

# **ELDER GROVE SCHOOLS**

2023-2024



**Outlaw Pride**

**Generations of Success, Striving for Excellence**

## **ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK**

### **Statement of Philosophy**

Activities are considered an integral part of the school's program of education, which provide experiences that will help students physically, mentally and emotionally. The element of competition and winning, though it exists, is controlled to the point it does not determine the nature or success of the program. This is considered to be educationally and psychologically sound because of the training it offers for living in a competitive society. Student-athletes are stimulated to want to win and excel, but the principles of good sportsmanship prevail at all times to enhance the educational values of contests. We believe that participation in activities, both as a player and as a student spectator, is an integral part of the students' educational experiences. Such participation is a privilege that carries with it responsibilities to the school, to the team, to the student body, to the community and to the students themselves. In their play and their conduct, students are representing all of these groups. Such experiences contribute to the knowledge, skill and emotional patterns that they possess, thereby making them better people and citizens.

### **Safety**

The District's philosophy is also to maintain an activities program which recognizes the importance of the safety of the participants. To participate in athletics, the student/athlete must have on file in the Activities Director's office the following:

- A. Completed Physical Form
- B. Concussion Form Signed
- C. Participation Fee (Per sport, Non-Refundable)

To ensure safety, participants are required to become fully familiar with the dangers and safety measures established for the activity in which they participate, to adhere to all safety instructions for the activity in which they participate, and to exercise common-sense. The purpose of this warning is to bring your attention to the existence of potential dangers associated with athletic injuries. Participation in any intramural or athletic activity may involve injury of some type. The severity of such injury can range from minor cuts, bruises, sprains and muscle strains to more serious injuries to the body's bones, joints, ligaments, tendons, or muscles, to catastrophic injuries to the head, neck and spinal cord. On rare occasions, injuries can be so severe as to result in total disability, paralysis or death. Even with appropriate coaching, appropriate safety instruction, appropriate protective equipment and strict observance of the rules, injuries are still a possibility.

### **Outlaw Pride**

Any great tradition takes a long time in building; it takes the hard work of many young adults, the loyal support of parents and community, and the dedication of sponsors and coaches. As members of the Elder Grove co-curricular activity group, students have inherited a tradition that is one of the finest in the state. The district believes in excellence and the total effort must be exerted to finish well. It is the striving, not necessarily the arriving, that brings out the best in a person. Students automatically assume a leadership role when they are involved in extracurricular activities. The student body, the community, and other communities judge the school by our conduct and attitude, both at school and away. Accepting the role of leadership allows each individual to contribute to school spirit and community pride.

## Objectives of Participation

The activities program should provide students with the opportunity to:

- 1) Improve self-respect
- 2) Develop an attitude of self-discipline
- 3) Develop leadership roles
- 4) Aid in developing pride in community and school
- 5) Learn the importance of teamwork in working toward a specific goal
- 6) Learn to work within a given set of rules
- 7) Carry over those values learned during activities into classroom work

## Competition

Competition gives all students an opportunity to learn something rarely available in the classroom situation. It is an experience that involves preparation, dedication and hard work. The reward is measured in different ways by each individual, ranging from simply participating to making the A team, placing in a competition, or winning a championship.

It is the philosophy of the Elder Grove School Activities Department that each student should be given an opportunity to develop his/her skills to the best of his/her ability. This includes the skill of being a team player, maximizing the role assigned by the coach.

The **5th and 6th grade** teams will give all students an opportunity to participate in any activity sponsored by the school system. Although students may play different roles and have different responsibilities to perform, no student at this level should be cut from an activity due to athletic ability. Playing time must be earned by the player and is determined by the coach. It's the philosophy of the activities department to try and distribute playing time equally and focus on skill development at the 5th and 6th grade level. This philosophy is explained to the coaches at the beginning of the season.

Competition is emphasized as students move through the activities program into **7th and 8th grade**. The goal for our 7th and 8th grade football, cross country, and "A" teams (volleyball and basketball), is to field teams that are competitive within our conference and at the state level.

## Academic Eligibility

Grades are our first priority. Student-athletes represent our school and therefore must be in good academic standing. Any player who has a grade(s) below a "C-" in any class will not be allowed to participate in any games that week; this includes weekend tournaments, until the grade is brought up to the appropriate level. Weeks run Sunday to Sunday, eligibility report is sent to coaches at noon on Monday.

If a student-athlete brings up a grade throughout the week - they will be eligible to play that week, with verbal or written confirmation from the teacher. The teacher must be provided a minimum of 24 hours (longer assignments could require additional time for grading at teacher discretion) from the time the assignment is submitted to grade it. This confirmation must be presented to the activities director for the student-athlete to become eligible mid-week.

A player, who is ineligible due to grades, will practice, but will be unable to play. Students who do not attempt to regain a passing grade average may continue to participate in practices, but may at the

coach's discretion be required to work on missing assignments during games and practices.

If a player is unable to bring deficient grade(s) up within (any) 4 Monday reports, over the course of the season, he/she will be dismissed from the team to focus on school. This includes weeks where grades have been brought up mid-week. \*(The Superintendent, Principal, or Athletic Director may intervene and waive this policy requirement due to unforeseen or extenuating circumstances.)

The Academic Eligibility report will not be pulled for the two weeks of a new quarter and semester.

### **General Eligibility**

If the conduct of a student is determined by the coach/sponsor and administration to be detrimental to the athletic/activity program, the student may be suspended from the program for a period to be determined by the coach/sponsor and administration. Denial from participating with the team for a period of time may result from the following:

- a. insubordination
- b. obscene gestures, swearing
- c. provocation
- d. fighting
- e. stealing
- f. other disciplinary situations that may arise

The same rules that apply in the classroom - apply on the playing field. The code of conduct outlined in the student handbook can be used to determine consequences - additional suspensions from practice and games can be applied by administration/coaches. The playing field is simply an extension of the classroom. See Code of Conduct - Elder Grove Student Handbook

All Middle School students must meet the school's academic requirements to participate.

Students-athletes have 1 week after the first practice to join the team. All required paperwork must be submitted within this time span. Student-athletes will not be able to join the team in the 2nd week of practice. The only exception to this rule is newly accepted students.

Student-athletes may only participate in 1 fall sports offering (Football, Girls Basketball, or Cross Country).

### **Coach/Sponsor Rules and Regulation**

A coach/sponsor may elect to have additional rules/regulations for their sport/group beyond those addressed in the activity handbook. A list of the specific rules/regulations requested by the coach/sponsor will be distributed to the participants involved within the first week of scheduled practices/meetings, and will be on file in the activity director's and/or principal's office.

Coaches have the final say on playing time and assignments. Playing time is earned.

## Conflict Resolution

Sometimes the need to contact a coach occurs during the school year. The correct sequence we request you take is:

**Level 1:** Each Head Coach/Sponsor will have a parents meeting at the beginning of the season to establish guidelines and expectations for their student-athletes, with parents invited to ask questions at this time.

**Level 2:** During the season, please contact your son/daughter's Head Coach/sponsor if you have questions or concerns. Please wait 24 hours after a contest to contact your son/daughter's coach.

**Teachable moment:** Have your son/daughter visit with his or her head Coach first. If we are preparing students for life's lessons, this is a critical piece of education.

**Level 3:** If you have contacted the Head Coach (level 2), and wish to also have the Activities Director involved, please contact the Head Coach. (The Head Coach may also request that the A.D. sit in on a parent meeting.)

**Level 4:** If you are interested, the Principal is also available to sit in on a parent meeting if #1, #2, and #3 do not work out. The administration also has several Parent Communication meetings during the school year and may be available either during or after one of these meetings.

**Level 5:** If the above are not satisfactory, please contact the A.D. office, and I will contact the Supt. of Schools if there are still concerns.

## Attendance/Participation

A student must be in attendance by 11:30 AM on the day of an activity to participate in that activity, unless approved in advance by the activities director. If a student must be absent for a special circumstance (i.e. doctor's appointment) the athletic director must be informed before leaving. If a student-athlete is suspended out of school, he/she will **not** be allowed to practice or play during the period of the suspension. A suspended student is also not allowed to attend any on-site games during this suspension.

A student-athlete will be given an excused absence if they miss school due to an Elder Grove Sponsored Activity or/ Laurel Co-op (track) event. Ineligible players may not be excused from school for activities.

## Practice Attendance

A student will not be allowed to participate in any activities if they fail to attend practice regularly. Unexcused absences from practice will result in the student not participating that week. Unexcused absences include attending traveling team practices/games over Elder Grove sponsored activities taking place at the same time. Chronic failure to attend practice will result in removal from the activity. Coaches have the authority to set their own rules in addition to these. Coaches' rules will be written and distributed, or verbally communicated at the beginning of the season.

## Physical Examination

A physical form must be turned in prior to beginning practice for any/all athletic events, (non-athletic activities do not require a physical). A physical examination is required for all participants in interscholastic athletics before they will be allowed to participate. No student will be permitted to practice before a physical examination form has been turned into the head coach/A.D./middle school office. These physical forms will be kept on file in the middle school office. Physical examinations are the responsibility of the parent/student. Student/Athletes should use the Montana High School Association physical form

which will be available on the school website or in the middle school office. A new physical is required for each new school year and needs to be completed after May 1st of the prior school year.

### **Equipment/Uniforms**

Players will check out and check in equipment at the beginning and end of each season. When equipment that is not returned in the same condition it was given, parents/guardians will be sent a bill for the cost to replace the equipment. Athletic uniforms and equipment are **not** to be worn or used by any student except during school sponsored practices or events in which the student participates. Coaches and sponsors expect all uniforms and equipment to be returned no later than one (1) week after the last day of participation.

### **Travel**

Parents/Guardians are responsible for transporting the student-athlete to and from all practices and games. **Students may NOT wait for games or activities at the school unless they have adult supervision or permission from the principal or athletic director, unless they play in the 4:15 PM game/match.**

### **Dress**

Those responsible for any performance groups, such as coach, director, advisor, etc., are hereby authorized and encouraged to develop for each group exemplary standards and practices in fashion, grooming and taste that will tend to enhance the appearance of the group as a whole and help build a constructive "esprit de corps" within the group.

Such standards and/or practices must be of a reasonable nature, appropriate to the group's activity, and reflect positively on the image of the group and the school.

### **Fundraising**

All fund raising by Elder Grove Public School students must be pre-approved by the activities director and/or principal prior to the beginning of the fundraiser. Students will not be dismissed from class for fund raising activities or for preparation for such fundraisers.

### **Injuries**

Injured participants must keep the coach/sponsor informed of their injury and recuperation. Injuries should be reported immediately to the coach. Coaches will report injuries to the Principal and/or Activities Director.

### **Equity**

Activity programs of Elder Grove Public School will be administered on a fair and equitable basis to all participants. Equity will be included in band performances, pep and recognition assemblies, number of sports offered, and other general areas of administering programs.

## Middle School Activities

**Boys Basketball:** (\$35 Participation Fee) Boys in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 may participate in this program, which instructs participants in the fundamentals of basketball, team play and good sportsmanship. Interscholastic competition will be scheduled with area schools and the season will conclude with an interscholastic tournament.

7th and 8th grade players are assigned to either the A or B team. The A team will have a roster limit of 12. The B team has unlimited roster spots. Players may be moved between A and B as they progress throughout the season. Tournament rosters will be finalized at the tournament seeding meeting (Limit of 12 players for the A team). Players will be evaluated on the following set of criteria: skill level, athletic potential, attitude, commitment, attendance, “body language” - attitude, academic standing, and coachability. If the number of players exceeds the spots available for these two teams, additional B teams may be made. If there aren't enough B games available from other schools, there will be an intramural league formed within the program.

**Girls Basketball:** (\$35 Participation Fee) Girls in grades 5, 6, 7 and 8 may participate in this program which instructs participants in the fundamentals of basketball, team play and good sportsmanship. Competition will include interscholastic games with area schools and a tournament at the conclusion of the season.

7th and 8th grade players are assigned to either the A or B team. The A team will have a roster limit of 12. The B team has unlimited roster spots. Players may be moved between A and B as they progress throughout the season. Tournament rosters will be finalized at the tournament seeding meeting (Limit of 12 players for the A team). Players will be evaluated on the following set of criteria: skill level, athletic potential, attitude, commitment, attendance, “body language” - attitude, academic standing, and coachability. If the number of players exceeds the spots available for these two teams, additional B teams may be made. If there aren't enough B games available from other schools, there will be an intramural league formed within the program.

**Football:** (\$150 Participation Fee) Students in grades 7 and 8 may participate in this program and will learn the fundamentals of football, team play and good sportsmanship. This is a competitive program and all playing time is earned. Playing time is determined by the coaching staff. Players must have participated in 10 practices before playing in a game. Note: Summer Football Camp counts for practices.

Players are evaluated and selected by the following criteria:

1. Skill level
2. Athletic potential
3. Attitude, commitment, and attendance

The following equipment will be checked out to each player: equipment bag, helmet, shoulder pads, pants with knee and thigh pads, practice and game jersey. Each player needs to furnish football shoes (non-metal), gym shorts, high black socks and t-shirt.

Participants are required to take the IMPACT testing - baseline before participating in a game.

**Cross Country:** (\$35 Participation Fee) Students in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 may participate in this program. Practices will take place mostly after school and the majority of running will take place on dirt roads to the west of Elder Grove. Cross Country is considered a competitive sport at Elder Grove Schools. Each player needs to furnish running shoes, work-out clothes, and a watch.

**Girls Volleyball:** (\$35 Participation Fee) Girls in grades 5, 6, 7, and 8 may participate in this program that instructs participants in the fundamentals of volleyball, team play and good sportsmanship. Competition will include interscholastic games with area schools and a tournament at the conclusion of the season. Each player will need to furnish gym shoes and knee pads.

7th and 8th grade players are assigned to either the A or B team. The A team will have a roster limit of 12. The B team has unlimited roster spots. Players may be moved between A and B as they progress throughout the season. Tournament rosters will be finalized at the tournament seeding meeting (Limit of 12 players for the A team). Players will be evaluated on the following set of criteria: skill level, athletic potential, attitude, commitment, “body language” - attitude, attendance, academic standing, and coachability. If the number of players exceeds the spots available for these two teams, additional B teams may be made. If there aren't enough B games available from other schools, there will be an intramural league formed within the program.

Parents will be asked to volunteer to line-judge.

**Student Council:** A student government is assembled from the middle school student body by majority election. The middle school Student Council sponsors a number of school-wide activities throughout the year. “The mission of Student Council is to cultivate responsible leaders within our school community and promote the true, outstanding character of our student body.” Students in 6th-8th grade are able to participate in Student Council but must maintain a 3.0 grade point average and be in good standing with teachers and staff. There are also several 5th grade representatives.

**Track:** (Co-op with Elysian): Boys and girls in grades 7 and 8 may participate in track & field with Elysian Middle School. Participants are introduced to the many events available in track and field and are given instruction in the events in which they are most interested.

**Yearbook:** Middle school students may assist in the production of the annual. Processes that are learned include photography, developing and layout.

**Pep Band:** Boys and Girls in grades 5-8 may participate in Pep Band events throughout the year. These events include assemblies, award ceremonies, and athletic contests.

**Tech Team:** All middle school students in grades 6-8 may belong to the Tech Team. The students need to be in good academic standing as determined by the Tech Team leader and administration. Behavior and attendance are factored into membership as well.

### Letter of Hardship

A hardship letter is used to request waiving the participation fee due to financial hardship. The ruling of hardship is determined by the administrative team.



### **Football Equipment Pricing Guide**

Players will check out and check in equipment at the beginning and end of each season. Equipment that is not returned in the same condition will be sent a bill for the cost to replace the equipment. Athletic uniforms and equipment are **not** to be worn or used by any student except during school sponsored practices or events in which the student participates. Coaches and sponsors expect all uniforms and equipment to be returned no later than one (1) week after the last day of participation.

Football Helmet - \$99.95

Shoulder Pads - \$75.00

Game Jersey - \$69.95

Practice Jersey - \$15.00

Football Pants - \$39.95

Gear Bags - \$44.95

### **Other Sports (Basketball, Cross Country, and Volleyball)**

5th and 6th grade game jersey - \$65.95

7th and 8th grade game jersey - \$69.95

### **Sport Specific Warning**

Elder Grove School provides and offers a wide range of athletics and extracurricular activities for both boys and girls. Participation in such activities is voluntary. Elder Grove recognizes that participation in athletics and extracurricular activities can bring the student many rewards.

The school district will provide properly trained coaches, safe equipment, facilities, teach proper techniques, and make reasonable efforts to see that the athletic or extracurricular program is safe for your child. However, because athletic activity can involve injury to the participants, we must warn you of such dangers.

These activities require that the student make a commitment to the activity, submit to the discipline of the coach/advisor, and develop self-discipline to be able to successfully participate. Participation in these activities often requires considerable physical exertion, physical conditioning, and adherence to training rules and regimens.

The purpose of this warning is to aid you in making an informed decision as to whether the student should participate in the athletic activity. In addition, its purpose is to make you aware that as a student athlete and parent or guardian, it is your responsibility to learn about the sport involved and to inquire of coaches, physicians, and other knowledgeable persons about any concerns that you might have regarding athletic safety and the School District's athletic program.

Athletic injuries can impair the student's general physical and mental health and the student's ability to earn a living and engage in social or recreational activities and general enjoyment of life. Such injuries can include death or serious physical injury and a possibility of emotional injury as well. Injury can arise from training room procedures, the administration of first aid, or failing to follow game, training, safety, or other team rules. The use of transportation provided or arranged by the School District to and from games/contests also involves the risk of injury or death.

Elder Grove School strives to protect each student from possible injury while engaging in school activities. The guidelines and sport specific injury warning information is listed on the following pages. The parents and student/athlete should read this information provided for each sport in which the student plans to participate. The parents and student/athlete should also read all other information carefully and sign in all the appropriate places.

It is the responsibility of the parent and/or guardian and student/athletes to read and understand the contents of this handbook.

### **Basketball**

Basketball is a sport that involves contact. Because it is a contact sport, and as a result of your participation, basketball involves the risk of serious injury to **every part** of the body.

Risk of injuries include minor injuries such as contusions, muscle strains, cramps, fractures, joint dislocations, and joint sprains which are all common types of injuries sustained by basketball players. However, this sport also includes catastrophic injuries involving the head, neck, and spinal cord that can cause some type of paralysis and includes death. Basketball injuries can result from contact with other participants, the basketball, the playing surface and other solid objects in and around the court during practices, scrimmages, warm-ups, or games.

### **Football**

Tackle football is a violent contact sport. The risks of injury involved while participating in football include virtually every part of the body. Injuries may result to the body's nerves, blood vessels, internal organs, reproductive organs, bones, joints, ligaments, muscles and tendons. Injuries may also be catastrophic involving the head, neck, and spinal cord, resulting in paralysis, brain damage, eye damage, dental loss, hearing loss, other head injuries, including death. Other injuries may include heat stroke, heart failure, asthmatic attack and/or the additional strain the body may place on an already existing physical condition. Common injuries include knee injuries, strains to the muscular system, shin splints, ankle, shoulder, back, and torso injuries. Dislocations and fractures are also common.

Injury may result from contact with other players, bystanders, the playing surface, training equipment, goal posts or other objects in and around the playing and/or practice field. Injury may result from mis-fitted or worn equipment. Injuries can result from correct or incorrect performance and occur in tryouts, practice, warm-ups, scrimmages or games. Perform only those skills and techniques as instructed and/or supervised by the coaching staff. Such as tackling, blocking techniques, basic hitting position, and etc.

By rule the helmet is not used as a "RAM". Initial contact **is not** to be made with the helmet. Tackling and blocking techniques are basically the same, **in that contact is not initiated with the helmet.** The player should always be in a position of balance, knees bent, back straight, body slightly bent forward, **HEAD UP,** and the **TARGET AREA AS NEAR TO THE BODY AS POSSIBLE WITH THE MAIN CONTACT BEING MADE WITH THE SHOULDER.** When properly tackling and blocking an opponent, contact with your helmet will naturally result. Therefore, technique is most important to prevent injuries.

### **Track and Field and Cross Country**

Track and Field is a sport involving sprinting, running, jumping, and activities such as pole vault, high jump, and discus throw. Common injuries sustained as a result of participation in track and field are to the thigh and hamstring muscle. Shin splints, muscle and tendon injuries of the leg and inflammation of the knee are also common. Head and neck injuries can occur as a result of being struck by a discus, shot put, or javelin, including death. The most common times for injury to occur are during warm-up, practice or meets. Injuries can result from correct or incorrect performances of techniques and skills.

### **Volleyball**

Volleyball is a competitive net and power ball sport. Common injuries sustained as a result of participation in volleyball include, but are not limited to, the arms, hands, legs, feet, ankles, knees, lower back, shoulders, and elbows. Also common are contusions, abrasions, strains, sprains, fractures, ligament, cartilage damage, and concussions, as well as paralysis and/or death.

Volleyball injuries can result from correct or incorrect performance of playing techniques used in tryouts, practices, warm-ups, games, drills, exercises, or matches. Injury to the head and mouth, nose, teeth, eyes, ears, and other parts of the body can result from contact with the ball, players, the playing surface, and other solid objects in and around the playing area.

## Management of Sports Related Concussions

The Elder Grove School District recognizes that concussions and head injuries are commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and other recreational activities. The Board acknowledges the risk of catastrophic injuries or death is significant when a concussion or head injury is not properly evaluated and managed. Therefore, all K-12 competitive sport athletic activities in the District will be identified by the administration.

Consistent with guidelines provided by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the National Federation of High School (NFHS) and the Montana High School Association (MHSA), the District will utilize procedures developed by the MHSA and other pertinent information to inform and educate coaches, athletic trainers, officials, youth athletes, and their parents and/or guardians of the nature and risk of concussions or head injuries, including the dangers associated with continuing to play after a concussion or head injury. Resources are available on the Montana High School Association Sports Medicine page at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org); U.S. Department of Health and Human Services page at: [www.hhs.gov](http://www.hhs.gov); and; the Centers for Disease and Prevention page at [www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports.index.html](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports.index.html).

Annually, the district will distribute a head injury and concussion information and sign-off sheet to all parents and guardians of student-athletes in competitive sport activities prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition.

All coaches, athletic trainers, officials, including volunteers participating in organized youth athletic activities, shall complete the training program at least once each school year as required in the District procedure. Additionally, all coaches, athletic trainers, officials, including volunteers participating in organized youth athletic activities will comply with all procedures for the management of head injuries and concussions.

**Training:** All coaches, athletic trainers, and officials, including volunteers shall undergo training in head injury and concussion management at least once each school year by one of the following means: (1) through viewing the MHSA sport-specific rules clinic; (2) through viewing the MHSA concussion clinic found on the MHSA Sports Medicine page at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org); or by the district inviting the participation of appropriate advocacy groups and appropriate sports governing bodies to facilitate the training requirements.

**Parent Information Sheet:** On a yearly basis, a concussion and head injury information sheet shall be distributed to the student-athlete and the athlete's parent and/or guardian prior to the student-athlete's initial practice or competition. This information sheet may be incorporated into the parent permission sheet which allows students to participate in extracurricular athletics and should include resources found on the MHSA Sports Medicine page at [www.mhsa.org](http://www.mhsa.org), U.S. DPHHS, and CDCP websites.

**Responsibility:** An athletic trainer, coach, or official shall immediately remove from play, practice, tryouts, training exercises, preparation for an athletic game, or sport camp a student-athlete who is suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury or other serious injury.

**Return to Play After Concussion or Head Injury:** In accordance with MHSA Return to Play Rules and Regulations and (title of bill), a student athlete who has been removed from play, practice, tryouts, training exercises, preparation for an athletic game, or sport camp may not return until the athlete is cleared by a licensed health care professional (registered, licensed, certified, or otherwise statutorily recognized health care professional). The health care provider may be a volunteer.

Athletic Director or Administrator in Charge of Athletic Duties:

- **Updating:** Each spring, the athletic director, or the administrator in charge of athletics if there is no athletic director, shall review any changes that have been made in procedures required for concussion and head injury management or other serious injury by consulting with the MHSA or the MHSA Web site, U.S. DPHHS, and CDCP web site. If there are any updated procedures, they will be adopted and used for the upcoming school year.
- **Identified Sports:** Identified sports include all organized youth athletic activity sponsored by the school or school district.

## A Fact Sheet for Athletes

### WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that:

- Is caused by a bump or blow to the head
- Can change the way your brain normally works
- Can occur during practices or games in any sport
- Can happen even if you haven't been knocked out
- Can be serious even if you've just been "dinged"

### WHAT ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Bothered by light
- Bothered by noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Difficulty paying attention
- Memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not "feel right"

### WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

- **Tell your coaches and your parents.** Never ignore a bump or blow to the head even if you feel fine. Also, tell your coach if one of your teammates might have a concussion.
- **Get a medical checkup.** A doctor or healthcare professional can tell you if you have a concussion and when you are OK to return to play.
- **Give yourself time to get better.** If you have had a concussion, your brain needs time to heal. While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have a second concussion. Second or later concussions can cause damage to your brain. It is important to rest until you get approval from a doctor or health care professional to return to play.

### HOW CAN I PREVENT A CONCUSSION?

Every sport is different, but there are steps you can take to protect yourself.

- Follow your coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Use the proper sports equipment, including personal protective equipment (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). In order for equipment to protect you, it must be:

- > The right equipment for the game, position, or activity
- > Worn correctly and fit well
- > Used every time you play

Remember, when in doubt, sit them out!

## A Fact Sheet for PARENTS

### **WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?**

A concussion is a brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can’t see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

### **WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?**

#### **Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians**

*If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs and symptoms of a concussion:*

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily • Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can’t recall events prior to hit or fall
- Can’t recall events after hit or fall

#### **Symptoms Reported by Athlete**

- Headache or “pressure” in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Does not “feel right”

### **HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION?**

Every sport is different, but there are steps your children can take to protect themselves from concussion.

- Ensure that they follow their coach’s rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity (such as helmets, padding, shin guards, and eye and mouth guards). Protective equipment should fit properly, be well maintained, and be worn consistently and correctly.
- Learn the signs and symptoms of a concussion.

### **WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?**

**1. Seek medical attention right away.** A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to sports.

**2. Keep your child out of play.** Concussions take time to heal. Don’t let your child return to play until a health care professional says it’s OK. Children who return to play too soon—while the brain is still healing—risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Second or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

**3. Tell your child’s coach about any recent concussion.** Coaches should know if your child had a recent concussion in ANY sport. Your child’s coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach. Remember, when in doubt, sit them out! It’s better to miss one game than the whole season.

#### Be Prepared

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious. Concussions can occur in any sport or recreation activity. So, all coaches, parents, and athletes need to learn concussion signs and symptoms and what to do if a concussion occurs.

#### SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS OR GUARDIANS	SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY YOUR CHILD OR TEEN	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Appears dazed or stunned</li> <li>•Is confused about events</li> <li>•Answers questions slowly</li> <li>•Repeats questions</li> <li>•Can’t recall events prior to the hit, bump, or fall</li> <li>•Can’t recall events after the hit, bump, or fall</li> <li>•Loses consciousness (even briefly)</li> <li>•Shows behavior or personality changes</li> <li>•Forgets class schedule or assignments</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Thinking/Remembering:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Difficulty thinking clearly</li> <li>•Difficulty concentrating or remembering</li> <li>•Feeling more slowed down</li> <li>•Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Physical:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Headache or “pressure” in head</li> <li>•Nausea or vomiting</li> <li>•Balance problems or dizziness</li> <li>•Fatigue or feeling tired</li> <li>•Blurry or double vision</li> <li>•Sensitivity to light or noise</li> <li>•Numbness or tingling</li> <li>•Does not “feel right”</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Emotional:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Irritable</li> <li>•Sad</li> <li>•More emotional than usual</li> <li>•Nervous</li> </ul> <p><b><u>Sleep*:</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•Drowsy</li> <li>•Sleeps less than usual</li> <li>•Sleeps more than usual</li> <li>•Has trouble falling asleep</li> </ul> <p><i>*Only ask about sleep symptoms if the injury occurred on a prior day.</i></p>

#### LINKS TO OTHER RESOURCES

- CDC –Concussion in Sports
  - <http://www.cdc.gov/concussion/sports/index.html>
- National Federation of State High School Association/ Concussion in Sports - What You Need To Know
  - [www.nfhslearn.com](http://www.nfhslearn.com)
- Montana High School Association – Sports Medicine Page
  - <http://www.mhsa.org/SportsMedicine/Sport>

