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MEMO #: JMO-37

TO: All Student Athletes  
 Parent/Guardian of Student Athletes

FROM: Dr. J. David Martin – Acting School Superintendent *JDM*  
 Sherry M. Vestal, RN – School Nurse Coordinator *SMV*

SUBJECT: VHSL Concussion Guidelines

DATE: July 25, 2011

The Virginia High School League (VHSL) established guidelines effective July 1, 2011 that all coaches, athletes and parents of athletes be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Signed documentation must be on file by the first practice date or the student athlete will not be allowed to participate until signed documentation has been received.

**What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump, blow or jolt to the head.

<b>Signs Observed</b>	<b>Symptoms reported by the Athlete</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Appears dazed or stunned</li> <li>- Confused</li> <li>- Forgets plays</li> <li>- Unsure of game, score or opponent</li> <li>- Moves clumsily</li> <li>- Answers questions slowly</li> <li>- Loses consciousness</li> <li>- Shows behavior or personality changes</li> <li>- Can't recall events prior to hit</li> <li>- Can't recall events after hit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Headache</li> <li>- Nausea and/or vomiting</li> <li>- Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>- Double or fuzzy vision</li> <li>- Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>- Feeling sluggish</li> <li>- Feeling groggy or foggy</li> <li>- Concentration or memory problems</li> <li>- Confusion</li> </ul>

**Removal from extracurricular physical activities:**

- A student athlete suspected by a coach, trainer or team physician of sustaining a concussion or brain injury in a practice, game, or competition shall be removed from the activity immediately, evaluated and referred for

further treatment if necessary. A student athlete who has been removed from play, evaluated and suspected to have sustained a concussion shall **not** return to play that same day.

- The determination of whether a student athlete removed from play is suspected of having sustained a concussion shall be the sole determination of the licensed health care provider, coach or properly trained individual conducting the assessment. Such determination is final and may **not** be overruled.
- The coach of a student athlete may elect not to return the student athlete to play, even after an assessment determines the student athlete is no longer suspected of sustaining a concussion.

**Return to Play:**

1. No student athlete shall be allowed to return to extracurricular physical activities (practices, games, competitions) until the student athlete presents a written medical release from his/her health care provider. The release shall certify that :
  - a. The provider is aware of the current medical guidance on concussions evaluation and management;
  - b. The student athlete no longer exhibits signs and symptoms or behaviors; and
  - c. The student athlete has successfully completed a progressive return to sports program which shall last a minimum of five (5) calendar days.
2. The coach may elect to not allow the student athlete to return to physical activities (even after receiving a medical release) if the coach observes signs or symptoms of a concussion. If the coach makes this decision, the coach must relay his observations and concerns to the parent/guardian of the student athlete within 24 hours.



**We hereby certify that we have received and read the above information regarding the signs and symptoms of a concussion, removal from activity and the return to play protocol.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
PRINTED NAME OF STUDENT ATHLETE

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Student Athlete

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Parent/Guardian

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date