



Montana High School Association

1 South Dakota Avenue ♦ Helena, MT 59601 ♦ (406) 442-6010 ♦ Fax: (406) 442-8250 ♦ www.mhsa.org

May 18, 2015

TO: MHS SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS
FROM: MARK BECKMAN, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RE: CONCUSSION LAW

In 2013, the Dylan Steigers Protection of Youth Athletes Act was signed into law. The requirements of the law mirror many aspects of the NFHS/MHSA Return to Play rules that have been in place for the past several years but there are a few additional requirements of the law. Below is an overview of the law and how it will pertain to MHS member schools:

- An athletic trainer, coach, or official shall remove a youth athlete from participation in any organized youth athletic activity at the time the youth exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion. ***(No change from our previous return to play rules).***
- The youth cannot return to play until they are evaluated by a licensed health care professional and receives written clearance to return to play from the licensed health care professional. ***(Our previous rule required that an athlete had to be cleared by a MD, DO, PAC or NP. The current law states an athlete can be cleared to return to play by a licensed health care professional).***
- **Policies** – Each school district in this state offering organized youth athletic activities shall adopt policies and procedures to inform athletic trainers, coaches, officials, youth athletes and parents or guardians of the nature and risk of brain injuries, including the effects of continuing to play after a concussion. School districts shall ensure access to training a program meeting the requirements stated previously and each official, coach and athletic trainer shall complete the training program at least once each school year. ***(See the requirements below for MHS schools to meet the procedures stated in the law. Requirements for grades K-8 are the responsibility of the local school district but templates of the MHS information will be available for use at those levels. School's are responsible to adopt policies and can contact Joe Brott at the MtSBA for sample policies).***
- **Coaches and Athletic Trainers** – ***To meet this provision of the law, the MHS will require every coach (head, assistant and volunteer including cheer coaches) and athletic trainer to take the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year. The course is available at www.nfhslearn.com. (Please see attached instruction sheet to access the course). The course must be viewed before the coach has contact with student athletes in his/her***

respective sport and viewed after May 1st for the subsequent year. The school should restrict any coach from coaching until the course is completed or the school district is in violation of Montana State Law. The requirements for grades K-8 are the responsibility of the local school district but schools can use the NFHS course without charge for those constituents if they so choose.

- **Officials** – *The MHSА/MOА will require each official to take the NFHS Concussion in Sports course each year. That course must be taken after June 1st for the subsequent school year and must be completed before officiating scrimmages or contests. If you use non-MOА officials for your sub varsity games and/or elementary/junior high contests the school district must verify those officials have completed training.*
- **Student Athletes and Parents** – *The MHSА will require that schools distribute the attached information to each student athlete and his/her parents or legal guardians before the student participates in an MHSА sport. The student athlete and parents/legal guardians must sign the front page after verifying they have read and understand the information regarding concussions. The sign off sheet must be retained on file by each school. This information with signature sheet cannot be distributed and completed until after May 1st for the next school year. The student and parents/guardians only have to do this once per year and it must be completed before the first sport the student participates. The requirements for grades K-8 are the responsibility of the local school district but access to the MHSА template will be made available for schools to utilize, if they choose, in Grades K-8.*

The following information is also attached:

- MHSА required concussion information packet with sign off sheet for student-athletes and parents/legal guardians.
- Concussion Quick Check Sheet
- Instructions on how to access the NFHS Concussion in Sports course.

Please contact the MHSА office with any questions you may have.

MB/jlh

Attachments