



The Parks and Recreation Department operates year-round programs throughout the City's public facilities, playgrounds, schoolyards, and various other locations to promote positive and healthy activities for all members of the Somerville community.

## **City of Somerville Parks and Recreation Department Concussion Policy for Youth Athletes**

### **I. Introduction**

#### **A. Purpose**

**Concussions Are Serious.** Medical providers may describe a concussion as a “mild” brain injury because concussions are usually not life-threatening. Even so, the effects of a concussion can be serious.

This policy provides guidelines for the prevention and management of sports-related head injuries. It shall apply to youth athletes who sustain head injuries or concussions while participating in Somerville Parks and Recreation Department (Department) sports programs and/or programs held at fields and/or facilities permitted by or supported by the Department.

#### **B. Objective**

The objective of this policy is to protect the physical and mental health of our youth athletes through the prevention and management of head injuries sustained during participation in organized youth sports. This objective will be achieved by educating the general public and youth leagues on how to prevent sports-related concussions, recognize the signs of concussions, report concussions appropriately, and determine when a participant is ready to return to play.

### **II. Overview**

#### **A. Department Philosophy**

The Department recognizes the importance of education and sports-related concussion and head injury prevention associated with contact sports.

#### **B. Consideration/Process**

Youth sport leagues and sports programs using facilities and/or fields permitted or supported by the Department are required to adhere to the standards established in this policy regarding concussion prevention, training, and reporting. This policy outlines specific reporting requirements, including procedures for making an initial report and for following up post-recovery.

### **III. Designation of Responsible Administrator**

Revised 9/16-JL

#### **References:**

Concussion Legacy Foundation [ConcussionFoundation.org](http://ConcussionFoundation.org)  
Brookline Massachusetts Recreation Concussion Policy November 2015.  
CDC Concussion Education Training.  
Somerville Massachusetts Public Schools Concussion Management Guidelines.



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The Somerville Parks and Recreation Director (Director) or a designee shall be responsible for the implementation of this policy and the related procedures. At the conclusion of each fiscal year, the Director or a designee shall complete an annual report identifying the number of sports-related head injuries and concussions that were sustained by athletes at fields and/or facilities permitted or supported by the Department and the sport in which the injury was sustained. This policy and the related procedures shall be reviewed and revised at least every two years.

### **IV. Training and Instruction**

#### **A. Annual Training**

All Department program staff, coaches, and volunteers who participate in organized youth athletic activities, as well as coaches and volunteers of youth sports-related organizations using facilities and/or fields permitted or supported by the Department shall complete an annual training on the prevention and recognition of sports-related head injuries and the associated health risks, including second impact syndrome. Documentation of such training shall be maintained by the user group organization and verified by the Department prior to issuing permits for facility and/or field use each season.

#### **B. Instruction for Staff, Coaches, and Volunteers**

All personnel, coaches, and volunteers participating in youth athletic activities at fields and/or facilities permitted or supported by the Department shall be required to complete concussion education training through one or more of the following approved programs:

1. CDC's concussion education training: [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion) Use the Concussion in Youth Sports training module. Then choose **Launch the Course** on right hand side.
2. NFHS concussion course: <https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61064/concussion-in-sports>  
This course is more geared toward High School coaches.
3. Concussion education event sponsored by the Department.

Independent youth leagues not under the Department are required to:

1. Provide the Department with a letter verifying the completion of concussion training by their staff, coaches, and volunteers. The letter must be signed by the youth league's board of directors.

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### **V. Post Head Injury/Concussion Procedures**

Each organization shall ensure that Somerville's Parks and Recreation Department Concussion Policy is followed. This policy is based on the existing Somerville Public Schools Sports Concussion Management Guidelines.

### **VI. Notice to Athletes and Parents**

#### **A. General Information**

The Department shall provide athletes and their parents with information pertaining to the annual training requirement set forth in Section IV (A); the procedure for notifying parents when an athlete has been removed from play for a head injury or suspected concussion sustained during an athletic activity; the protocol for obtaining medical clearance set forth in the guidelines related to this Policy; and the responsibilities of parents/guardians pertaining to a physician's clearance for return to play.

Independent youth leagues not under the Department are required to:

1. Provide the Department with their policies regarding the procedure for notifying parents when an athlete has been removed from play due to a head injury or suspected concussion sustained during an athletic activity, the protocol for obtaining medical clearance set forth in the guidelines related to this Policy; and the responsibilities of parents/guardians in regard to obtaining a physician's clearance for return to play.

#### **B. Parent Outreach**

Each organization shall take steps to ensure that parents/guardians of athletes understand and comply with their responsibilities under this policy and the related guidelines. This includes notifications to the Director or a designee regarding removal from play due to a head injury or suspected concussions sustained during an athletic activity.

Independent youth leagues not under the Department are required to:

1. Provide the Department with the youth league's policy regarding removal from play due to a head injury or suspected concussions sustained during an athletic activity.

### **VII. Compliance and Penalties**

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All personnel and athletes who participate in organized youth sports on fields and/or facilities permitted or supported by the Department are responsible for understanding their responsibilities and obligations under this policy. Users who fail to comply with the provisions of this policy may be subject to revocation of facility and/or field permit.

#### **VIII. Definitions**

- A. A **concussion** is a type of traumatic brain injury—or TBI—caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This sudden movement can cause the brain to bounce around or twist in the skull, stretching and damaging the brain cells and creating chemical changes in the brain.
- B. **Return to play** is the Massachusetts 105 CMR 201.011 Medical Clearance and Authorization to return to play regulation. This regulation is from the Massachusetts 105 CMR 201.000: Head Injuries and Concussions in Extracurricular Athletic Activities.
- C. **Youth athletes** are school age 18 and under.
- D. **Sports programs and leagues** are any and all athletic activities and programs. This policy should not be construed as to be limited to any specific sport or group of sports.

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