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**HEALTH SERVICES DEPARTMENT
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**Concussion/Head Injury Management Information for
Parents of High School and Middle School Athletes**

To improve the safety of student athletes, the Athletic Department and Health Services Department have developed a Head Injury and Concussion Prevention and Management Program. A key part of the program involves the ImPACT Program. (Immediate Post-Concussion Assessment and Cognitive Testing.) This test looks at the ability of the brain to think and process information. The New York State High School Athletic Association endorses ImPACT. ImPACT testing helps us determine when it is safe for a student athlete to return to play **and** school after a head injury.

650,000 children and athletes have a head injury with concussion each year. These injuries occur in many sports. This includes sports we offer: football, soccer, basketball, lacrosse, rugby, baseball, softball, ice hockey, wrestling, and cheerleading. These injuries happen during head contact with person, the field or court, or equipment. Middle and high school students take longer to recover from a concussion than an adult. They are also more likely to get a second concussion. Second concussions increase the risk for severe brain injury.

Each student athlete will be required to take a baseline ImPACT test. This initial test will be completed before the start of the practice season (once and then every 2 years). No athlete will be able to practice unless a baseline test has been taken and reviewed by the Health Services Department.

Signs and symptoms of head injury with concussion vary and may appear mild to severe. There may be no symptoms, or they may be slight. Some symptoms can be: changes in walking, slurred speech, slow reaction time. "Passing out" does not have to happen to mean there has been a head injury. CT scans may not be needed: 90% are negative when there is a concussion. Thus, it is very important that any student who gets or sees another student get a head injury report it to a coach, athletic trainer, parent, or School Nurse.

If a head injury with concussion occurs, the student must repeat the ImPACT test within 1 to 3 days. The athlete must be seen by a doctor or nurse practitioner and have medical clearance to play. Returning to the sport also depends on the athlete getting back to the original levels on the ImPACT test. Final clearance from the school district Medical Director will be based on both the ImPACT Test and medical exam. If ImPACT testing after injury shows that an athlete's brain function is not as good as the original test, repeat testing will be done weekly until the test result is close to the original.

After a concussion, the brain goes into a "crisis" period which can last 7 to 10 days. The brain has difficulties with memory and thinking and requires time to heal. This involves physical rest, and the student may require reduced school work, rest breaks during the day, and decreased homework. The student will not be allowed to participate in their sport or gym classes.

After clearance the student will slowly return to activity based on steps that help the athletic trainer to see how well the athlete is doing. Each step requires at least 24 hours to make sure symptoms don't come back. This system is being put into place to protect each athlete.

For more information, you can view the websites listed below:

CDC: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>

NYSHSAA: <http://www.keepyourheadinthegame.org/>

ImPACT: <http://www.impacttest.com/>

Our goal, as it has always been, is to maximize safe participation in our sports program. If you have further questions or concerns, please contact the Health Services Department (576-4264) or Athletic Department (576-4586).