

WEIMAR INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL

**National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS)
Sports Medication Advisory Committee (SMAC)**

INTRODUCTION

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury that interferes with normal function of the brain. It occurs when the brain is rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body.

The understanding of sports-related concussion has evolved dramatically in recent years. We now know that young athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of a concussion. Once considered little more than a “ding” on the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in short or long-term changes in brain function, or in some cases, death.

What is a concussion?

You’ve probably heard the term “ding” or “bell-ringer.” These terms were once used to refer to minor head injuries and thought to be a normal part of sports. There is no such thing as a minor brain injury. Any suspected concussion must be taken seriously. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body. Basically, any force that is transmitted to the head causes the brain to literally bounce around or twist within the skull, potentially resulting in a concussion.

What exactly happens to the brain during a concussion is not entirely understood. It appears to be a very complex injury affecting both the structure and functions of the brain. The sudden movement of the brain causes stretching and tearing of the brain cells, damaging the cells and creating chemical changes in the brain. Once this injury occurs, the brain is vulnerable to further injury and very sensitive to any increased stress until it fully recovers.

Common sports injuries such as torn ligaments and broken bones can be seen on MRIs or x-rays, or detected during an examination. A concussion, however, is primarily an injury that interferes with how the brain works. While there is damage to brain cells, the damage is at a microscopic level and cannot be seen on MRI or CT scans. Therefore, the brain looks normal on these tests, even though it has been injured.

Listed below are the Concussion Management Protocol Documents and Website Link(s):

- “Natasha’s Law” HB 2038: <http://www.uiltexas.org/files/health/HB02038F.pdf>
- Weimar ISD Concussion Oversight Team
- UIL Concussion Acknowledgement Form
- Recovery and Safe Return to Play Guidelines
- Post-Concussion Cognitive Recommendations / Modifications
- On-field Recognition and Management of Concussion Tool
- Post Head Injury Home Instructions for Parents
- UIL Concussion Management Protocol Returns to Play Form