



FRIENDS' CENTRAL SCHOOL

Concussion Protocol

In recent years, we have seen an increase in concussions. A concussion is defined by The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) as a "mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) caused by a blow or jolt to the head or body that causes the brain to shake." Though concussions are common, they do cause some brain injury and need time and rest to heal properly. Most concussive traumatic brain injuries are mild, and people usually recover fully.

Friends' Central School's Athletic Training staff will comply with the Safety in Youth Sports Act (PA Senate Bill 200) and NATA recommendations pertaining to concussions in athletics.

Signs and Symptoms

Headache, vomiting, ringing in the ears, light and/or sound sensitivity, vision problems, dizziness, balance problems, fatigue, nausea, depression, inability to focus, reasoning difficulty, irritability, sadness, nervousness, sleep disturbances, feeling groggy, memory loss, personality changes

Pre-Concussion Management

At the beginning of each year, Friends' Central parents will receive information regarding concussions. These documents must be read, and parents must acknowledge they have read and understood the Friends' Central School Concussion Statement Form, which includes information on concussion reporting, treatment, and Friends' Central's "return to play" guidelines.

Prior to the first practice, all student-athletes will be presented with the CDC Concussion Fact Sheet. A certified athletic trainer will explain it to them and answer any questions students may have. Each student-athlete must then sign the Friends' Central School Concussion Statement Form accepting responsibility for reporting their injuries, including concussions, to the Athletic Training staff. These forms will be kept in the student-athletes' medical files in the athletic training room.

All incoming athletes will be given the neuropsychological ImPACT test to assess their baseline scores prior to their first practice. This baseline will be taken once the athlete has decided to participate on an athletic team, with subsequent tests only given after/if the athlete presents with signs and/or symptoms of a concussion. These scores will be used as a tool to help aid in concussion management, in combination with consultation of qualified medical staff.

Coaches will be given a copy of the Friends' Central School Athletics Concussion Policy and the CDC Concussion Fact Sheet for Coaches, as well as take an approved online course (NFHS, CDC, or ConcussionWise), annually.

Post-Concussion Management

Middle and Upper School

When a student has received a concussion diagnosis by a healthcare provider, parents will notify the School Nurse and appropriate Administrator.

To re-enter school after a concussion, the Nurse must receive a “Return to Learn” form from a physician. Likewise, “Return to Play” documentation from a physician is required by the Nurse’s office when a student is approved to resume physical activity at school. The Athletic Trainer implements the “Return to Play” protocol, following the “Stepwise” return to play process. (CDC)

The Nurse is the primary contact with the family and shares the physician’s “Return to Learn” protocol with the Administrator.

The Administrator shares protocols with teachers, trainers, coaches, and support services, as needed. In most cases, the Advisor and Athletic Trainer play crucial roles in monitoring a student’s progress from day to day.

The Friends’ Central School team supports the student in every possible way and makes the necessary and prescribed academic accommodations in order to ensure a seamless transition back to school.

When a student returns to school for work and/or play, the Advisor, Athletic Trainer, Administrator, and Nurse have varying roles in overseeing the student’s progress.

In the course of recovering from a concussion, a student may require modifications to schedules, assignments, and exams depending on the severity of the concussion and the amount of school time missed. A student may also require tutorial support.

As conditions of concussion are varied, flexibility and communication between home and school are essential elements to a student’s recovery from a concussion.

Return to Play

The student-athlete will return to participation in athletics and/or physical education after final clearance by the FCS Athletic Trainer, the pre- and post-IMPACT scores, and the treating physician who specializes in concussions, and s/he will follow the “stepwise return to play” process (*see page 3*).

Since every concussion is different, each concussion will be monitored and treated individually to ensure the safety and future health of the student-athlete.

Stepwise Return to Play Process

The stepwise approach to return to play allows a student-athlete to progress from light to increasing exertion. Before consideration of return to play, athletes must be symptom free with normal neurological and cognitive examinations. Each step requires the athlete to remain symptom free to progress, allowing a drop back to the previous asymptomatic step until asymptomatic for 24 hours before progression resumes.

During this time, there should be no use of pharmacological agents that could affect concussion symptoms.

1. No activity; complete rest after initial concussive symptoms; once asymptomatic, proceed to next step in progression.
2. Light aerobic exercise – Walking, swimming, or use of stationary bike, keeping intensity less than 70 percent of maximum predicted heart rate. The goal is to increase the heart rate in order to assess how the athlete reacts to a small amount of exertion.
3. Sport-Specific Training – this can include any simple movement activities without the risk of head impact, like skating drills in ice hockey or running drills in soccer.
4. Non-Contact Practice – The athlete progresses to more complex training drills specific to his/her sport. Here we are assessing if the athlete can coordinate movements during exercise, which tests brain function coupled with sport activity.
5. Full-Contact Practice (after medical clearance) - Following medical clearance, the athlete participates in normal training activities. The goal is to restore confidence and allow the coaching staff to assess functional skill.
6. Return to Play – Normal game play is allowed, with close monitoring for any symptoms.

Lower School

When a student has received a concussion diagnosis by a healthcare provider, parents will notify the School Nurse, Classroom Teacher, and appropriate Administrator.

To re-enter school after a concussion, the Nurse must receive a “Return to Learn” form from a physician. Likewise, “Return to Play” documentation from a physician is required by the Nurse’s office when a student is approved to resume physical activity at school.

The Nurse is the primary contact with the family and shares the physician’s “Return to Learn” protocol as needed with teachers, trainers, coaches, and support services as needed.

The Classroom Teacher plays a crucial role in monitoring a student’s progress from day to day.

The Friends' Central School team supports the student in every possible way and makes the necessary and prescribed academic accommodations in order to ensure a seamless transition back to school.

When a student returns to school for work and/or play, the Classroom Teacher, Administrator, and Nurse have varying roles in overseeing the student's progress.

In the course of recovering from a concussion, a student may require modifications to schedule and assignments depending on the severity of the concussion and the amount of school time missed. Students may also require tutorial support.

As conditions of concussion are varied, flexibility and communications between home and school are essential elements to a student's recovery from a concussion.