



POLICIES ON HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETICS

2022-2023



Approved by the
Greater Lowell Technical School Committee

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FOREWORD

A survey of middle and high school students has shown that 18% report having symptoms associated with a concussion after a blow to the head during extracurricular athletics, annually¹. Given that there are approximately 200,000 Massachusetts students involved in athletics (MIAA), there is an estimated 36,000 student athletes a year experiencing a possible concussion. A growing body of scientific literature demonstrates the short and long-term risks of concussions. Returning a student athlete to play after a known or suspected concussion places the student at risk for long term health consequences, including serious injury or even death. The risk of substantial injury is particularly high if the athlete suffers a subsequent concussion before completely recovering from the prior one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences.

In 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health's (MDPH) issued the new regulation 105 CMR 201.000 *Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities*, mandated by *Chapter 166 of the Acts of 2010, An Act Relative to Safety Regulations for School Athletes*. This regulation requires all public middle and high schools (serving grades 6 through high school graduation) and those non-public schools that are members of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) to have policies and procedures governing the prevention and management of sport-related head injuries. The section in the regulations on School Policies (105 CMR 201.006) states that these policies will be developed by January 1, 2012² and will be reviewed and revised "as needed but at least every two years." Furthermore, the regulation outlines the 17 topic areas that school policies, at a minimum, should address. This document is organized in 17 sections to provide guidance for each of the areas identified in the regulations. Each section cites the relevant subsection of the regulation, provides clarifying comments and includes sample policies. MDPH sought to build in flexibility wherever possible to allow schools to incorporate the required head injury policies into existing policies and approaches to make implementation simpler. We have attempted to highlight these areas of flexibility throughout the document by including multiple approaches that will satisfy the requirement.

These regulations and the resulting school policies are meant to prevent concussions and minimize the health consequences should a concussion occur. The regulations also emphasize a team approach, bringing together all those in the school community responsible for student athletes' safety to understand the risks of concussions so they can respond appropriately. Schools and school districts are encouraged to use this document and the model policies that have been shared by many schools across the Commonwealth as a starting point as they develop their own school policies that fit local circumstances and reflect the district's unique characteristics. Each school district or private school is responsible for developing policies that are consistent with the regulations and include all required information. MDPH looks forward to working with schools, school districts and other key partners to implement these regulations in order to promote the health and safety of our student athletes.

¹ Youth Health Survey, 2009, Massachusetts Department of Public Health.

² In a Frequently Asked Questions document posted on the DPH website, DPH has indicated that schools should confirm that they have interim policies in place as of January 1, 2012 and then may finalize their policies by March 1, 2012 and confirm to the Department that they have done so.

INTRODUCTIONS TO SCHOOL POLICES ON HEAD INJURIES AND CONCUSSIONS IN EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETIC ACTIVITIES

Greater Lowell Technical High School seeks to prevent concussions and provide a safe return to activity for all students after injury, particularly after a head injury. In order to effectively and consistently manage these injuries, the Athletic Department abides by the following procedures that have been developed to aid in ensuring that concussed athletes are identified, treated and referred appropriately, receive appropriate follow-up medical care during the school day, including academic assistance, and are fully recovered prior to returning to athletic activity.

SECTION 1: PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SCHOOL POLICY AND PROCEDURES

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006 (A)(1): Designation, by the superintendent or head master, principal or school leader, of the person responsible for the implementation of these policies and protocols, either the Athletic Director or other school personnel with administrative authority;

Person Responsible Policy

The Greater Lowell Regional Vocational Technical School District has designated its Athletic Director to oversee the implementation of policies and protocols governing the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. In addition, the AD will be responsible for:

- (1) Supporting and enforcing the protocols, documentation, required training and reporting.
- (2) Assuring that all documentation is in place.
- (3) Reviewing, updating and implementing policy every two years and including updates in annual training and the student handbook.

SECTION 2: ANNUAL TRAINING REQUIREMENT

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(2): Annual training of persons specified in 105 CMR 201.007 in the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injury, and associated health risks including second impact syndrome, utilizing Department-approved training materials or program, and documentation of each person's completion of such training.

Training Requirement Policy

- ❖ The Commonwealth of Massachusetts requires annual safety training on sports related concussion, including second impact syndrome, for coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers, volunteers, school nurses, school and team physicians and athletic directors, whether employed by a school or school district or serving as a volunteer, parent or legal guardian of a child who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity and student who participates in an extracurricular athletic activity. At Greater Lowell Technical High School, school personnel are required to complete free, on-line training (either the National Federation of High Schools or the CDC's Heads Up Concussion training). Student athletes and their parents-must complete one of the approved on-line trainings and submit a completion/consent notice via the online registration platform to meet this participation requirement. Alternatively, parents may review DPH-approved written materials (provided by the athletic department) and sign a verification form that they have read and understood these materials.

SECTION 3: DOCUMENTATION OF PHYSICAL EXAM

Regulations:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(3): Documentation of physical examination prior to a student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities on an annual basis, consistent with 105 CMR 200.100(B)(3) and information for students participating in multiple sports seasons that documentation of one physical examination each year is sufficient;

Physical Examination Policy

- ❖ Each student athlete must have a physical examination on an annual basis, i.e. within 13 months of the student's last physical examination (to allow for insurance coverage of the examination). Any student athlete who does not have a current physical on file with the nurse, prior to the first day of try-outs/practice, is not eligible until a new/updated physical is turned in. If the student's physical examination expires during the sports season, they must have an updated physical examination to continue to participate in the sports season. All physicals are to be turned in to the nurse or athletic trainer, not the coach.

SECTION 4: PRE-PARTICIPATION HEAD INJURY REPORTING FORMS, SUBMISSION AND REVIEW

Regulations:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(4): Procedure for the school to obtain and ensure review, prior to each sports season, of current information regarding an athlete's history of head injuries and concussion using either the Department Pre-participation Health Injury/Concussion Reporting Form For Extracurricular Activities, or school based equivalent.

Concussion History Form Submission and Review Policy

- ❖ The Massachusetts concussion law requires an athlete and his or her parents to inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of each sports season. This reporting is done via the **Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting** form (see Appendix I) and should be completed by the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s) and the student. It must be submitted to the Greater Lowell Technical High School's Athletic Director, **prior to the start of each season a student plans to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity.** This form provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. This form is designed to ensure that particular attention is paid to identifying athletes with a history of brain or spinal injuries. For example, it asks such questions as:

- ❖ Has student ever experienced a traumatic head injury (a blow to the head)? (If yes, when?)
- ❖ Has student ever received medical attention for a head injury? (If yes, when?)
- ❖ Was student diagnosed with a concussion? (If yes, when?)
- ❖ Durations of symptoms for most recent concussion.

Until the pre-participation form is completed and signed by the parent/ guardian and student and returned to the school prior to the start of every sports season, the student cannot participate in the extracurricular sports activity.

- ❖ *History of Multiple Concussions on Pre-participation Form:* The decision to allow a player who reported a history of multiple concussions on her/his pre-participation form should be made only after consultation with the student's physician or primary care provider; the sports medicine or concussion specialist, if involved; the neuropsychologist, if involved, and the appropriate school athletic staff and the parent. Current evidence indicates that youth who have suffered one or more concussions are more likely to suffer a subsequent one. Options may include switching positions, limiting contact in practices, or changing sports altogether to minimize the risk of re-injury. The focus of Greater Lowell Technical High School will always be on protecting the health and safety of the student and avoiding long-term consequences that can occur from repeated concussions.

- ❖ *Collection/Distribution of Pre-participation Forms:* Greater Lowell Technical High School has the pre-participation forms available electronically at the School's website under Athletics at www.gltech.org. Hard copies of these forms are also available at the Athletic Department and School Nurse's office.
- ❖ The parent/student can fax, mail, or hand deliver the completed and signed pre-participation form to the Greater Lowell Technical High School's athletic department which will forward a copy to the school nurse. In addition, during the months of July and August, coordination between the athletic and school nursing departments is particularly important when the school nurse is not available. The pre-participation forms should be submitted to the Athletic Director who will then follow-up with the school nurse at the beginning of the school year.

SECTION 5: MEDICAL/NURSING REVIEW OF PRE-PARTICIPATION FORMS

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006 (A)(5): Procedure for medical or nursing review of all Pre-participation Forms indicating a history of head injury

Medical Review of Pre-Participation Form Policy

At the start of each sports season, the Athletic Director will review all pre-participation forms and forward to the school nurse those forms indicating a history of head injury. The school nurse will be responsible for:

- reviewing or having the school physician review completed pre-participation forms.
- addressing any questions raised by the Athletic Director.
- communicating with the coach and athletic trainer regarding the student's concussion history and discussing concerns.
- following up with parents and students as needed prior to the student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities.

SECTION 6: MEDICAL/NURSING REVIEW OF REPORTS OF HEAD INJURY DURING THE SEASON

Regulation:

105CMR 201.006(A)(6): Procedure for the school to obtain and ensure timely medical or nursing review of a Department Report of a head Injury During Sports Season Form, or school-based equivalent, in the event of a head injury or suspected concussion that takes place during the extracurricular activity season.

Medical/Nursing Review Policy

- ❖ The following procedures will be followed when an athlete receives a head injury:
 - Athlete is removed from the contest or practice.
 - The certified athletic trainer conducts a *Standardized Assessment of Concussion* and completes the ***“Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form”*** (See Appendix II).
 - If certified athletic trainer is not available, coach completes the ***“Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form”***
- ❖ The certified athletic trainer/coach will give ***“Report of Head Injury During Sports Season Form”*** to Director of Athletics.
- ❖ Director of Athletics will notify school nurse and/or school physician (if appropriate) who will review the Report of Head Injury form.
- ❖ School nurse will contact athlete’s teachers and school counselor.

SECTION 7: PROCEDURE FOR REPORTING HEAD INJURIES TO SCHOOL NURSE AND/OR CERTIFIED ATHLETIC TRAINER

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(7): Procedure for reporting head injuries or suspected concussions sustained during extracurricular athletic activities to the school nurse and certified athletic trainer, if on staff.

Reporting Head Injury Policy

Coaches will report all head injuries to the Certified Athletic Trainer as soon as possible for medical assessment and management and coordination of home instructions and follow-up care. The athletic trainer will notify the school nurse of the student's injury, prior to the next school day, so that the school nurse can initiate appropriate follow-up in school immediately upon the athlete's return to school.

SECTION 8: REMOVING ATHLETES FROM PLAY AND MEDICAL EVALUATION

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(8): Procedure for identifying a head injury or suspected concussion, removing an athlete from practice or competition and referring for medical evaluation.

Identifying Head Injury or Suspected Head Injury and Removing from Play Policy

- ❖ If a student athlete receives a blow to the head and any signs or symptoms are present - or if the student is suspected of having a head injury - the coach or athletic trainer must remove the student from play/practice and the student will not return to play/practice that day. The student will be referred to the school nurse, athletic trainer, or coach who will:
 - a) Contact parent, guardian or emergency contact,
 - b) Refer student immediately to their primary care physician or if unavailable, emergency room,
 - c) Send copy of the symptom checklist with the student for review by medical personnel,
 - d) Students must follow their primary care physician's written orders concerning return to school and physical activity (which includes physical activity in Physical Education class, sports practice and/or games).

SECTION 9: MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR RETURN TO PLAY

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(9) The protocol for medical clearance for return to play after a concussion that at a minimum complies with 105 CMR.201.011.

105 CMR 201.011: Each student who is removed from practice or competition for a head injury or suspected concussion, or loses consciousness, even briefly, or exhibits signs and symptoms of a concussion, shall obtain and present to the Athletic Director, unless another person is specified in school policy or procedure, a Department Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (Medical Clearance and Authorization Form), or school-based equivalent, prior to resuming the extracurricular athletic activity. This form must be completed by a physician or one of the individuals as authorized by 105 CMR 201.011(A). The ultimate return to play decision is a medical decision that may involve a multidisciplinary approach, including consultation with parents, the school nurse and teachers as appropriate.

(A) Only the following individuals may authorize a student to return to play:

- (1) A duly licensed physician;
- (2) A duly licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
- (3) A duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or
- (4) A duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

Return to Play Policy

All students at Greater Lowell Technical High School must be cleared to return to play/practice by a licensed medical professional (physician, nurse practitioner in consultation with a physician, certified athletic trainer in consultation with a physician or neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery) after the graduated return to play has been completed. (See details about graduated return to play practices below under Section 10). It is recommended that this medical professional have familiarity with concussion diagnosis and management in order to determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for the student to return to normal activities including physical activity and school (concentration and learning activities). Sports activities include physical education class as well as sports practices and games:

- The student should be completely symptom free at rest and with physical (sprints, non-contact aerobic activity) and cognitive exertion (school work).
 - Return to play should occur gradually (see below).
 - Students should be monitored for symptoms and cognitive function during each stage of exertion.
 - Students should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are asymptomatic at the current level.
- ❖ Medical clearance will be provided using the Post Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form (see Appendix III) also available on the Greater Lowell Technical High School website. It is recommended that the student take this form to the medical professional at the time of exam as other forms will not be accepted. These forms must be provided to the coach or athletic trainer and will

be shared with the school nurse for review with a copy kept in the student's medical record.

- ❖ In a situation in which a student has been medically cleared but school staff have observed continuing symptoms, the school will make the final decision regarding a student's return to play. If this situation arises, the Greater Lowell Technical High School staff should communicate with the physician or health care provider who provided the clearance regarding the symptoms school staff have observed to allow for reevaluation by the health care provider. It is possible that the health care provider was not aware of the student's symptoms when the provider gave the clearance. If the athlete still has symptoms, the athlete should NOT return to play.

Return to Play Schedule:

When a student athlete is completely symptom free at rest and has the approval of a medical professional, she/he may begin a graduated return to play protocol. The return to play schedule for the student should proceed as follows and should be monitored by the athletic trainer.

Step 1: Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.

Step 2: Aerobic exercise such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.

Step 3: Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight-training can begin.

Step 4: Full contact controlled training followed by practice or training.

Step 5: Full contact game play.

SECTION 10: DEVELOPMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION OF POST CONCUSSION GRADUATED REENTRY PLANS

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006: Procedure for the development and implementation of post-concussion graduated reentry plans to school and academic activities, if indicated, by persons specified in CMR 201.010(E)(1).

105 CMR 201.010(E) Each student who is removed from practice or competition and subsequently diagnosed with a concussion shall have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities.

(1) The plan shall be developed by the student's teachers, the student's school counselor, school nurse, certified athletic trainer if on staff, neuropsychologist if available or involved, parent, members of the building-based student support and assistance team or individualized education program team as appropriate and in consultation with the student's primary care provider or the physician who made the diagnosis or who is managing the student's recovery.

(2) The written plan shall include instructions for students, parents and school personnel, addressing but not be limited to: (a) Physical and cognitive rest as appropriate; (b) Graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies as appropriate, including accommodations or modifications as needed; (c) Estimated time intervals for resumption of activities; (d) Frequency of assessments, as appropriate, by the school nurse, school physician, team physician, certified athletic trainer if on staff, or neuropsychologist if available until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized; and (e) A plan for communication and coordination between and among school personnel and between the school, the parent, and the student's primary care provider or the physician who made the diagnosis or who is managing the student's recovery.

(3) The student must be completely symptom free and medically cleared as defined in 105 CMR 201.011 in order to begin graduated reentry to extracurricular athletic activities.

Graduated Reentry Planning

Greater Lowell Technical High School requires that all students returning to school and athletics after a concussion have a written plan for reentry. School staff, such as teachers, school nurses, counselors, administrators, coaches and others should work together to develop and implement this plan in coordination with the student, their parent/guardian and the primary care provider.

Graduated return to academic plans are based on the stages of recovery framework that takes a student from rest, to gradual return to full participation in academic activities.

The written reentry plans will be signed by the student, their parent/guardian, the school nurse, the lead teacher/school counselor, athletic trainer and coach so that all parties are in agreement as to the plan for reentry. Frequent or periodic assessments by school staff including the nurse, athletic trainer, school physician or team physician as appropriate may be necessary until full return to classroom activities and extracurricular athletic activities are authorized by medical staff. A copy of the plan will be kept in the student's medical record.

Stages of Recovery:

The stages of recovery are a framework designed through a collaborative effort by local health care professionals. The purpose of this framework is to create common language that will help guide students, families, school personnel and health professionals through the recuperation process. Placement in stages is based on assessment of the student's medical condition by a licensed medical professional and accompanied by written orders.

Red Stage (Usually 2 – 4 days, but could last weeks)

- 1) Rest
- 2) Students typically do not attend school

Orange Stage

- 1) Rest
- 2) Attend school half to full days
- 3) Avoid school bus and heavy backpacks
- 4) Work with designated educational personnel regarding school accommodations
- 5) No tests in school
- 6) No sports, chorus or physical education

Yellow Stage

- 1) Attend school full-time if possible
- 2) Students and families work with teachers regarding homework deadlines (complete as much as possible)
- 3) See school nurse for pain management and/or rest if needed
- 4) Limit one quiz/test per day (untimed testing is recommended)
- 5) Work in 15 minute blocks
- 6) No sports
- 7) Licensed medical professional will make decisions regarding chorus and physical education based on medical assessment

Green Stage

- 1) Attend school full time
- 2) Resume normal activities
- 3) Resume sports once school work is back on track, student is symptom-free, and has been cleared by a licensed medical professional

Graduated return to athletic plans will begin only after a student has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom free at rest.

SECTION 11: PROVIDING INFORMATION, FORMS AND MATERIALS TO PARENTS AND ATHLETES

11a) Annual Training Requirement

Annual Training Policy

- ❖ Parents/guardians and students who plan to participate in any athletic program at Greater Lowell Technical High School must also take a free on-line course. Two free on-line courses are available and contain all the information required by the law. The first is available through the National Federation of High School Coaches. You will need to click the “order here” button and complete a brief information form to register. The entire course, including registration, can be completed in less than 30 minutes.

<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>

The second on-line course is available through the Centers for Disease Control at:

www.cdc.gov/Concussion

11b) Procedure for the School to Notify Parents when an Athlete has been Removed from Play for a Head Injury or Suspected Concussion

Parent Notification Policy

The athletic trainer, coach or school nurse should promptly inform the athlete’s parents or guardians about the possible concussion during the day of the injury via telephone and give them the fact sheet on concussions. Give the parents the Report of Head Injury during Sports Season form and explain to them they will need to complete it and return it to the school. Inform the parents that the student will have to be medically cleared by a medical professional before returning to play and the Post-Sports-Related Head Injury Medical Clearance and Authorization Form will need to be completed and returned to the school before the student can resume play.

11c) Protocol for Parents/Students to Obtain Medical Clearance for Return to Play and Academics after a Diagnosed Concussion

(See also #8 above)

Obtaining Medical Clearance Policy

At Greater Lowell Technical High School parents and students are oriented about the protocol on obtaining medical clearance for return to play after a diagnosed concussion. The website for the school at www.gltech.org under the Athletics tab has the sports

concussion policy that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office or the school nurse office to get further clarification or ask questions. No student will be allowed to return to play athletic activities until the medical clearance form is signed by authorized medical professional, submitted and reviewed by the school nurse.

11d) Parent's Responsibility for Completion of the Pre-Participation Form or School-Based Equivalent

Pre-Participation Policy

- ❖ At Greater Lowell Technical High School, parents and students are oriented about the requirement to submit the pre-participation form, signed by both student and parent, which provides a comprehensive history with up-to-date information relative to concussion history. It is the parent's responsibility to tell all the student's coaches and school nurse if the student has ever had a concussion via this form. The website for the school at www.gltech.org under the Athletics tab has the sports concussion policy that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office or the school nurse office to get further clarification or ask questions. These forms should be submitted to the athletic department office which copies and reviews them and then forwards them to the school nurse office for review. At the beginning of every sports season, no student will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until the pre-participation form is signed, submitted by parent and student and reviewed by designated staff annually.

11e) Parent's Responsibility for Completion of the Report of a Head Injury Form, or School-Based Equivalent

Head Injury Forms Policy

- ❖ At Greater Lowell Technical High School, parents and students are oriented about the requirement to submit all forms including the Report of Head Injury Form signed by parent if their child has a head injury related to athletic activities. The website for the school at www.gltech.org under the Athletics tab has the sports concussion policy that also details these protocols. Finally, parents and students can always call the athletic department office or the school nurse office to get further clarification or ask questions. These forms should be submitted to the athletic department office which copies and reviews them and then forwards them to the School Nurse Office for review. At the beginning of every sports season, no student will be allowed to participate in athletic activities until all required forms including the report of head injury form has been signed, submitted by parent and reviewed by school nursing and athletic department staff.

SECTION 12: INCLUSION OF SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY POLICY IN THE STUDENT AND PARENT HANDBOOK

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(12): Inclusion in the student and parent handbooks of information regarding the sports-related head injury policy and how to obtain the policy

Handbook Policy

- ❖ **State Concussion Law Requirements:** The Commonwealth of Massachusetts Executive Office of Health and Human Services requires that all high schools subject to the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) rules adhere to the following law:

Student athletes and their parents, coaches, athletic directors, school nurses, and physicians must learn about the consequences of head injuries and concussions through training programs and written materials. The law requires that athletes and their parents inform their coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of the season. If a student athlete becomes unconscious, or is suspected of having a concussion, during a game or practice, the law now mandates taking the student out of play or practice, and requires written certification from a licensed medical professional for “return to play.”

Parents and student-athletes who plan to participate in any sports program at Greater Lowell Technical High School must also take one free online course about concussions per school year. Two free online courses have been made available and contain all the information required by the law.

The first online course option is offered through the National Federation of High School Coaches. You will need to click the “order here” button and complete a brief information form to register. At the end of the course, you will receive a completion receipt. The entire course, including registration, can be completed in less than 30 minutes:

<http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>

The second online course option is offered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention at:

http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html

SECTION 13: COMMUNICATING WITH PARENTS WITH LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(13): Procedure for communicating with parents with limited English proficiency

Communicating with Parents Policy

- ❖ Because of limited English skills, some parents may be unable to communicate with school personnel and may feel isolated from the school community. Greater Lowell Technical High School makes every attempt to communicate effectively with parents with limited English proficiency. Greater Lowell Technical High School has translated these school policies on head injuries and concussions in athletic activities and the mandated forms into Spanish, Portuguese and Khmer. These documents are listed on the school's website at www.gltech.org in all of these languages. Greater Lowell Technical High School will translate other materials as requested. In the event a student receives a concussion or is suspected of having a concussion Greater Lowell Technical High School Athletic Director's office should notify the parent in the appropriate language. Interpreters are available by contacting the School Counseling Department.

SECTION 14: OUTREACH TO PARENTS FOR FORM AND TRAINING COMPLETION

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(14): Procedure for outreach to parents who do not return completed forms required for students to participate in extracurricular sports and for how to handle situations where a student verifies completion of the annual training requirement but a parent has not

Outreach to Parents Policy

- ❖ Student athletes at Greater Lowell Technical High School will not be permitted to participate in extracurricular sports until both the parent and student have completed Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form for Extracurricular Activities *before the start of every sports season*. In the event the school has not received the Pre-Participation Head Injury/Concussion Reporting Form, or other required forms, including documentation of an annual physical examination and documentation that both the student athlete and their parent/guardian have completed the required annual training, the student athlete will not be allowed to play or practice until the appropriate required signed and completed forms are returned to the Athletic Department.

SECTION 15: SHARING CONCUSSION-RELATED HEALTH INFORMATION

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(15): Procedure for sharing information concerning an athlete's history of head injury and concussion, recuperation, reentry plan, and authorization to return to play and academic activities on a need to know basis consistent with requirements of 105 CMR 201.000 and applicable federal and state law including but not limited to the Massachusetts Student Records Regulations, 603 CMR 23.00, and the Federal Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act Regulations, 34 CFR Part 99

Sharing Information Policy

Informal collaboration occurs on a temporary, as-needed basis for information exchange, as when the school nurse informs (while adhering to protocols for confidentiality) the physical education teacher that a particular student may not participate in athletic activities because of a recent injury. There may be circumstances in which there is a need to share information in the student health record with authorized school personnel — either to enhance the educational progress of the student or protect his/her safety or well-being. For example, staff may need to be alerted to signs or symptoms of a medical problem on a need to know basis and offered a course of action. This type of disclosure should be made only to those authorized school personnel who work *directly with* the student in an instructive (academic or athletic), administrative, or diagnostic capacity. Finally, authorized school personnel should be instructed not to re-disclose the information.

If there is any question about the sensitivity of the information, the school nurse should seek the permission of the parent/guardian and student, if appropriate, prior to disclosure to authorized school personnel. Ultimately, however, federal regulations permit information in the student health record to be seen by authorized school personnel on a need to know basis, and the basis for such sharing seems even more compelling when necessary to protect the well-being or safety of the student.

There may be times when a school nurse has the legal obligation to disclose health or related information to protect a student's health or safety. Public policy requires the protection of a patient's right to privacy by medical professionals, unless there is an immediate threat of serious harm to the student or others.

SECTION 16 A & B: REQUIREMENTS THAT COACHES, ATHLETIC TRAINERS, TRAINERS AND VOLUNTEERS A) TEACH STRATEGIES THAT MINIMIZE SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY AND B) PROHIBIT DANGEROUS PLAY

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(16) Instructions to coaches, certified athletic trainers, trainers and volunteers a) to teach form, techniques, and skills and promote protective equipment use to minimize sports-related head injury; and b) to prohibit athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique

105 CMR 201.012(C)(6): The Athletic Director shall be responsible for "Ensuring that athletes are prohibited from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon..."

105 CMR 201.013(A)(6) & (7): Coaches shall be responsible for (6) Teaching techniques aimed at minimizing sports-related head injury; (7) Discouraging and prohibiting athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous athletic technique that endangers the health or safety of an athlete, including using a helmet or any other sports equipment as a weapon..."

Teaching Form & Techniques Policy

Coaches of Greater Lowell Technical High School are expected to be current with best practices in their sport that reduce the likelihood of head injury. In addition, coaches are prohibited from teaching or promoting dangerous practices such as using a helmet as a weapon. It is expected that all coaches and athletic department staff teach techniques that minimize sports injury and/or concussion such as proper fitting, certified (especially helmets) equipment and protective equipment.

SECTION 17: PENALTIES

Regulation:

105 CMR 201.006(A)(17): Penalties, including but not limited to personnel sanctions and forfeiture of games, for failure to comply with provisions of the school district's or school's policy

Penalties Sample Policy

Greater Lowell Technical High School takes the safety of student athletes seriously. All members of the school staff are expected to follow these policies and protocols to support the health and safety of student athletes. The underlying philosophy of these policies is "when in doubt, sit them out". Failure to comply with the letter or spirit of these policies could result in progressive discipline for staff and/or forfeiture of games. If students or parents have concerns that the policies are being violated, they should contact the Superintendent or Principal and also place their complaint in writing with a request for resolution.

Appendix I

PRE-PARTICIPATION HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION REPORTING FORM FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES



DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

PRE-PARTICIPATION HEAD INJURY/CONCUSSION REPORTING FORM FOR EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

This form should be completed by the student's parent(s) or legal guardian(s). It must be submitted to the Athletic Director, or official designated by the school, *prior* to the start of each season a student plans to participate in an extracurricular athletic activity.

Student's Name	Sex	Date of Birth	Grade
School		Sport(s)	
Home Address			Telephone

Has student ever experienced a traumatic head injury (a blow to the head)? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when? Dates (month/year): _____

Has student ever received medical attention for a head injury? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when? Dates (month/year): _____

If yes, please describe the circumstances: _____

Was student diagnosed with a concussion? Yes _____ No _____

If yes, when? Dates (month/year): _____

Duration of Symptoms (such as *headache, difficulty concentrating, fatigue*) for most recent concussion: _____

Parent/Guardian:

Name: _____ Signature/Date _____
(Please print)

Student Athlete:

Signature/Date _____

Appendix II

REPORT FOR HEAD INJURY DURING SPORTS SEASON



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

DEVAL L. PATRICK
GOVERNOR

TIMOTHY P. MURRAY
LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR

JUDYANN BIGBY, MD
SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH
COMMISSIONER

REPORT OF HEAD INJURY DURING SPORTS SEASON

This form is to report head injuries (other than minor cuts or bruises) that occur during a sports season. It should be returned to the athletic director or staff member designated by the school and reviewed by the school nurse.

For Coaches: Please complete this form immediately after the game or practice for head injuries that result in the student being removed from play due to a *possible* concussion.

For Parents/Guardians: Please complete this form if your child has a head injury outside of school related extracurricular athletic activities.

Student's Name	Sex	Date of Birth	Grade
School		Sport(s)	
Home Address			Telephone

Date of injury: _____

Did the incident take place during an extracurricular activity? ____ Yes ____ No

If so, where did the incident take place? _____

Please describe nature and extent of injuries to student:

For Parents/Guardians:

Did the student receive medical attention? yes ____ no ____

If yes, was a concussion diagnosed? yes ____ no ____

**I HEREBY STATE THAT TO THE BEST OF MY KNOWLEDGE, MY ANSWERS TO THE ABOVE QUESTIONS
ARE COMPLETE AND CORRECT.**

Please circle one: Coach or Marching Band Director

Parent/Guardian

Name of Person Completing Form (please print): _____

Signature _____

Date _____

Appendix III

POST SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY MEDICAL



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health

POST SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY MEDICAL CLEARANCE AND AUTHORIZATION FORM

This medical clearance should be only be provided *after* a graduated return to play plan has been completed and student has been symptom free at all stages. *The student must be completely symptom free at rest and during exertion prior to returning to full participation in extracurricular athletic activities.*

Student's Name	Sex	Date of Birth	Grade
----------------	-----	---------------	-------

Date of injury: _____ Nature and extent of injury: _____

Symptoms (check all that apply):

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Nausea or vomiting | <input type="checkbox"/> Headaches | <input type="checkbox"/> Light/noise sensitivity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Dizziness/balance problems | <input type="checkbox"/> Double/blurry vision | <input type="checkbox"/> Fatigue |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Feeling sluggish/"in a fog" | <input type="checkbox"/> Change in sleep patterns | <input type="checkbox"/> Memory problems |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Difficulty concentrating | <input type="checkbox"/> Irritability/emotional ups and downs | <input type="checkbox"/> Sad or withdrawn |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | | |

Duration of Symptom(s): _____ Diagnosis: ☐ Concussion ☐ Other: _____

If concussion diagnosed, date student completed graduated return to play plan without recurrent symptoms: _____

Prior concussions (number, approximate dates): _____

Name of Physician or Practitioner: _____

☐ Physician ☐ Certified Athletic Trainer ☐ Nurse Practitioner ☐ Neuropsychologist

Address: _____ Phone number: _____

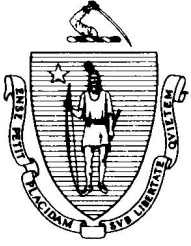
Physician providing consultation/coordination (if not person completing this form): _____

I HEREBY AUTHORIZE THE ABOVE NAMED STUDENT FOR RETURN TO EXTRACURRICULAR ATHLETIC ACTIVITY.

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Note: This form may only be completed by: a duly licensed physician; a certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician; a duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; a duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

Appendix IV



SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY REGULATIONS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
Executive Office of Health and Human Services
Department of Public Health

SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURY REGULATIONS: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Revised December 13, 2011 (see questions #27, 28, 29 and 30 for new material)

WHO IS COVERED BY THE REGULATIONS?

1. We are an independent school – are we subject to these regulations?

It depends. The regulations apply to *all public middle and high schools*, and all other schools which are subject to the official rules of the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA). If your school is a member of the MIAA, then it is subject to the regulations. However, even if your school is not an MIAA member, you may still decide that you wish to adopt the approach promoted by the regulations for the safety and well-being of your student athletes.

2. We have a band at our school, but they are not a marching band – are they subject to the regulations?

No. The law and the regulations refer only to marching bands.

3. For purposes of these regulations, is cheerleading considered to be an extracurricular activity?

Yes, cheerleading is expressly included in the regulatory definition of an extracurricular athletic activity.

TRAINING REQUIREMENTS

4. We are planning to have a pre-season meeting of parents and students –can we provide concussion training during that meeting?

Yes, definitely. As you know, the regulations require that parents and students, as well as a variety of school personnel, receive DPH-approved concussion training annually. If schools wish to, they can provide this training in a pre-season meeting for parents and students. There are at least two strategies for providing such training in a pre-season meeting:

revised October 28, 2011

Schools may offer one of the following on-line trainings: the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) *Heads Up Concussion* training or the National Federation of State High School Association's (NFHS) *Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know* training. Schools may use the agenda and attendance roster as a record of verification for participants who are trained in this type of group setting.

Alternatively, schools may use DPH approved written training materials to meet the training requirement. The versions for parents and students are available in English and Spanish. If schools distribute these training materials to parents and students at a pre-season meeting, all parents and students should be asked to sign an acknowledgement verifying that they have reviewed the written materials.

The on-line courses can be found at: ☐

- http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online_training.html
- <http://www.nfhslearn.com/electiveDetail.aspx?courseID=15000>

The written materials can be found at:

- Student athletes:
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Athletes_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf
- Parents:
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet-a.pdf
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Parents_Fact_Sheet_Spanish-a.pdf
- Coaches:
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/Coach_Guide-a.pdf
 - http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/pdf/coaches_Engl.pdf
- School nurses: <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/schools.html>

5. We would like to have our certified athletic trainer provide the required concussion training to all of our coaches and athletic staff – is that allowed?

Currently, DPH has identified two free, on-line courses that meet the training requirements. CDC written training materials may also be used to meet the training requirement. (See above.) If the certified athletic trainer uses these materials as part of their presentation, that would meet the requirements of the regulations.

DPH is developing criteria that will allow designation of other courses or training to meet the requirements of the regulations. However, until those criteria are available you can meet the training requirements by distributing the relevant CDC educational materials, geared toward coaches, in addition to the in-person training your certified athletic trainer will provide.

6. If we distribute the Centers for Disease Control (CDC)'s *Heads Up Concussion* materials to parents and students, would that satisfy the annual training requirement?

Yes, however your school must maintain records that show which parents and students were trained in this manner. All parents and students must sign and date an acknowledgement verifying that they have reviewed these materials.

7. What should we do if a student turns in a concussion training form, but his or her parent does not? Can we let the student play?

The regulations require concussion training for parents and students. The policies that schools/school districts develop should address this situation, including procedures for outreach to parents who do not return completed forms required for students to participate in extracurricular sports.

PRE-PARTICIPATION REQUIREMENTS

8. Is baseline neurocognitive testing required before a student can play sports?

No. Although baseline neurocognitive testing can be very helpful in assessing an athlete's recovery after a concussion, it is not required by the law or the regulations. However, many school districts have decided to perform these tests on their athletes.

9. What should we do if a student does not turn in his/her pre-participation disclosure form seeking information about his/her past head injuries as required by the law?

You should not permit the student to participate in practice or competition until s/he submits the completed form. The head injury policies that schools/school districts develop should consider how to respond to this situation as they would to other situations when students or parents have not completed required forms or permission slips.

10. Our school already has a pre-season permission form that students and parents have to sign – can we add the pre-participation information required by DPH to that form so we only have to collect one?

Yes, definitely. In fact, the regulations were written with the flexibility to allow schools/school districts to include the information found on the DPH forms in "school-based equivalents." Schools/school districts are encouraged to make use of this opportunity to streamline information collection and to avoid unnecessary duplication of effort. Schools just need to make sure that their school based forms collect all of the data elements included on the DPH forms.

11. We already have our pre-season form printed – it contains a question about whether a student has had a head injury, but doesn’t have all of the elements of the DPH Pre-Participation Form – do we have to do both?

Not necessarily. You could review the forms you receive to identify those students who have a history of head injury and follow up with that subgroup of students to get the additional information. You could use the DPH Pre-Participation Form for this or a school-based equivalent that includes the same information.

12. If a student turns in a pre-participation form for fall sports, does he or she have to turn in another one before winter or spring season?

Yes. The law and the regulations require that before the start of *every sports season*, the student and the parent must complete the pre-participation form or school-based equivalent. However, the concussion awareness training only has to be completed once a year.

13. One of my players reported a history of multiple concussions on his pre-participation disclosure form – should I let him play this season?

Current evidence indicates that youth who have suffered one or more concussions are more likely to suffer a subsequent one. The decision on whether a student who has had multiple concussions should play a sport where there is a risk of another concussion is a complicated one. It should be made only after consultation with the student’s physician or primary care provider; the sports medicine or concussion specialist, if involved; the neuropsychologist, if involved, and the appropriate school athletic staff and the parent. Options may include switching positions, limiting contact in practices, or changing sports altogether to minimize the risk of re-injury. The focus should be on protecting the health and safety of the student and avoiding long-term consequences that can occur from repeated concussions.

MEDICAL CLEARANCE FOR RETURN TO PLAY

14. If one of my players suffers a head injury, who can provide the medical clearance to allow him or her to return to participation in extracurricular athletics?

The regulations allow the following 4 categories of health professionals to authorize a student to return to play:

- A duly licensed physician;
- A duly licensed certified athletic trainer in consultation with a licensed physician;
- A duly licensed nurse practitioner in consultation with a licensed physician; or

- A duly licensed neuropsychologist in coordination with the physician managing the student's recovery.

If a student is seen by a physician assistant (PA), the physician supervising the PA must provide the authorization.

15. What if a doctor's clearance comes on a prescription pad or note paper?

Medical clearance for returning to play must use the DPH Medical Clearance Form available on the DPH website (www.mass.gov/dph/injury) or a school-based equivalent that includes the same information. The Medical Clearance Form contains information that is helpful to schools as they monitor the student returning from a concussion – more detailed information than a simple statement that the student is ready to return to athletics. Therefore, this form or a school-based equivalent that collects the same information should be used. You may consider providing this form to the athlete to share with the physician. DPH will work with the Massachusetts Medical Society and others to disseminate the form as well.

16. If a student has a concussion, does the student have to complete a graduated return to play program before returning to full participation in their sport?

Yes. The regulations require that students who have been removed from play due to a head injury or suspected concussion must have medical clearance to return to play. If a student is diagnosed with a concussion, this clearance can *only* be provided after he or she completes a graduated return to play program and shows no recurrence of symptoms. If a student is diagnosed with a concussion, he or she must have a written graduated reentry plan for return to full academic and athletic activity. This plan must be developed by the student's teachers, school counselor, school nurse, certified athletic trainer, if available or involved, parent, and the primary care provider or the physician who is managing the student's recovery.

17. What if a student is starting back at school on a modified schedule but still has some concussion symptoms – can he or she start a graduated return to play program?

No. Students who still have symptoms should not begin athletic activity. The graduated return to play program should begin only after a student is *completely* symptom free at rest. If a student is still having symptoms that prevent a full return to academic activities, he or she is not ready to begin the graduated return to play program.

18. In the past, we have had situations where a student's doctor has cleared him/her to return to sports, but the school staff noted that the student still had symptoms. In such a situation, who has the final say regarding whether a student can actually return to play?

The school has the final say. Whether a student may participate in a given extracurricular activity is a privilege that may be granted or withheld by a school based on individual circumstances. If these situations arise, the school staff should communicate to the physician or health care

provider who provided the clearance that the student is not symptom-free. It is possible that the health care provider was not aware of the student's symptoms when the provider gave the clearance. If the athlete still has symptoms, the athlete should NOT return to play. A school physician, if available, should also be involved. Medical clearance is meant to be provided AFTER a student has completed his or her graduated return to play plan, so hopefully, these situations will be rare.

EXCLUSION FROM PLAY

19. What happens if there is disagreement among the coach, certified athletic trainer and the game official regarding whether a player should be removed from a game after a head injury?

Coaches and certified athletic trainers both have regulatory responsibilities for identifying players with head injuries or suspected concussions and removing them from play. In the event of a disagreement between them, or with a game official, the governing rule should be "when in doubt, sit them out".

20. I am concerned that there may be times when the coach and certified athletic trainer think that a player should be removed from a practice or game after a head injury, but the player's parent disagrees and thinks the player should continue playing – who makes the final decision?

Ideally, parents, coaches and others who have all received the DPH approved head injury training will recognize the signs and symptoms of a possible concussion. However, school staff are responsible for removing an athlete from play if he or she loses consciousness or shows the signs and symptoms of a concussion -- even if a parent or the player disagrees. As has always been the case, the focus is on the health and safety of the player.

21. What if a student suffers a head injury outside of school-sponsored extracurricular athletics – do the parent and student have to let the school know?

Yes. Schools/school districts should make sure that parents and students understand their responsibilities. Parents must inform the coach, school nurse or other school staff designated by school policy about any head injury or concussion that a student suffers while not participating in a school-sponsored extracurricular athletic activity. The parent may use the Report of Head Injury Form, or a school-based equivalent.

School staff needs this information to ensure safe participation in extracurricular athletics.

SCHOOL HEAD INJURY POLICIES

22. Our school is developing a head injury policy – do we have to have DPH review it before we can use it?

No. Schools/school districts are responsible for developing their policies in accordance with the regulations. However, DPH will be posting best practice and guidance documents to assist schools in this process.

23. The regulations say that we have to submit an affirmation that we have developed a head injury policy to the Department of Public Health by January 1, 2012 – do we also need to submit the policy itself?

No. DPH will not be routinely reviewing individual school/school district head injury policies. However, DPH will collect the affirmations, on school or school district letterhead, as documentation that the school/school district has complied with the regulatory requirement to develop appropriate head injury policy. [Please see question #29 below for additional information concerning school policies.](#)

24. We are wondering about academic reentry – will students who need academic accommodations during their recovery all need 504 plans?

The Department of Elementary and Secondary Education is developing guidance to assist schools in responding to the educational needs of students who are recovering from head injuries and/or concussions. Once available, it will be posted on both the DPH and DESE websites and will be shared with school districts.

REPORTING

25. What kind of reporting are schools required to do by these new regulations?

Starting with the 2011-2012 school year, schools will need to report the following information each year:

- The total number of Report of Head Injury Forms or school-based equivalents they receive; and
- The total number of students who suffer head injuries and suspected concussions when engaged in any extracurricular athletic activities

These two statistics will provide crucial data to help us understand more about the nature and extent of head injuries in extracurricular athletic activities in Massachusetts.

26. We already have to report participation data to the MIAA – is there a way that we can add these statistics to what we already have to send to them?

DPH and MIAA continue to work together to promote the safety of student athletes while minimizing paperwork burdens on schools, coaches and athletic directors. Part of this effort includes an exploration of adding DPH required data elements to the MIAA required reports. DPH will post information about this on its website and it will also be communicated by MIAA.

27. Will a student on a graduated reentry plan also need a 504 plan or IEP for their return to academic activities? What about providing MCAS accommodations to these students?

All students recovering from a concussion will need a written graduated reentry plan, as described under DPH regulation 105 CMR 201.010. These students are entitled to receive instructional accommodations and modifications for routine classroom work (or tutoring) and for classroom assessments, as described in their reentry plan. In addition, to be eligible to receive accommodations on statewide assessments (e.g., MCAS tests), the student will also need either a 504 plan or an Individualized Education Program (IEP).

Instructional accommodations and modifications should be based on an individual student's academic performance and stage of recovery and must be described either in the graduated reentry plan, current IEP, or a 504 plan. The 504 plan may be used to address section 201.010 (2) (b) of the graduated reentry plan (i.e., "instructions for the student's graduated return to extracurricular athletic activities and classroom studies, as appropriate, including accommodations and modifications as needed"). A reference to the graduated reentry plan should be included in the student's IEP, if appropriate, in the section titled "Additional Information."

Note: An *accommodation* is intended to provide a student with a support that allows the student to achieve at the same level as other students.

A *modification* is a change in the expectations for a student's performance, such as taking a reduced workload or specially-adapted classroom tests.

It may be necessary to "try out" various approaches for adapting instruction, then revise the information in the academic portion of the graduated reentry plan based on whether the accommodation or modification appears to be having the desired effect and the student is comfortable using it.

In terms of MCAS participation, the student must have either an IEP or the 504 plan to be eligible to receive test accommodations. The IEP or 504 team must evaluate the student's current academic performance, profile, and learning preferences and make separate decisions in each subject as to how the student will participate in MCAS, including whether the student will take the standard MCAS test and, if so, which accommodations will be provided. Accommodations must be listed *separately* for routine instruction and for MCAS testing in the 504 plan.

It may be appropriate for a student with a concussion to participate in the MCAS Alternate Assessment (MCAS-Alt), instead of the standard MCAS test in a subject, even with the provision of test accommodations, because the complexity and severity of the student's disability may make it impossible for the student to take a test of the intensity and duration of MCAS and/or to complete each test session in a single school day, as required. The MCAS-Alt is a collection of the student's work and other information in the assessed subject collected into a portfolio by the student's teacher over the course of the school year and submitted each year to the state in early April. The decision to designate a student for the MCAS-Alt is made by the IEP or 504 team.

The principal may determine that a student diagnosed with a concussion who is on a graduated reentry plan should *not* participate in MCAS testing because participation may impede the student's recovery or endanger the student's health. In making this determination, the principal should consult with any of the following, as appropriate: the school nurse, school counselor, student's teacher(s), members of the student's building-based support and assistance team or Individualized Education Program (IEP) Team, the physician who made the diagnosis or is managing the student's recovery, and the child's parent or guardian. In such cases, the student should be designated *Absent Medical* in the student's test booklet, which will be reflected in reports of test results received by the parent, school, and district.

Information on participation requirements for students with disabilities in MCAS can be found on the Department's website at www.doe.mass.edu/mcas/participation/?section=sped.

- 28. The regulations specify that school policies must include documentation of a physical examination prior to a student's participation in extracurricular athletic activities on an annual basis consistent with 105 CMR 200.100(B)(3): *Physical Examination of School Children*. The MIAA has a rule for its members (Rule 56.1 Student Eligibility/School Requirements: Physical Examinations/Medical Coverage/Concussions) which requires a physical exam within 13 months of the start of each season, but allows a student "who meet[s] this criterion at the start of the season will remain eligible for that season." What do we do if a student needs another physical exam during the sports season?**

The DPH regulations regarding head injuries and concussions in extracurricular athletic activities, **105 CMR 201.006(A)(3)**, were written to be consistent with existing DPH regulations regarding physical exam requirements for students, **105 CMR 200.100(B)(3)**, and to apply to all public middle and high schools and MIAA member schools. Both require a physical exam "on an annual basis." DPH is sensitive to issues of insurance coverage in those cases where repeat physical examinations within a 12 month period would not be covered. For that reason, the DPH regulations do not specifically define "on an annual basis" as being strictly within a 12 month period, but left that policy-making decision to schools. To comply with DPH regulations, schools have the option to choose to adopt a policy that requires physical examinations within 12 or 13 months of the student's last physical.

29. If our school is working on our policies but has not completed them by January 1, 2012, will DPH accept an affirmation from a school/school district by January 1, 2012 that we have developed interim policies and expect to submit an additional affirmation after the deadline affirming that our school/school board has adopted a final policy?

Yes. The Department of Public Health understands that many schools adopted policies in school year 2010-2011. DPH also understands that most schools are hard at work aligning their policies with DPH regulations which became effective in June 2011, and that many schools and districts have been awaiting model program guidance from the Department. DPH plans to post model program guidance by December 15 taking into account exemplary policies that different districts have shared with us.

All schools districts that have adopted policies, whether interim policies or final policies, must submit an affirmation by **January 1, 2012**. If a school district does not have a final policy yet, DPH will accept an affirmation from a school/school district by **January 1, 2012** that indicates that

- (a) the school/school district has *interim policies in place*, and
- (b) that the school will submit an *additional affirmation after the deadline*, no later than **March 1, 2012**, affirming that our school/school board has adopted a final policy in accordance with 105 CMR 201.000.

30. How do I submit the required confirmation that my school/school district has interim policies in place by January 1 and approved policies by March 1, 2012?

Confirmation should be on school letterhead with the signature of the superintendent or athletic director. It can be emailed to DPH-ConcussionPolicies@MassMail.State.MA.US or mailed in hard copy to Carlene Pavlos, Director; Division of Violence and Injury Prevention; Massachusetts Department of Public Health; 250 Washington Street; Boston, MA 02108