm>

An Educator's Guide to Concussions in the Classroom 2nd Edition
A Coach's Guide to Concussions
An Athlete's Guide to Concussions
Classroom Concussion Assessment Form
A School Administrator's Guide to Academic Concussion Management, NationwideChildrens.org/Sports-Medicine

