

Board Policy S-6: Concussions and Traumatic Head Injuries



REFERENCES

[Administrative Procedures for Board Policy S-6](#)

[Utah Code Ann. §26-53-101 et seq., Protection of Athletes with Head Injuries Act](#)

[Utah Admin. Code R277-614, Athletes and Students with Head Injuries](#)

THE POLICY

The Salt Lake City School District Board of Education is committed to keeping students safe while they participate in district sporting events, including physical education classes. In accordance with state law, the district will effectively and consistently manage any suspected concussions or traumatic head injuries, and obtain written medical clearance before allowing a student, who has sustained such an injury, to return to activity.

The purpose of this policy is to implement procedures to appropriately identify and assist students who may have sustained a concussion or traumatic head injury.

No district employee or student shall be subjected to discrimination in employment or any district program or activity on the basis of age, color, disability, gender, gender identity, genetic information, national origin, pregnancy, race, religion, sexual orientation, or veteran status. The district is committed to providing equal access and equal opportunity in its programs, services and employment including its policies, complaint processes, program accessibility, district facility use, accommodations and other Equal Employment Opportunity matters. The district also provides equal access to district facilities for all youth groups listed in Title 36 of the United State Codes, including scouting groups. The following person has been designated to handle inquiries and complaints regarding unlawful discrimination, harassment, and retaliation: Kathleen Christy, Assistant Superintendent, 440 East 100 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84111, (801) 578-8251. You may also contact the Office for Civil Rights, Denver, CO, (303) 844-5695.

S-6: Administrative Procedures

Concussions and Traumatic Head Injuries



REFERENCES

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DEFINITIONS

Qualified Health Care Provider: A health care provider who is licensed under Title 58, Occupations and Professions, and who evaluates and manages concussions or traumatic head injuries within the scope of his or her practice.

Sporting Event: Any of the following athletic activities that is organized, managed or sponsored by the district, and/or the Utah High School Athletic Association:

1. a game;
2. a practice;
3. a sports camp;
4. a physical education class;
5. a competition; or
6. a tryout.

Sporting event does not include free play or recess taking place during school hours. Sporting event also does not include the district merely making one of its fields, facilities or other locations available to an amateur sports organization or a child for his/her/its use.

Staff: For the purpose of this policy only, the term "staff" includes all coaches, athletic support staff, physical education teachers, and employees and volunteers who are responsible for student safety during a sporting event.

Traumatic Head/Brain Injury: An injury to the head arising from blunt trauma, an acceleration force, or a deceleration force, with one of the following observed or self-reported conditions attributable to the injury:

1. transient confusion, disorientation, or impaired consciousness;
 2. dysfunction of memory;
 3. loss of consciousness; or
 4. signs of other neurological or neuropsychological dysfunction, including:
 - a. seizures;
 - b. irritability;
 - c. lethargy;
 - d. vomiting;
 - e. headache;
 - f. dizziness; or
 - g. fatigue.
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PROCEDURES FOR IMPLEMENTATION

These procedures and the accompanying policy apply to district students participating in any sporting event as defined above.

Each school shall annually provide written copies of these procedures and the accompanying policy to parents of students participating in any sporting event, and obtain a signed statement from the parent acknowledging that the parent has read, understands, and agrees to abide by the district's concussions and traumatic head injuries policy.

No student may participate in a sporting event until the student's parent has signed and returned the acknowledgment to the school.

I. Recognition of a Concussion or Traumatic Head/Brain Injury (TBI)

- A. The most common type of TBI is a concussion. A concussion can occur even if a student does not lose consciousness. When combined with a head injury, staff should consider TBI symptoms to be present when the student:
 1. forgets plays, or has difficulty concentrating or with short-term memory;
 2. exhibits difficulty with balance, dizziness, or coordination;
 3. answers questions slowly or inaccurately;
 4. complains of double vision or changes in vision;
 5. notices sensitivity to light or sound/noise;
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6. begins vomiting;
7. has a seizure;
8. complains of a headache;
9. feels sluggish or foggy;
10. has a vacant stare or befuddled facial expression;
11. is slow to answer questions or follow instructions;
12. is confused or is unable to focus attention;
13. is disoriented (walking in the wrong direction or unaware of time, date, or place);
14. has slurred or incoherent speech;
15. exhibits emotions out of proportion to circumstances (distracted or crying for no apparent reason); or
16. has any visible injury to the head.

B. Staff, as defined above, are not expected to be able to diagnose a concussion or TBI; that is the role of a qualified health care professional. However, all staff must be aware of the signs, symptoms and behaviors of a possible concussion or TBI, and implement the appropriate protocol as outlined in these procedures.

II. Removal Protocols

- A. Every school shall designate an employee or multiple employees, as needed, to make proper referrals for students suspected of sustaining a concussion or TBI.
- B. Any time a student is suspected of sustaining a concussion or TBI, the designated school employee must be notified as soon as possible to initiate proper referral protocols.
- C. The designated school employee is responsible for:
 1. ensuring appropriate transport for the injured student;
 2. informing the parent of the injury and the need for a proper medical evaluation before the student can return to play; and
 3. ensuring that documentation of a completed proper medical evaluation is obtained by the school prior to the student being allowed to return to play.

III. Notification and Transportation

- A. Parent notification
 1. School personnel shall notify the student's parent as soon as reasonably possible that their student has been injured.
 2. Depending on the injury, the parent must be advised as to whether an emergency vehicle is transporting the student. If the student is symptomatic but stable, the parent should be informed that their student may be picked up at the sporting event and transported by the parent.
 3. If the student is transported by the parent, the parent must be advised to contact the student's primary care provider, or seek care at the nearest emergency department, on the day of the injury.
 4. Parents must be informed that a medical evaluation by a qualified health care professional is required before the student will be allowed to return to play in any district sporting event.
- B. In the event that the student's parent cannot be reached, and the student is able to be sent home rather than directly to an emergency medical provider, school personnel must:
 1. ensure that the student will be with a responsible adult who is capable of monitoring the student before allowing the student to go home;
 2. continue efforts to reach the parent; and
 3. not permit a student with a suspected concussion or TBI to drive himself or herself home.

IV. Emergency Medical Response

- A. Staff must be prepared to appropriately react to these situations, and should err on the side of caution in determining the appropriate response.
- B. The following situations indicate a medical emergency and require an emergency medical response by school personnel in conjunction with parent notification. This list provides examples of situations, but is in no way comprehensive.
 1. Any student with a witnessed loss of consciousness of any duration should be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department via emergency vehicle.
 2. Any student who has symptoms of a concussion, and whose condition appears to be worsening should be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department via emergency vehicle.
 3. Any student who exhibits any of the following symptoms should be transported immediately to the nearest emergency department via emergency vehicle:
 - a. deterioration of neurological function;
 - b. decreasing level of consciousness;
 - c. irregular respirations;
 - d. bleeding or fluid discharge from the ears;

- e. suspected spinal injury;
- f. mental status changes including lethargy, confusion, or agitation; or
- g. seizure activity.

V. Return to Play

- A. Any student with a suspected concussion or TBI is prohibited from continued participation, or returning to play, in any sporting event until the student is evaluated by a trained qualified health care professional.
- B. This prohibition will remain in effect until the student provides the school with a written statement from a trained qualified health care provider stating that he or she has successfully completed a continuing education course in the evaluation and management of a concussion and that the student is cleared to resume participation in the sporting event.

VI. Training

- A. All staff who are responsible for supervising students at sporting events shall:
 - 1. complete training on the nature and risk of concussions or traumatic head injuries consistent with the law,
 - 2. be familiar with the Utah High School Activities Association's Concussion Management Policy, which can be found on the association's website.
- B. Coaches shall complete all necessary training prior to, or within 14 days of, their date of hire or notification of contract renewal. Training and certification is a condition of employment for coaches, and failure to obtain the necessary training may be grounds for discipline, up to and including termination.

VII. School Nurses

- A. A school nurse may assess a student with a suspected concussion or TBI during school hours on school property regardless of whether the nurse has received specialized training in the evaluation and management of a concussion or TBI.
- B. If a student is suspected of sustaining a concussion or TBI, a school nurse will:
 - 1. not permit the student to resume participation in a sporting event;
 - 2. not provide a written statement permitting the student to resume participation in a sporting event; and
 - 3. refer the student to a qualified healthcare provider for evaluation and treatment.
- C. All school nurses shall complete training in the evaluation and management of a concussion as district funding allows.