

## **RVCS POLICY AND PROCEDURES REGARDING CONCUSSIONS**

The following policy and procedure has been developed for RVCS in keeping with the Virginia Board of Education Guidelines for Concussions in Student-Athletes. The goal of the policy is to ensure that student-athletes who sustain concussions are properly diagnosed, given adequate time to heal, and are supported until symptom free.

When an injury occurs and concussion is suspected, the student/athlete will be removed from the activity at that time. He/she shall not return to play that same day, or until evaluated by an appropriate licensed health care provider. If a concussion is diagnosed that student may not return to play until given written clearance to return to play from a licensed health care provider with experience in the evaluation and management of concussions.

If no athletic healthcare provider is available for diagnosis, the athlete will not be allowed to return to practice or play when showing symptoms. The presiding coach will determine if 911 should be called, and will call the student's parents immediately. When 911 is called, and athletic administrator will be notified as well. The player will not be left alone, nor allowed to transport themselves off the premises, and must be monitored for a change in condition over the next several hours.

Any athlete removed from play due to suspicion of a concussion or continues to have symptoms must follow-up with an appropriate medical provider for evaluation before returning to competition. Any student-athlete with other signs and symptoms related to a concussion for more than a period of 48 hours will all be referred for a physician follow-up.

The provider will perform an appropriate neurological evaluation and repeat SAC and/or SCAT2 testing. They will also determine if referral for neuropsychological testing is necessary, direct time needed for cognitive rest, and determine when the athlete is cleared to play due to completion of the graduated return to play scale. The treating provider will give either a verbal or written clearance to return to play to the athletic coach, athletic director, or appropriate school representative.

Once a concussion is diagnosed, athletes are not able to progress through the step-wise return to play protocol faster than the required time, nor can any additional physician excuse or clear the athlete without completing the necessary steps in the required time frame.

### **GRANTED RETURN TO PLAY**

When the player is symptom-free and able to resume activity, a prescribed sequence of steps must be followed. With this stepwise progression, the athlete will only continue to proceed to the next level if asymptomatic at the current level. Each step will take 24 hours so that an athlete would take one week to proceed through the full rehabilitation protocol once they are asymptomatic at rest and with provocative exercise. If any post-concussion symptoms occur while in the stepwise program, then the patient will drop back to the previous asymptomatic level and try to progress again after a further 24-hour period of rest has passed.

Once the athlete successfully completes each step, the athlete will be cleared to play without restrictions provided no symptoms return. This requires documentation of progression and must be signed off by appropriate medical personnel.

## **GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL**

(24 hours per stage/move to the next when activities are tolerated without new or worsening symptoms/if worsen, return to the previous stage for at least 24 hours and seek medical clearance)

1. NO ACTIVITY (RECOVERY) Complete Physical and Cognitive Rest until Medical Clearance
2. LIGHT AEROBIC EXERCISE (INCREASE HEART RATE) Walking, Swimming, Stationary Cycling.
3. SPORT SPECIFIC EXERCISE (ADD MOVEMENT) Running Drills (Soccer, etc.) NO Head Impact Activities
4. NONCONTACT TRAINING DRILLS (INCREASED EXERCISE, COORDINATION & ATTENTION) Progress to Complex Training Drills (e.g., Passing Drills, etc.).
5. FULL CONTACT PRACTICE (RESTORE CONFIDENCE & ASSESS FUNCTIONAL SKILLS) If Symptom Free, Return to Normal Training Activities.

*Reference: Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport: the 3rd International Conference on Concussion in Sport held in Zurich (2008), Br J of Sports Med 2009; 43: i76-i84 doi:10.1136/bjism.2009.058248*