

WARNING OF RISK

Serious, and perhaps fatal injury may result from athletic participation. By its very nature, competitive athletics may put students in situations in which accidents may occur. Many forms of athletic competition result in violent physical contact among players, the use of equipment, which may result in accidents, strenuous physical exertion, and numerous other exposures to risk of injury. Students and parents must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution, or supervision will totally eliminate all risk of injury. Just as driving an automobile involves choice of risk, athletic participation by students also may be inherently dangerous. The obligation of parents and students in making this choice to participate cannot be overstated. There have been accidents resulting in serious permanent physical impairment as a result of athletic competition. Students will be instructed in proper techniques to be used in athletic competition and in proper utilization of all equipment worn or used in practice and competition. Students must adhere to that instruction and utilization and must refrain from improper uses and techniques. By granting permission for your student to participate in athletic competition, you, as a parent or guardian, acknowledge that such a risk exists. By choosing to participate, you, the student, acknowledge that such a risk exists. **FOOTBALL PLAYERS:** No helmet can prevent all head or neck injuries a player may receive while participating in football. **DO NOT USE YOUR HELMET TO BUTT, RAM OR SPEAR AN OPPOSING PLAYER.** This is in violation of the football rules and such use can result in severe head or neck injuries, paralysis or death to you and possible injury to your opponent. If any of the foregoing is not completely understood please contact your school Athletic Director for further information.

Concussion Information

A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, **all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly.** In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following: headache, “pressure in head”, nausea or vomiting, neck pain, balance problems or dizziness, blurred double or fuzzy vision, sensitivity to light or noise, feeling sluggish or groggy, drowsiness, change in sleep patterns, amnesia, “don’t feel right”, fatigue or low energy, sadness, nervousness or anxiety, irritability, more emotional, confusion, concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays), repeating the same question or comment.

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include: appears dazed, vacant facial expression, confused about assignment, forgets plays, is unsure of game, score, or opponent, moves clumsily or displays incoordination, answers questions slowly, slurred speech, shows behavior or personality changes, can’t recall events prior to hit, can’t recall events after hit, seizures or convulsions, any changes in typical behavior or personality, loses consciousness.

Athletes with signs and symptoms of a concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for student athlete’s safety.

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury of concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. The new CIF Bylaw 313 now requires implementation of long and well-established return to play concussion guidelines that have been recommended for several years:

“A student athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury in a practice or game shall be removed from competition at that time and for the remainder of the day.” **AND**

“A student athlete who has been removed may not return to play until the athlete is evaluated by a licensed health care provider trained in the evaluation and management of concussion and received written clearance to return to play from that health care provider.”

You should also inform your child’s coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it’s better to miss one game than miss the whole season. When in doubt, the athlete sits out. For current and up-to-date information on concussion you can go to <http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionsInYouthSports/>.