

## Students

### CONCUSSION IN STUDENT ATHLETES

BP 6145.22(a)

Note: Effective August 25, 2011, AS 14.30.142-.143 requires school districts to have a program for the prevention and management of concussions in student athletes. A concussion is a brain injury but the effects of concussion can be mitigated by prompt recognition and appropriate response. The statutes require school districts to consult with the Alaska School Activities Association (“ASAA”) to develop and publish guidelines to educate coaches, students, and parents about the risks of concussion, and to develop standards for return to play. ASAA guidelines are incorporated into this policy and the accompanying AR. The law also requires annual dissemination of information to parents and athletes, verification of receipt of that information prior to participation, and specific procedures for removal and return to play of a student suspected of having a concussion.

The Board recognizes that students who participate in sports and other recreational activities are at risk for concussion. The Board promotes student, parent, and staff awareness of the risks of concussion and directs appropriate concussion management procedures to improve the health and safety of student athletes.

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury resulting from a forceful blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the head, causing any change in behavior, thinking, or physical functioning. The likelihood of serious injury increases when a concussion is not properly identified, evaluated, and managed.

*(cf. 6145 – Extra Curricular and Co-Curricular Activities)*

*(cf. 5141 – Health care and Emergencies)*

#### **Risk Awareness and Education**

The Superintendent will develop appropriate concussion management procedures to help ensure a safe and healthy athletic experience. These procedures shall include guidelines and other information to educate coaches, student athletes, and their parents/guardians of the nature and risk of concussion, including the dangers associated with returning to play before a concussion is fully healed.

On an annual basis, the District will distribute a concussion fact sheet to students participating in District-sponsored sports, and to their parents/guardians. The student and parent/guardian must return a signed, written acknowledgement indicating they have reviewed and understand the information. The written acknowledgement must be received by the athlete and parent/guardian prior to the athlete’s participation in any District-sponsored practice or competition.

#### **Removal and Return-To-Play**

Note: AS 14.30.142(d) requires that an athlete be evaluated and cleared for participation “in writing by a qualified person who has received training and is currently certified, as verified in writing or electronically by the person, in the evaluation and management of concussions.” There is currently no recognized certification for the evaluation and management of concussions so districts should require that the qualified person be *trained* in the evaluation and management of concussions. State law defines a “qualified person” as either a health care provider who is licensed in Alaska or exempt from licensure, or a person acting at the direction or under the supervision of a physician who is licensed in Alaska, or exempt from licensing under AS 08.64.370(1), (2), or (4).

## **Students**

### **CONCUSSION IN STUDENT ATHLETES** (continued)

BP 6145.22(b)

The Superintendent's guidelines will include procedures for the immediate removal from practice or competition of a student who has signs of concussion. A student who has been removed from participation may not return to the activity until evaluated and cleared to do so by a qualified person who is trained in the evaluation and management of concussions, as established by law. Because of the risks of returning to play prematurely, a student should gradually be returned to the activity.

### **Coaches Training**

Note: AS 14.30.142 provides that school districts are to work with ASAA to develop and publish guidelines and other information "to educate coaches[.]" ASAA recognizes that districts must individually decide how to implement and provide coaches training but requires that districts shall ensure training for coaches at least every three years, on the same cycle as the required Sports First Aid certification.

All coaches, including volunteer coaches, will complete training in the evaluation and management of concussions as specified in District procedures.

*Legal Reference:*

ALASKA STATUTES

*AS 14.30.142 Concussions in student athletes: prevention and reporting*

*AS 14.30.143 Concussions in student athletes: school district immunity*