



Bellefonte Area School District Concussion Management Plan

In accordance with recommendations by Law in the state of Pennsylvania, in accordance with Senate Bill 200(SB 200), also known as “Safety in Youth Sports Act,” the Bellefonte Area School District has adopted a policy for its student-athletes participating in interscholastic activities.

The Safety in Youth Sports Act, Pennsylvania Senate Bill 200, (Section1) Establishes standards in the state of Pennsylvania for managing concussions and traumatic brain injuries to student-athletes.

This policy also includes students in an athletic contest or competition that is sponsored by, or associated with the Bellefonte Area School District, including cheerleading, club sponsored sports activities, and sports activities sponsored by the school district’s affiliated organizations. This includes practices, interschool practices, and scrimmages as **outlined in section 2 under “Athletic Activity”** in accordance with this act.

A **copy of Pennsylvania Senate Bill 200** is attached with this Concussion Management Plan (added at the end of this document).

I. Definitions

A. Appropriate Medical Professional

1. A Licensed Physician who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions or a Licensed or Certified Health Care Professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions designated by such Licensed Physician. The **Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) are the appropriate Health Care Professional(s)** and the Licensed Physician designee, trained to provide concussion evaluation and management under the Standard Operating Procedures.
2. A Licensed Neuropsychologist trained in the evaluation and management of concussions or who has post-doctoral training in neuropsychology and specific training in the evaluation and management of concussions.

B. Specific Head Injuries

1. **Concussions or Mild-Traumatic Brain Injury (MTBI)** – A concussion, or MTBI, is the common result of a blow to the head or body which causes the brain to move within the skull. This injury causes brain function to change which results in an altered mental state (either temporary or prolonged). Psychologic and/or anatomic disruptions of connections between some nerve

cells in the brain occur. Concussions can have serious and long-term health effects, even from a mild hit to the head.

****Symptoms include, but are not limited to**** - brief loss of consciousness, headache, amnesia, nausea, dizziness, confusion, blurred vision, ringing in the ears, loss of balance, mood changes, poor concentration or mentally slow, lethargy, photosensitivity, noise sensitivity, and changes in sleeping patterns. The symptoms may be temporary or long lasting.

2. **Second Impact Syndrome (SIS)** – Refers to catastrophic events which may occur when a second concussion occurs while the athlete is still symptomatic and healing from a previous concussion. The second injury may occur within days or weeks following the first injury. Loss of consciousness *is NOT required*. The second impact is more likely to cause brain swelling with other widespread damage to the brain. This can be fatal. Most of SIS occurs when an athlete returns to activity without being symptom free from the previous concussion.

II. Appropriate Health Care Plan for Bellefonte Area School District

- A. The Bellefonte Area School District provides an appropriate healthcare plan that includes equitable access to athletics healthcare providers for each sport.
- B. The Bellefonte Area School District provides healthcare to all student-athletes participating in interscholastic athletics, cheerleading, and club sponsored activities. This healthcare is provided by the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) that provide coverage for after school practices, scrimmages, and scheduled interscholastic athletic events.
- C. The Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) on staff at Bellefonte Area School District follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), in accordance with the Pennsylvania Board of Medicine and Osteopathic Medicine. This SOP is provided by the Bellefonte Area School District Team Physician.

III. Educational Materials Related to Concussions and Traumatic Brain Injuries

- A. The Pennsylvania Department of Health and Department of Education shall develop and post on their internet websites guidelines and other relevant materials to inform and educate students participating in or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, their parents and their coaches, about the nature and risk of concussion and head injury, including the risks associated with continuing to play or practice after a concussion or head injury. In developing the guidelines and materials, the departments shall utilize existing materials developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- B. Bellefonte Area School District policies for Concussion Management Planning in Accordance with SB 200**
 1. The Bellefonte Area School District shall require each school year, that the student-athletes participating or desiring to participate in an athletic activity, and the student's parent/guardian, prior to participation by the student in an

athletic activity, sign and return to the district an acknowledgement of receipt and review of concussion and traumatic brain injury information sheet developed in accordance with the “Safety in Youth Sports Act.” In signing this information sheet (BASD’s *Injury Policy*, and BASD’s *Return to Play Requirements*), student-athletes and the parent/guardian accepts responsibility for reporting their injuries and illnesses to the school district’s medical staff (Staff Licensed Athletic Trainers), including signs and symptoms of concussions.

2. The Bellefonte Area School District requires all student-athletes and parents/guardians to review and sign the *PIAA Concussion Information Sheet* as part of the comprehensive initial Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation (CIPPE) required by the PIAA.
3. The Bellefonte Area School District will record a baseline assessment for each student-athlete competing in contact or non-contact sports, deemed at risk, or high risk, for potential concussions or head injuries. The assessment tool Bellefonte Area School District will administer on a bi-annual basis is the internet based *Concussion Vital Signs* program. These sports include but are not limited to baseball, basketball, football, soccer, softball, track and field, volleyball, wrestling and lacrosse; at a minimum. The same baseline assessment tools should be used post-injury at appropriate time intervals.
 - A. The baseline assessment should be considered one or more of the following areas of assessment.
 1. At minimum, the baseline assessment should consist of the use of a Symptoms Checklist (part of *Concussion Vital Signs* testing) and the *Concussion Vital Signs* neurocognitive computer based testing.
 2. Additionally, neuropsychological testing (i.e. computerized, standard paper and pencil) has been shown to be effective in the evaluation and management of concussions. The development and implementation of a neuropsychological testing program should be performed in consultation with a neuropsychologist. Ideally, post injury neuropsychological test data should be interpreted by a neuropsychologist or appropriately trained individuals (i.e. Athletic Trainers).
 - B. In the event a student-athlete has not completed a baseline because of an absence or failed baseline exam, the student will complete a phasic variation of the neurocognitive testing program. The student-athlete will need to perform no less than three different post-tests roughly 24 hours apart from each other. The data collected from those three tests will be compared by the athletic training staff. The scores from each test will be analyzed and compared to look for “odd outliers” or anomalies. As long as the score averages are comparable, the student-athlete will be able to move on to the next phase of their program.

IV. Informational Meeting on Concussion and Traumatic Brain Injuries

The Bellefonte Area School District will hold an informational meeting prior to the start of each athletic season for all student-athletes, parents/guardians, and coaches regarding concussions and other head injuries, the importance of proper concussion management and how neurocognitive testing can aid in the evaluation, management and the recovery process. All members of the district coaching staff, head and assistants, are required to attend these informational meetings each school year. Student-athletes and their parents/guardians are required to attend at least one informational meeting per year.

V. Removal from Participation in Athletic Activity Following Concussions and Traumatic Brain Injuries

A. A student-athlete who, as determined by a licensed or certified health care provider, whose scope of practice includes the management and evaluation of concussions, coach entity, student's team, game official or other official designated by the student's school entity, exhibits signs or symptoms of a concussion or head injury while participating in an athletic activity, shall be removed from participation at that time. The student shall not return to participation until they are evaluated and cleared for return to participation in writing by a licensed or certified health care practitioner whose scope of practice includes the treatment and management of concussions.

1. The Bellefonte Area School District shall require the immediate removal of the student-athlete from athletic activity after sustaining a concussion or traumatic brain injury. The athlete may not return to activity until they are evaluated and cleared for Return to Participation (RTP) in practice or competition, in writing, by a licensed or Certified Health Care Provider who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussion.

A. Following evaluation and determination of a concussion or traumatic brain injury, the student-athlete is to be further evaluated by a licensed physician. This should be (but not always, depending on scheduling) prior to initiating the phasic return program and return to participation in any activity as outlined within the concussion management plan.

B. The student-athlete will receive serial monitoring for deterioration and will be assessed daily when attending school utilizing a daily symptoms score sheet provided by the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) on staff. The symptom score sheet will be continued until symptoms relating to their head injury have resolved.

VI. Return to Participation in Athletic Activity Post Concussion/Traumatic Brain Injury

A. Student-Athlete Return to Play

1. The coach may not return a student-athlete to play in any athletic activity. The student-athlete may not return to play until they have been evaluated and cleared for participation in writing by an appropriate medical professional.

The governing body of a school entity may designate a specific person or persons, who must be appropriate medical professionals, to provide written clearance for return to participation. In order to help determine whether a student is ready to return to participation, an appropriate medical professional may consult any other licensed or certified medical professionals.

- B. Bellefonte Area School District's Return to Participation (RTP) Policy for student-athletes relating to concussions and traumatic brain injury
 - 1. An athlete cannot return to participation in their respective sport or physical activity until...
 - A. Have been evaluated by a Licensed Physician
 - B. Symptom Free
 - C. Return to the level of their baseline concussion testing (Concussion Vital Signs)
 - D. Successfully complete a 5-phase return to participation program with the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) on staff with the Bellefonte Area School District
 - E. Evaluated and cleared for RTP in writing, by a Licensed or Certified Health Care Provider, and Licensed Physician
 - 2. Once asymptomatic and post-exertion assessments are within normal baseline limits, return to play should follow a medically supervised stepwise process.
 - 3. As part of the Concussion Management Plan, all student-athletes must, satisfactorily, complete the 5-phase return to play exertion program with the Licensed Athletic Trainers at Bellefonte Area School District before they can return, along with securing a written release by a Licensed or Certified Health Care Professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions and traumatic brain injury designated by a Licensed Physician. The Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) are the appropriate Health Care Professional(s) within Bellefonte Area School District and the Licensed Physician designee, trained to provide concussion evaluation and management under the Standard Operating Procedures.
 - 4. Final authority for return to play of the student-athlete to athletic activity shall reside with the Licensed Physician and/or the Physician designee, which includes the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) on staff within the Bellefonte Area School District.
- C. Documentation of the incident, evaluation, continued management and clearance of the student-athlete with a concussion
 - 1. All reported injuries, included concussions, are documented with the follow-up SOAP notes and kept on file with the individual student-athlete's records.
- D. Evaluation for Concussion and Mild Traumatic Brain Injury
 - 1. Evaluation following the initial injury of the student athlete will include :
 - a. Sports Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT-5)
 - b. Graded Symptom Checklist
 - c. Sideline Functional and Visual Assessments

- d. On-field Cognitive Testing
 - e. Observe athlete 15-20 minutes and re-evaluate
2. Return to Play (RTP) Criteria post initial injury
 - a. Student-athlete does not return to game or practice if he/she displays any signs/symptoms consistent with a concussion
 - b. Physician referral or immediate Emergency Room visit if level or number of symptoms persist, increase, or worsen after the initial injury
 - c. The referring Athletic Trainer(s) will notify the parents and give at home instructions to the parent/guardian prior to releasing the athlete from the Athletic Trainer's care
 - d. 5 Phase Return to Play program must be completed with the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) at Bellefonte Area School District
 - e. "Concussion Vital Signs" neurocognitive testing will be administered, at a minimum, of 24 hours after symptoms have resolved. The student-athlete must return to normal level of baseline testing before return to play in athletic activity.

If in doubt, the student-athlete will be removed from activity or given specific instructions on practice parameters if the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s), through specific testing, does not assume a concussion is present. The coach(s) will be notified as well of any specific limitations to the student-athlete's activity level; they are to abide by these parameters until further instruction is given by the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s)

3. 5 Phase Return to Play (RTP) Program
 - a. Must be completed with the Licensed Athletic Trainer(s) at the Bellefonte Area School District
 - b. Activity Progressions are as follows:
 - Student-Athlete must be symptom free
 - Light aerobic exercises with no resistance training
 - Sports-specific activity
 - Non-contact training drills with resistance training
 - Full contact training drills (must have physician clearance ahead of time before portion of the phase can be completed).

Athlete progression continues as long as the athlete is asymptomatic at current level. If the athlete experiences any post-concussion symptoms, a waiting period of 24 hours is implemented, and then begin the progression at the phase prior to the one where symptoms appeared.

- E. Injury Prevention Strategies to Reduce the Incidence of Head Injuries
 1. All football headgear must be NOCSAE certified
 2. All football headgear should properly fit the student-athlete

3. For all sports that require headgear, a coach or appropriate designate with knowledge of equipment fitting should check headgear before use to make sure air bladders work and are appropriately filled. Padding should be checked to make sure they are in proper working condition.
 4. Make sure helmets are secured properly at all times
 5. Mouth guards should fit and be used at all times for those sports that they are required
 6. Neuropsychological testing or “Concussion Vital Signs” testing on student-athletes that participate in varsity, junior varsity and junior high interscholastic athletics should be done prior to the start of each season on a bi-annual basis.
- F. Emergency Actions Plans (EAP)
1. The Bellefonte Area School District has separate and specific emergency action plans for all indoor and outdoor practice and competition event venues. These EAP’s are posted in the Athletic Training Room on the bulletin board and on Bellefonte Area School District’s website under “Athletics” and “Athletic Training” tabs. Each member of the Athletic Training staff will review and practice these guidelines accordingly.
- G. Training and Educational Course for Concussion Management
1. During each school year, a coach shall complete the concussion management certification training course provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Federation of State High School Associations or another provider approved by the Department of Health.
 2. A coach shall not coach an athletic activity until they have completed the training course as outlined in this subsection.
- H. Penalties for Coaches Violating SB 200 Section 3 (f)
1. Any coach found in violation of the requirements under subsection (c), which penalties shall take effect two years following the effective date of this section.
 - a. For a first time violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season’
 - b. For a second violation, suspension from coaching any athletic activity for the remainder of the season and for next season
 - c. For a third violation, permanent suspension from coaching any athletic event