**Lawrence Academy Concussion Protocol**

A growing body of scientific literature demonstrates the short- and long-term risks of concussions. Returning a student to physical or cognitive activity after a known or suspected concussion places the student at risk for long-term health consequences. The risk of substantial injury is particularly high if the student 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.

With this in mind Lawrence Academy seeks to prevent concussion and provide a safe return to academics and athletics for all students after an injury, particularly after a head injury, and thus will follow guidelines established by the Massachusetts Department of Public Health and the National Athletic Trainers’ Association Position Statement on Management of Sport-Related Concussion. The following procedures have therefore been developed to aid in ensuring that concussed students are identified, treated and referred appropriately; receive appropriate follow-up medical care, including academic accommodations; and are completely recovered prior to returning to full participation in both the academic and athletic programs at Lawrence Academy.

**Persons responsible for implementation of policy and procedures**

Lawrence Academy has designated the ***head athletic trainer*** to oversee the implementation of policies and protocols governing the prevention and management of head injuries. In addition, they 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 as current knowledge dictates and including updates in training and student and parent handbooks.

**Training requirement**

In accordance with the Commonwealth of Massachusetts policies, Lawrence Academy requires annual safety training on sports-related concussion, including second impact syndrome, for certified athletic trainers, school nurses, school physicians, administrators, faculty and coaches, whether employed by a school or serving as a volunteer. It is strongly recommended that students who participate in athletic activities and their parents or legal guardians also complete the annual training. At Lawrence Academy, written materials are available at pre-season meetings and also on the school website: [www.lacademy.edu](http://www.lacademy.edu) through the Athletics link. Alternatively, school personnel, students and parents may complete free, on-line training (either the National Federation of High Schools or the CDC’s Heads up Concussion training). Throughout the year, the athletic trainer works with the equipment manager and coaches to ensure that equipment fits properly, discusses best practices in their sport, including dangerous play thus reducing the likelihood of athletic injury.

**Documentation of physical examination**

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 who does not have a current physical on file with the school nurse, prior to the first day of try-outs/practice, may not participate until a new or updated physical is turned in. If the student’s physical examination expires during the sports season, he/she must have an updated physical examination to continue to participate in sports. All health forms are available on the school’s website at [www.lacademy.edu/health](http://www.lacademy.edu/health).

**Pre-participation head injury reporting and review**

In addition, the Massachusetts concussion law requires athletes and their parents to inform coaches about prior head injuries at the beginning of each sports season. This reporting is done prior to fall sports via the Lawrence Academy Health History form and updated throughout the year as necessary.

Until the Health History form is completed and returned to school prior to the start of fall term, the student cannot participate in any sports activity at Lawrence Academy.

Current evidence indicates that youth who have suffered one or more concussions are more likely to suffer a subsequent one. Lawrence Academy will always focus on protecting the health and safety of the student in an effort of avoiding long-term consequences that can occur from repeated concussions. Therefore, the decision to allow a player who reported a history of multiple concussions on her/his Health History form to play will be made only after consultation with the student’s primary care provider or concussion specialist, school nurse, athletic trainer and the parent. The school-affiliated concussion specialist shall also be consulted for a final disposition if needed.

After review of the Health History forms, the school nurse will communicate any concerns to the head athletic trainer and athletic director and follow up with parents and students as needed prior to the student’s participation in athletic activities.

**Reporting and review of incidents of head injury during the school year**

Collaboration and sharing of this information is crucial to management and coordination of student’s care after a head injury. Lawrence Academy therefore requires that coaches and other personnel report any head injury immediately to the athletic trainer and/or school nurse. Parents of students who sustain a head injury outside of school related activities are required to inform the athletic trainer and/or school nurse. Parents are made aware of their responsibility for informing the athletic trainer or school nurse in the event of a head injury occurring outside of school related activity through the school website and direct correspondence.

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**Removing athletes from play and evaluation**

At Lawrence Academy we are committed to providing a safe environment for our students. It is expected that all members of school staff adhere to the following to support the health and safety of students. The underlying philosophy of these policies is “when in doubt, sit them out.”

Any student who receives a blow to the head and/or exhibits any signs or symptoms of concussion must be removed immediately from play/practice. He/she will be evaluated by the athletic trainer who will initiate care as necessary. The student will be removed from all athletic activity for a period of not less than 24hours.

The student will need to be evaluated by his/her PCP or school designated PCP office. 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 physical and cognitive activities.

A student, if clinically able by the physician’s office, will be allowed to attend classes unless academic accommodations are put into place.

Parents of day students who are symptomatic but stable will be contacted by the athletic trainer and are expected to take responsibility for their children immediately. The athletic trainer will communicate his/her findings with the parents and advise follow-up with the primary care provider. The parents will receive important information regarding signs and symptoms of deteriorating brain injury/ function prompting immediate referral to a local emergency room as well as return to play and academic requirements at the school.

Parents of boarding students who are symptomatic and stable will be notified of the injury by the athletic trainer. The student will be monitored for signs and symptoms of deteriorating brain injury/ function and referred as necessary.

When a student loses consciousness for any reason, EMS will be activated.

Athletes who are removed from play or practice and who begin to develop signs and symptoms of a worsening brain injury will be transported to the ER immediately.

The athletic trainer or school nurse will notify the student’s advisor, assistant head, dean of students, and director of studies of the injury and the post concussion protocol will be initiated. An academic accommodations notification will be sent via the health office. Students are required to see the health office daily to complete a symptom checklist.

If academic accommodations are necessary, a medical note specifying accommodations must be obtained for the school. Students will then be **required** to pick up a RED SHEET at the health center and have their teachers sign off on the sheet daily. This is also noted on the daily attendance. This sheet is to be returned daily to the health center. Once students are “OFF RED SHEET” they will be **required** to meet with the Director of Studies to review and set a plan for any missed academic work.

The school nurse will maintain communication will notify all necessary teachers/staff of progression via the RED SHEET.

**Medical clearance for return to full athletic and academic participation**

***When may an athlete return from injury?***

*If it is determined that an athlete has a concussion s/he will be out of competition until he/she is cleared for participation by a physician. No player shall go from being sidelined with a concussion to activity until he/she has followed the recommended stepwise process to return to activity from the treating physician. Each athlete will likely have his/her own course of recovery which may depend upon prior medical history of concussion. Each student who is removed from practice or competition shall have a graduated re-entry plan for return to full academic and extracurricular athletic activities. The plan, put forth by the treating physician, shall be communicated with the student’s teachers, the student’s advisor, school nurse, certified athletic trainer, parent, and other support personnel as appropriate and in consultation with the student’s primary care provider or the treating physician. This plan, if needed, shall include instructions for a student, parent(s), and school personnel addressing physical and cognitive rest, graduated return to academics and athletics, assessment frequencies, as appropriate, by the school nurse, physician, team physician or athletic trainer until full return to academics and athletics is authorized. The student must be completely symptom free (unless advised differently by a concussion specialist) and medically cleared in order to begin graduated re-entry (stepwise program) to activities.*

In addition to the physical clearance exam, three other criteria must be met prior to clearance for return to play in athletics:

1. the student-athlete must be asymptomatic, at rest and with exertion, (unless dictated differently per the concussion specialist), and
2. The student must complete a RTP plan (see below)
3. the student-athlete’s post-injury neurocognitive testing data must be within normal range of the student-athlete’s baseline neurocognitive testing scores, if available. Lawrence Academy currently utilizes either SAC, BESS/SWAY, KING-DEVICK or ImPACT testing for pre and post injury assessment of concussion.

***The athletic training staff, in consultation with the school nursing staff, school and team physician and/or school concussion consultant, reserve the right to continue to withhold a student-athlete from participation until the school medical staff deems fit.***

*Student-athletes who have been cleared to progress to activity are progressed following a stepwise procedure, as recommended by the National Athletic Trainers’ Association Position Statement on Management of Sport-Related Concussion in addition to Massachusetts State Regulations.*

**Post-concussion graduated reentry-Cognitive**

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. Progression to the next phase will require the student to be symptom free for 24 hours (unless permitted by the concussion specialist). If symptoms do develop or increase, the student must drop back to the previous step.

* Complete cognitive rest: No school, computer, texting, video games. May watch TV for short periods if permitted.
* Light cognitive activities: No school but may do activities that do not cause symptoms to recur, e.g. start with 5-15 minutes of homework. Stop if symptoms develop or increase. Increase cognitive activity as long as symptoms do not develop

or increase. Student should continue to participate in short burst of time as tolerated, working up to longer periods as long as symptoms do not develop or increase.

* Post concussion medical leave: When allowed to return to school the student will attend and participate in class at his/her own pace. No work is graded, but feedback

is provided. The student will be allowed to leave class to rest immediately should any symptoms occur and must see the school nurse. No athletics.

**Full academic participation:**

*Once the student is cleared to resume a full academic program, the health office will send an “OFF RED SHEET” notice to the director of studies, dean of students and head athletic trainer regarding the student’s updated status. The director of studies will contact the student and develop a plan for making up any missed work. The student must also check in at this time with the athletic training staff regarding a time-table to begin the athletic RTP plan when cleared by the treating physician.*

**Athletics**

A step wise approach to sports will also be initiated. Return to Playplans will begin only after a student has returned to full participation in academics and is completely symptom-free at rest unless dictated otherwise by the treating physician. Progression to the next phase will require the student to be symptom free for 24 hours unless dictated by the treating physician. If symptoms do develop the student must drop back to the previous step.

* No activity: Complete physical and cognitive rest; no exercise or

school. No computer, texting, video games, etc.

* Light aerobic exercise: Walking, swimming, stationary bike. Heart rate < 70% of max. No resistance training. May return to class.
* Sport-specific training: Skating in hockey, running in soccer, etc. No contact.
* Non-contact drills: Passing drills, dribbling. May start resistance training.
* Full-contact practice: Normal participation after medical clearance.
* Game play

It is impossible to predict how long recovery will take following a concussion. Factors that may affect the rate of progression include: previous history of concussion, duration and type of symptoms, age of the athlete, and sport/activity in which the athlete participates. An athlete with a prior history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a collision or contact sport should be progressed more slowly.

*Students should only progress to the next level of exertion if they are asymptomatic at the current level or unless dictated differently by a concussion specialist. In a situation in which a student has been medically cleared but the advisor and/or other staff members have observed continuing or increased symptoms, Lawrence Academy’s health care professionals will make the final decision regarding a student’s return to play in consultation with the school-affiliated concussion specialist. If this situation arises, the athletic trainer, school nurse, or school physician will communicate the school’s concerns to the health care provider who gave the clearance. The Lawrence Academy health care professionals will make the final decision, in consultation with the school-affiliated concussion specialist, regarding a student’s return to activity. Students may be required to follow-up with a concussion specialist if so deemed by the school medical staff.*