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Somerville Public Schools Concussion Management

Supporting your student who has suffered a concussion:

Concussion management is a process that takes time and communication. Since this is an evolving injury symptoms, cognitive deficits and balance could change or occur during the first 24-48 hours. Constant monitoring of symptoms and adjusting the plan of care is imperative. Both cognitive demand and physical exertion must be limited in order for the healing to occur. Somerville Public Schools Concussion Policy requires your student to be evaluated by your primary care physician and highly recommends for your student to remain home 1-2 days after injury to allow for cognitive healing to occur. **Any student who suffers a concussion will not be allowed to participate in physical education, recess, music, dance, attend field trips or any extracurricular activities until cleared to do so.**

1. **Regular and close monitoring of symptoms:** A Concussion is a Mild Traumatic Brain injury and should be treated as such. Monitor symptoms closely as the potential always exists for complications, some life-threatening (such as bleeding on the brain or second-impact syndrome). Such complications may occur immediately (minutes to hours) or over several days after the injury. **If your student experiences any of the following signs of deteriorating mental status, take her to the hospital immediately:** Cambridge Hospital has a Pediatric Emergency Room that is equipped to deal with Head Trauma.

- Has Headache that gets worse
- Is very drowsy or can't be awakened (woken up)
- Can't recognize people or places
- Is vomiting
- Behaves unusually, seems confused or very irritable
- Experiences seizures (arms and legs jerk uncontrollably)
- Has weak or numb arms or legs
- Has slurred speech

2. **Sleeping:** A good night sleep is an important start to the recovery process. A **good rule of thumb** to use is to wake up your Student during the night to check for signs of deteriorating mental status (see #1) only if he experienced a loss of consciousness or prolonged **amnesia** after the injury, or was still experiencing other significant **post-concussion symptoms** at bedtime. Sleeping allows the brain to heal !

3. **Medication:** Acetaminophen (e.g. Tylenol®) should be given sparingly after the injury. **Avoid** medications containing aspirin or non-steroidal anti-inflammatory (Ibuprofen/Advil®).

4. **Drug use warning:** Warn your student about the dangers of ingesting alcohol, illegal drugs, or other substances that might interfere with cognitive and neurologic function and neurologic recovery.

5. **Physical Rest:** Rest is important, but not complete bed rest. Your student should be doing daily living activities, **BUT not engaging in physical or strenuous activity:** physical education class, recess, dance, music or vocational classes ; attending field trips or school related extracurricular activities until he is cleared to do so. **Do Not Drive while having symptoms.**

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6. **Cognitive Rest:** Because activities that require concentration and attention may increase post-concussion symptoms and delay recovery, students who have sustained concussions should **LIMIT/NO computer use, video games, texting, watching TV and school-related activities(reading, tests and homework)** until they are symptom free. Students will be given a graduated academic accommodation plan with reduced work and assessed for the need of a 504 plan. However, this does not excuse a student from not doing missed work. It is highly recommended that students remain home from school for 1-2 days following injury to allow for cognitive healing to occur. A plan to complete work will be made once your student is symptom free.
7. **Graduated return-to-play.** Recent guidelines recommend that athletes follow a step-wise approach to return-to-play utilizing progressive aerobic and resistance exercises 24 hours after being symptom free. **WE FOLLOW A 6 DAY PROGRESSION, therefore at the very least your student- athlete will be out of competition for 1 week.** Athletes who have suffered more than one concussion or who have pro-longed symptoms will have a longer return to play progression. Students are not cleared for recess or physical education class until they have been symptom free for 1 week.
8. **Normal diet:** A well-balanced diet that is nutritious in both quality and quantity should be maintained to provide the needed nutrients to aid in the recovery process. Students should Avoid soda and drinks high in sugar.
9. **Further testing/management.** Students will be given the SCAT3/ or ImPACT neurocognitive test to evaluate their cognitive abilities and balance. Your student should be seen by a specialist if any of the following are true:
- post-concussion symptoms last more than 10 days or recur with exertion
 - convulsions or loss of consciousness (LOC) at the time of injury
 - if they have suffered one or more concussions in the past
10. **Trust your instincts.** Be as involved in the management of your students concussion as your instincts tell you to be. Don't be afraid to ask your student how he is feeling, what makes him feel worse or daily monitoring using the symptom score card. If you suspect something is wrong call your pediatrician.

Somerville High School recommends the services of Dr. Kreher at Mass General Hospital for concussion management or the Mass General Concussion Clinic. Please feel free to contact myself, Michelle Kelly, ATC or Dr. Kreher with questions or concerns.

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