

**GEORGIA INDEPENDENT SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT AND RETURN TO PLAY POLICY**

All Georgia Independent School Association Interscholastic Member Schools are required to comply with the following policy effective September 1, 2013. This policy applies to all practices, conditioning, and games in all sports. This policy will be reviewed by the Board of Trustees yearly, at which time comments and suggestions for the improvement of the policy will be solicited from all Member Schools, coaches, trainers, and officials, and appropriate modifications made.

**I. Definitions.**

- A. "Health Care Provider" means a licensed physician or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management.
- B. "Student Athlete" means any student who participates in interscholastic athletic competitions at a Member School regardless of age.
- C. "Coach" means all coaches of all interscholastic sports whether full or part time and whether paid or volunteer.
- D. "Member School" means each Georgia Independent School Association Interscholastic Member School.

**II. Policy.**

- A. At the beginning of every school year, all Member Schools shall provide to the parents or legal guardians of every Student Athlete an information sheet which informs them of the nature and risks of concussions and head injuries and the actions to be taken by the schools to minimize the risks and effects of concussions and head injuries. Such information sheet should be substantially in the form of Appendix A to this Policy, and each Member School shall maintain a copy of the information sheet signed by each Student Athlete's parents or legal guardians for that school year.

- B. If a Coach observes a Student Athlete exhibit any sign, symptom, or behavior consistent with a concussion or head injury, the Coach must immediately remove that Student Athlete from practice, conditioning, or game. The Student Athlete may not return to practice, conditioning, or game until a Health Care Provider has determined that the Student Athlete has not suffered a concussion. In the case where a Health Care Provider has determined that the Student Athlete has suffered a concussion, the Student Athlete may not resume practice, conditioning, or participation in games until medically determined capable of doing so for full or graduated return. In no circumstance may a Student Athlete return to a practice, conditioning or a game on the same day that a concussion has been diagnosed by a Health Care Provider or cannot be ruled out.
- C. All Coaches must participate every year in a course of concussion management approved by the GISA. All Member Schools must maintain record of each Coach's participation in the course. The on-line course in concussion management entitled "Concussion in Sports" and prepared by National Federation of High School Sports Associations is acceptable and is available free to Member Schools at [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com).

### **III. Penalties.**

Member Schools violating this policy shall be fined a minimum of \$500.00 and a maximum of \$1,000.00 for the first offense. A Member School may be removed from membership for repeat violations.

*Approved by the GISA Board of Trustees this 29th day of July, 2013.*

**APPENDIX A**  
**CONCUSSION INFORMATION FOR STUDENT ATHLETES**

**NAME OF SCHOOL:** \_\_\_\_\_

According to the article “Concussion” by the Mayo Clinic Staff,<sup>1</sup> a concussion is defined and has symptoms as follows:

**Definition:**

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury that alters the way your brain functions. Effects are usually temporary, but can include problems with headache, concentration, memory, judgment balance and coordination.

Although concussions usually are caused by a blow to the head, they can also occur when the head and upper body are violently shaken. These injuries can cause a loss of consciousness, but most concussions do not. Because of this, some people have concussions and don’t realize it.

Concussions are common, particularly if you play a contact sport, such as football. But every concussion injures your brain to some extent. This injury needs time and rest to heal properly. Luckily, most concussive traumatic brain injuries are mild, and people usually recover fully.

**Symptoms:**

The signs and symptoms of a concussion can be subtle and may not be immediately apparent. Symptoms can last for days, weeks or even longer.

The most common symptoms after a concussive traumatic brain injury are headache, amnesia and confusion. The amnesia, which may or may not be preceded by a loss of consciousness, almost always involves the loss of memory of the impact that caused the concussion.

Signs and symptoms may include:

- \* Headache or a feeling of pressure in the head
- \* Temporary loss of consciousness
- \* Confusion or feeling as if in a fog
- \* Amnesia surrounding the traumatic event
- \* Dizziness or “seeing stars”
- \* Ringing in the ears
- \* Nausea or vomiting
- \* Slurred speech
- \* Fatigue

The well-being of its Student Athletes is of paramount importance to the School. Coaches are trained annually in recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussions and are required immediately to remove from practice, conditioning, or a game any Student Athlete who shows such signs. Student Athletes will not be permitted to return until a Health Care Provider has either ruled out a concussion or determines the Student Athlete capable of returning. In no instance will a Student Athlete with a diagnosed concussion return the same day.

PRINTED Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Student: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

PRINTED Parent Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Parent: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/concussion/DS00320>.