Niobrara County School District #1
619 West 5th Street
P.O. Box 629
Lusk, Wyoming 82225
Phone: (307)334-3793 Fax: (307)334-0126

Concussion Protocol for Coaches and Parents

Our Commitment to Athlete Safety

The health and safety of our children is always our number one priority. Every concussion — and every child — is unique. Symptoms may appear right away or may develop hours after the initial injury, and recovery timelines can vary from one athlete to another.

Because of this, we treat each situation with care and flexibility. What matters most is ensuring that every child has the time, support, and medical guidance they need to recover fully before returning to play.

By working together — coaches, parents, athletes, and healthcare providers — we can make sure that safety comes first, and that our athletes return to the sports they love in a healthy and confident way.

Immediate Action & Documentation

Any athlete who is suspected of having sustained a concussion will be removed from play or practice immediately. The incident will be carefully documented, including the circumstances of the injury, observed symptoms, and any actions taken.

If an incident happens over the weekend/at home and a concussion is suspected, parents will notify the school and coach so proper protocol can be maintained/followed.

Parent/Guardian Communication

Parents or guardians will be notified as soon as possible. Clear communication ensures families are fully informed and can make decisions in collaboration with healthcare professionals. Again, if athlete sustains a concussion at home, please notify the school and coaches as soon as possible.

No Same-Day Return

Athletes cannot return to full play or practice on the same day a concussion is suspected. Return to sport may only occur once the athlete has been evaluated and cleared by a licensed physician.

Use of SWAY for Monitoring

We utilize the SWAY mobile assessment tool to help collect data and monitor an athlete's recovery process. SWAY results can be shared with parents and healthcare providers to support clinical evaluation.

IMPORTANT: SWAY is not a tool for medical clearance. Clearance decisions can only be made by a physician.

Stepwise Return-to-Sport Process

The return to activity will follow a structured, step-by-step protocol to ensure full recovery (Please see Concussion Protocol Flowchart). If at any time an athlete regresses even after being cleared – they will need to be seen and cleared by a physician again.

Important Note on Concussion Decisions

Our coaches and staff are **not medical professionals** and therefore cannot diagnose a concussion. If a concussion is suspected, they will always **err on the side of caution** by removing the athlete from play or practice.

This precaution ensures that no child is placed at unnecessary risk. The athlete's **safety and health come first**, and only a licensed healthcare professional can determine whether it is safe to return to activity.

*See Concussion Protocol Flowchart

Niobrara County School District #1

Concussion Protocol

Injury Occurs (Concussion Suspected)

Whether incident is witnessed by coach or athlete reports injury

---Athlete is removed from Play---

initial assessment, rest, and monitored

(if athlete is in duress or needs emergent medical care - 911 will be called)

Paperwork

Coach/Staff fill out "Standardized Assessment of Concussion." Send copy to parents, keep original for records.

Parents Contacted

Inform Parent - athlete is on "Concussion Protocol". Parents monitor symptoms and let Coach/school know of any changes.

Begin Return to Play

Student will begin the steps of "Return to Play." Each step is roughly 24 hours. Must make each "step" with no symptoms. If at any time sx return or worsen - they go back a step. If student continue to worsen or digress - seeing a health care provider is recommended.

Return-to-Play

Step 1

Day to Day Activity - chores, school work, walking, etc

Step 2

Aerobic Exercise - stationary cycling or walking, light training. Slightly increased heart rate

Step 3

Sport-Specific Training - away from team environment (running, change of direction). Increased heart heart. No activities at risk of head impact

**Student has accomplished all 3 steps with no symptoms - student now needs to be seen by a physician and cleared to engage in more strenuous game like drills/play. SWAY testing can be utilized at this time (results can be sent to Dr.)

Step 4

Non-contact training drill - exercise is high intensity including more training drills (ex: passing drills, multiplayer training)

Step 5

Full Contact Practice - participate in normal training activities.

Step 6

Return to Sport - normal game play

***If at any time during steps 4-6 - student has symptoms or declines in health – student will not only go back steps but this will be treated as a secondary concussion and the student will need reevaluated by the physician and cleared.

Symptoms (sx) of a Concussion:

- Severe or increased headache
- Double or blurred vision
- Abnormal eye movement or pupil changes
- Light or noise sensitivity
- Nausea/Vomiting
- Neck pain or tenderness
- Weakness or tingling in arms or legs
- Loss of Consciousness
- Seizures or convulsions
- Changes in mood
- Slurred speech

***If injury occurs outside of school/school activity - parents must inform the school so proper steps and care can be taken**

**** If parents choose to skip "steps" and have the child cleared right away - student must complete a full practice with no sx in order to participate in a match**