

O'Neill Public School Activities Handbook



**Rules and Regulations
2025-2026**

Introduction

Student participation in extracurricular activities has been linked to improved attendance, higher academic achievement, and greater student self-confidence and self-esteem. O'Neill Public Schools provides students with the opportunity to participate in a comprehensive activities program that includes athletics, fine arts, and select clubs or organizations associated with academic areas.

Although the school district believes strongly in the value of student activities, participation in the activities program is a privilege, not a right. Students must obey the rules set out in this handbook and any additional rules created by their coach or activity sponsor. This handbook is advisory and does not create a "contract" with parents, students, or staff. The administration reserves the right to make decisions and make rule revisions at any time to implement the educational program and to assure the well-being of all students. The administration is responsible for interpreting the rules contained in the handbook. If a situation or circumstance arises that is not specifically covered in this handbook, the administration will make a decision based upon all applicable school district policies, and state and federal statutes and regulations.

Please read this handbook carefully. Students and their parents are responsible for complying with all of the rules and procedures detailed in this booklet.

Parents must sign the acknowledgement and permission to participate form at the end of this handbook before their student will be permitted to participate in the activity programs of the district.

The provisions in this handbook are subject to change at the sole discretion of the Board of Education. From time to time, you may receive updated information concerning changes in the handbook. These updates should be kept within the handbook so that it is up to date. If you have any questions regarding this handbook, please contact the Superintendent for assistance.

Table of Contents

Introduction	2
Notice of Discrimination	4
General Information about the Activities Program	5
Academic Eligibility	5
Attendance at Practices and Contests	5
Closings	5
Colors	5
Complaint Procedure	5
Concussion Awareness	6
Corrective Measures	7
Dances	7
Electronic Communication	8
Equipment	8
Fundraising	8
Individual Training Rules and Rules of Conduct	8
Initiations and Hazing	9
Injuries	9
Insurance	9
Lettering Requirements	9
Mascot	11
Practices	11
Secret Organizations	11
Student Manager, Helpers, or Activity Aids	12
Sunday and Wednesday Night Activities	12
Transportation	12
Weight Room	12
Available Activities	13
Code of Conduct	20
Authorization and Acknowledgement	27
Acknowledgement of Conduct Code	29

Notice of Discrimination

The school district does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The school district prohibits sex discrimination in any education program or activity in any education program or activity that it operates.

Students who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their disability, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the following Section 504 Coordinator: Jill Brodersen at 402-336-1544 (phone number), jillbrodersen@oneillschools.org (e-mail address) or in person at school.

Students who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their sex, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the following Title IX Coordinator: Nate Larsen at 402-336-1544 (phone number), natelarsen@oneillschools.org (e-mail address), 635 N 4th Street, O'Neill, NE 68763 (mailing address) or in person at school. The School District's specific Notice of Nondiscrimination on the Basis of Sex may be accessed at the following link: [Policy 3053 - Nondiscrimination](#)

Students who believe that they have been the subject of unlawful discrimination or harassment due to their race, color, or national origin, or that have other related concerns or questions, should contact the following Title VI Coordinator: Michael Rotherham at 402-336-3775 (phone number), mikerotherham@oneillschools.org (e-mail address), 635 N 4th Street, O'Neill, NE 68763 (mailing address) or in person at school.

Students who believe that they have been the subject of any other unlawful discrimination or harassment should contact the appropriate building principal in person at the school. Students may report discrimination or harassment to any staff member who will then forward it on to the appropriate coordinator or administrator. The staff member will follow school district policies to respond to the report.

For additional prohibited discrimination and related information, please review school district Policy 3053 – Nondiscrimination.

SECTION ONE

General Information about the Activities Program

Academic Eligibility

To be eligible to participate in the school's activity programs, each student must (1) meet Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA) requirements concerning scholastic eligibility, (2) meet the requirements of board policy including all rules applicable to the activity, and (3) have not less than a 59.5% grade in two or more classes for a period of one week to remain eligible to participate in any portion of the activities program. Students in grades 9-12 must be passing five classes for each grading period. Junior High students must be passing four classes, three of which must be core classes. Participants must attend practices and participate in all conditioning during any period of ineligibility.

The school district will notify a participant and his or her parents whenever the participant is declared academically ineligible.

Students may not participate in any activity, performance or practice while serving a short-term suspension, long-term suspension, or expulsion from school.

Attendance at Practices and Contests

Participants in the activities program are expected to attend and be on time at all practices and meetings scheduled by the coach or sponsor. Participants may be excused for absences resulting from a participant's illness, a death in the family, a doctor's appointment, a court appearance, or other absences that are arranged in advance. The coach, sponsor, or director of an activity may require a participant who has an excused absence to complete an alternate assignment for missing a practice, meeting, event, performance, or contest. A participant who is unable to attend a scheduled practice, meeting, or game must contact the coach or sponsor in advance. Students who are absent from school due to illness are not required to provide the coach or sponsor with additional notification of the student's absence from practice.

Students who are absent for more than half of the school day will not be permitted to practice or participate in an athletic contest or activity performance unless the student has the building principal's prior permission to participate despite the absence.

If a participant misses a scheduled contest or performance, the coach or sponsor may impose discipline up to and including suspension of the participant from the activity for the remainder of the season or length of the activity.

Closings

Unless the administration determines that it is permissible for the activity to continue as scheduled, all activities will be canceled or postponed in the event that school has been called off for inclement weather or any other reason as determined by the administration.

Colors

The School colors are royal blue and white.

Complaint Procedure

To reduce conflicts in the school's activities program, students and/or their parents should use the district's formal complaint procedure to manage conflicts about the program. The

complaint procedure is printed in the school's student handbook and may be found on the district's web site: <https://www.oneillpublicschools.org/>.

Concussion Awareness

The Nebraska Unicameral has found that concussions are one of the "most commonly reported injuries in children and adolescents who participate in sports and recreational activities and that the risk of catastrophic injury or death is significant when a concussion or brain injury is not properly evaluated and managed."

The School District will:

- a. Require all coaches and trainers to complete training course approved by the Chief Medical Officer on how to recognize the symptoms of a concussion or brain injury and how to seek proper medical treatment for a concussion or brain injury.
- b. On an annual basis provide concussion and brain injury information to students and their parents or guardians prior to such students initiating practice or competition. This information will include:
 1. The signs and symptoms of a concussion;
 2. The risks posed by sustaining a concussion; and
 3. The actions a student should take in response to sustaining a concussion, including the notification of his or her coaches.

A student who participates on a school athletic team must be removed from a practice or game when he/she is reasonably suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury in such practice or game after observation by a coach or a licensed health care professional who is professionally affiliated with or contracted by the school. The student will not be permitted to participate in any school supervised team athletic activities involving physical exertion, including practices or games, until the student:

- a. has been evaluated by a licensed healthcare professional;
- b. has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed healthcare professional; and
- c. has submitted the written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities to the school accompanied by written permission to resume participation from the student's parent or guardian.

If a student is reasonably suspected after observation of having sustained a concussion or brain injury and is removed from an athletic activity, the parent or guardian of the student will be notified by the school of:

- a. the date and approximate time of the injury suffered by the student,
- b. the signs and symptoms of a concussion or brain injury that were observed, and
- c. any actions taken to treat the student.

The school district will not provide for the presence of a licensed healthcare professional at any practice or game.

School officials shall deem the signature of an individual who represents that he/she is a licensed healthcare professional on a written clearance to resume participation that is provided to the school to be conclusive and reliable evidence that the individual who signed the clearance is a licensed healthcare professional. The school will not take any additional or independent steps to verify the individual's qualifications.

Corrective Measures

1st Offense: Exclusion from all scheduled interscholastic contests for a period of 21 calendar days. The suspension days shall start at the time that due process is administered and guilt is determined. The student would be allowed to practice during this time. ***Due process is the procedure used in determining the involvement of the student in question. This may involve an interview with the student and possibly interviews with others that have direct knowledge about the situation.

2nd Offense: Exclusion from all scheduled interscholastic contests for a period of 21 calendar days. The suspension days shall start at the time that due process is administered and guilt is determined. The student would be allowed to practice during this time.

If the student self-reports, the above penalty may be reduced to 14 days for the first such violation. Self-reporting must be completed by noon the following school day. Corrective measures for violation of training hours, practice attendance, failure to take part in a schedule contest, dress code, conduct and academic performance may include one or more of the following:

- Students shall be informed by the coach/sponsor to immediately comply with the regulation.
- Discipline by increased workout.
- Conference with the parents or guardians of the student.
- Students shall not take part in the next scheduled event.
- Will lose any, or all awards earned in the activity.
- Mandatory counseling for the student and/or parent.
- Dismissal as a member of the activity

Note: Suspension time will carry over to the next sport/activity if not in season. Suspension time will involve students missing a minimum of one event.

It should be noted that a violation of the rules could result in two or more of these corrective measures being applied. However, the gravity of the violation will determine the corrective measure(s) utilized. All proceedings concerning violations of the foregoing rules will be within the laws of the State of Nebraska, and the United States, the Nebraska School Activities Association rules and regulations and the O'Neill Public School Board of Education policies.

Dances

School dances are part of the district's extracurricular activity program. Students who wish to participate in school dances must comply with the activity code. Students may be prohibited from participating in school dances as a consequence for violating school rules or these activity rules.

Junior High School Dances

Junior high school (grades 7-8) dances are restricted to students currently enrolled in the junior high school and will be sponsored by junior high teachers and administration. Any organization wishing to sponsor a junior high dance must obtain permission from the principal regarding date and times. Each dance must be sponsored by at least two faculty members and one administrator. Once admitted to the dance, students must remain until the close of the dance. Students who leave the dance will not be readmitted. Students who are academically ineligible will not be allowed to attend school dances.

High School Dances

All high school dances are restricted to O'Neill High School students and their guests. Any organization wishing to sponsor a dance must obtain permission from the principal

regarding date and times. Each dance must be sponsored by at least two faculty members and one administrator. Once admitted to the dance, students must remain until the close of the dance. Students who leave the dance will not be readmitted. Students who are academically ineligible will not be allowed to attend school dances. Dances are for students in grades 9-12. Students may bring an out of town date but they must be at least a freshman in high school to a maximum of 19 years of age. Students must sign up their date/complete an out of town date form.

Homecoming, Frolics, and Prom

The Homecoming Dance is open to students and guests of O'Neill High School. The Homecoming Dance is for students of O'Neill High School or students who participate in O'Neill High School Fall activities. Non O'Neill High School students must sign up at the office.

Frolics and Junior/Senior Prom is open to students and guests of the O'Neill High School Junior and Senior classes. Guests must follow all rules that the students must follow. Each student is responsible for his/her guest's conduct. Appropriate attire is required for these dances. No blue jeans, shorts, or T-shirts will be allowed at the banquet or dances.

Electronic Communication

The school board supports the use of technology by coaches, extracurricular sponsors, and other staff members to communicate with students for legitimate educational, extracurricular, and other school-related purposes. However, electronic communication between students and teachers, sponsors, and coaches shall be appropriate at all times and shall not violate any law, district policies, or the Regulations and Standards for Professional Practices Criteria, commonly known as Rule 27 of the Nebraska Department of Education ("Rule 27"). Please see the Social Media Policy For School District Employees for further explanation.

Equipment

Each participant in the athletic portion of the activities program will be issued a locker to store his/her personal belongings and school equipment that has been checked out. Students should secure their athletic lockers with combination locks.

School-owned clothing or equipment that is checked out to individual students remains the property of the school. The clothing or equipment is not to be used or worn by the student except for the intended use. Each piece of equipment or clothing is to be returned to the instructor or coach when the season or the use for such clothing or equipment is over. Each participant is responsible for all equipment checked out to him/her. Students will be assessed the replacement cost for school equipment that has been checked out to him/her and is lost or stolen.

Fundraising

All school-sponsored fundraising activities must be approved by a member of the school district administration. Fundraising for any activity must comply with the district's policies, including applicable provisions specifically pertaining to Booster Clubs and PTOs for non-school-sponsored fundraising. Use of the school mascot shall not be permitted unless approved by the superintendent.

Individual Training Rules and Rules of Conduct

Head coaches or sponsors may develop additional training rules or rules of conduct for their activity. Students are responsible for knowing these rules and complying with them.

Initiations and Hazing

Initiations and hazing by members of classes, clubs, athletic teams, or any other organization affiliated with the district are prohibited except as otherwise permitted by this policy. Any student engaging in hazing or non-approved initiations is subject to discipline as permitted by policy and law.

Initiations are defined as any ritualistic expectations, requirements, or activities placed upon new members of a school organization for the purpose of admission into the organization, even if those activities do not rise to the level of "hazing" as defined below. Initiations are prohibited except by permission of the superintendent.

Hazing is defined as any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any school organization. Hazing activities include, but are not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, an act of sexual penetration, an exposure of the genitals of the body done with the intent to affront or alarm any person, a lewd fondling or caressing of the body of another person, forced and prolonged calisthenics, prolonged exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or harmful substance not generally intended for human consumption, prolonged sleep deprivation, or any brutal treatment or the performance of any unlawful act that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any person.

Injuries

Participants who suffer any type of injury while involved in extracurricular activities must notify the coach or sponsor immediately. The coach or sponsor will then evaluate the injury and, if necessary, notify the participant's parents or seek immediate medical treatment.

If at any time during participation a doctor removes an athlete from participation because of an illness or injury, the athlete must have a written release from a doctor before participating again. The written release must be given to the coach or sponsor of the activity.

Note: The release requirement will be satisfied if the initial doctor's order specifies the duration of the student's restriction from participation and/or competition. Also see Concussion Awareness above.

Insurance

The school district does not provide medical or other insurance coverage for students who participate in athletic contests or other activities. It is the parents' responsibility to provide adequate insurance to cover any medical expenses that may be incurred while the student is participating in athletics or other activities.

The school district makes an accident insurance plan available for purchase by participants and their families through an authorized insurance agent. Information about policies which families may purchase will be available prior to each sports season and at fall registration.

Lettering Requirements

The following guidelines will be used in determining student eligibility for lettering:

Football-

The athlete must participate in 40% of the varsity quarters, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Cross Country-

The athlete must meet one of the following criteria:

- 1) medal in three regular season varsity meets.
- 2) compete as a member of the varsity team at the conference meet.
- 3) compete as a member of the varsity team at the district or state meet.
- 4) and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Softball-

The athlete must participate in 40% of the varsity quarters, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Volleyball-

The athlete must participate in 25% of the total sets, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Girls Basketball-

The athlete must participate in 40% of the varsity quarters, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Boys Basketball-

The athlete must participate in 25% of the varsity quarters, complete the season in good standing with the team, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Golf-

The athlete must meet one of the five criteria:

- 1) participate in at least 1/3 of the varsity golf meets/duals.
- 2) be a participant of a team that places 1st, 2nd, or 3rd at a varsity tournament competing against 10 or more teams.
- 3) be a participant of a team that places 1st or 2nd at a varsity tournament competing against 9 or more teams.
- 4) Place as an individual medalist in a tournament.
- 5) Four year participating seniors may letter and all golfers must complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Track-

The athlete must accumulate a total of 100 points and finish the season. 10 pts per meet for participation in a varsity invite, 20 pts per meet for placing in a varsity invite (an invite involves four or more teams), 10 pts for working at the O'Neill JH Track Invite, 5-15 pts for the season of exhibiting a positive attitude and work ethic. Points may be earned for volunteer work during the season at coaches discretion and/or have the head coach's recommendation.

Wrestling-

The athlete must place in a Varsity tournament in which you have won at least two matches or win at least 15 matches at the varsity level, during the season. Athletes must complete the entire season in "good standing", be a positive influence, and have the recommendation of the head coach.

Student Managers-

The student manager must complete the season and have the recommendation of the head coach of the sport involved.

Vocal Music-

All vocal music students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to earn a varsity letter by earning 100 points. 20 points for the following: Selected for All-State, & lead role in

the Musical. 10 points for participation in the following: fall concert, Mid State Clinic, Veterans Day Concert, Winter Concert, District Music Contest, Spring Concert, small group/solo at District Music, selected for Honor Choir, participate in the Musical. 5 points for the following; Attend an outside concert, sing the national anthem for a sporting event, be selected for a solo in concert. In addition students receive points for grading: A=5 points, B=4 points, C=3 points, D=2 points, F=0 points. Small group/solo ratings: 1=20 points, 2=15 points, 3=10 points, 4 & 5 =5 points. Participants must attend all scheduled rehearsals, performances, and contests unless previously excused by the director.

Instrumental Music-

All band students in grades 9-12 have the opportunity to earn a varsity letter by earning 80 points. 10 points for participation in concert band (3 opportunities), 10 points for marching band (3 opportunities), and 10 points for the following: District Music large group, St. Pat's parade, District Music stage band, Stage Band Tour, Honor Bands, Conference Honor Band, Class B Honor Band, Musical Pit Band, NMEA All State Music Audition. 5 points for the following; Graduation, Veterans Day, District Music Solo, District Music Small Group, District Music Recital. 1 point for the following: Pep Band Nights & Summer Band Camp. Participants must demonstrate high quality rehearsal and performance habits, exhibit and encourage a positive attitude toward the music program, and demonstrate strong positive leadership skills. Participants must attend all scheduled rehearsals, performances, and contests unless previously excused by the director.

Speech-

Team members must earn 100 points during the season. Point breakdown is as follows: 2 points per practice attended, 2 points per team meeting, Placing at meets: 6th (1), 5th (2), 4th (4), 3rd (6), 2nd (8), 1st (10). Varsity medals are doubled at the end of the season. 2 points for earning a perfect score of 50, and 2 points for working a concession stand. Members must have the recommendation of the head coach.

One-Act Play-

The team member must attend all competitions, not miss more than two practices, contribute in ways that are productive and meaningful, complete the season, and/or have the recommendation of the head coach.

Mascot

The official emblem for boys' and girls' athletic teams is the eagle. The mascot cannot be used for non-school-sponsored purposes unless approved by the superintendent.

Practices

The individual head coach or sponsor, in cooperation with the high school activities director, will schedule all starting times of practice. All participants are expected to be ready at the time set by the coach or sponsor.

To be eligible to practice, a participant must satisfy the following requirements:

1. Submit to the coach or sponsor a signed physical form and NSAA participation form complete with a parents signature.

Secret Organizations

Secret organizations are prohibited. School officials shall not allow any person or representative of any such organization to enter upon school grounds or school buildings for

the purpose of rushing or soliciting students to participate in any secret fraternity, society, or association.

Student Manager, Helpers, or Activity Aids

Students wishing to serve as student volunteers for extracurricular activities must gain the permission of the activity coach or sponsor. Student volunteers must comply with all of the rules and procedures contained in this handbook.

Sunday and Wednesday Night Activities

In order to provide students sufficient time away from school for family-related activities, the school will endeavor not to schedule activities on Wednesday evenings or on Sundays. Practices will be organized so that all participants are showered, dressed, and/or leave the facilities by 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday nights. An exception to this guideline would be when a team, group of students, or an individual may be required to participate in an activity sponsored by the conference, district, or state on a Wednesday night.

The school does not allow Sunday practice sessions, except when a varsity team, group of students, or individual is scheduled to compete or perform on a Monday. Practices scheduled for a Sunday must have the prior approval of the activities director or building principal.

Transportation

All participants are expected to ride to and from away activities by means of approved school transportation.

A participant may ride home with his or her parent/guardian only if the parent/guardian personally contacts the sponsor at the activity. A participant may ride home with an adult if the participant's parent/guardian has personally contacted coach/sponsor and completed an Activities Travel Release form prior to the contest. Parents are discouraged from requesting to take their children home after an away contest or performance. Travel to and from an event provides time for the students to further develop a strong team concept.

Weight Room

The weight room has been developed to help each athlete, student, or adult in the community maintain a level of physical fitness. No one may use the weight room or equipment without proper supervision. The school will develop a schedule for use of the weight room by athletes during the school year and during the summer months.

The weight room is a high demand area within the school facilities. The following guidelines will help determine the priorities in reference to use if more than one group desires to use the facility at the same time:

1. Physical education instruction
2. By the team sports, which are in season
3. Conditioning programs for athletes not currently out for a sport
4. Summer conditioning programs
5. Adult education

SECTION TWO

Available Activities

ACTIVITY CREDITS/ORGANIZATIONS/CLUBS

School Board Policy requires every student to accumulate five (5) activity credits for graduation. These credits will not be waived. Following is a list of school activities and the number of credits that can be earned through participation. The earning of activity credits begins with the 9th grade.

<u>ACTIVITY</u>	<u>SPONSOR</u>	<u>CREDITS PER YEAR</u>
Athletics	N/A	2 ½ per sport/max 5 credits
Choir	Chad Dean	2 ½ credits
Dance Team	Tiffani Shoemaker	2 ½ credits
Eagle Eye Broadcasting	Emily Morrow	2 ½ credits
FCCLA	Angie Ehlers	2 ½ credits
FFA	Bailee Dougherty	2 ½ credits
Fine Arts Club	Kendra Vanderbeek	2 ½ credits
Musical	M. Huber/T. Shoemaker	2 ½ credits
National Honor Society	T. Brown/B. Kelly	2 ½ credits
"O" Club	Nate Larsen	2 ½ credits
One-Act Play	Kendra Vanderbeek	2 ½ credits
Pep Band	Chad Dean	2 ½ credits
Quiz Bowl	Casey Petersen	2 ½ credits
Robotics	Simonson/Kruse	2 ½ credits
Speech Team	Kendra Vanderbeek	2 ½ credits
Student Council	Reinhardt-Sigler	2 ½ credits
Yearbook	Katie Oberle	2 ½ credits

Athletics

Sport

Basketball - Boys
Basketball - Girls
Cross Country
Football
Golf - Boys
Golf - Girls
Softball
Track - Boys
Track - Girls
Unified Sports
Volleyball
Wrestling - Boys
Wrestling - Girls

Coach

Seth Kallhoff
Brock Eichelberger
Cole Hilker
Brock Eichelberger
Greg Buller
Ashley Belmer
Alex Miller
Cole Hilker
Seth Ehlers
Casey Petersen
Lynae Hilker
Bryan Corkle
Zac Kliment

Basketball (Boys)

Boys basketball is offered to both junior and senior high students at O'Neill Public School. The junior high play approx. 8 regular season games and a season ending area tournament. The senior high season starts in November and sub-district play begins in late February. Our high school program includes a varsity schedule (18 games), a Holiday Tournament, and a Mid-State Conference Tournament; a Junior Varsity schedule (18 games); and a "C" team schedule (9 games and 1 tournament). O'Neill's basketball team emphasizes the importance of teamwork, discipline and hard work as we strive to attain team and personal goals.

Basketball (Girls)

Girls basketball is offered to both junior and senior high students at O'Neill Public School. (The junior high program begins in mid-October and ends before Christmas break.) The senior high season starts in November and sub-district play begins in late February. Our high school program includes a varsity schedule (18 games), junior varsity schedule (14 games), and a "C" team schedule. O'Neill Eagle basketball emphasizes the importance of teamwork, discipline and hard work as we strive to attain team and personal goals.

Cross Country

The O'Neill High School cross country program consists of boys and girls in grades 7-12. The season starts in mid-August and concludes in mid-October. There are approximately eight (8) scheduled meets with distances of 3.1 miles for both girls and boys. Junior High competitors run a distance of 1.25 miles. Runners are in periodic training throughout the year with the purpose of the program being to develop running and competitive ability.

Football

Football is offered to athletes from the junior high to senior high levels. The objective of the program is to help the athlete develop mentally, physically, and morally. These objectives will be met by placing emphasis on discipline and self-confidence, physical conditioning and skill development, and above all else, sportsmanship, integrity and teamwork.

Golf (Boys)

Golf is a lifetime sport. Emphasis will be placed on preparing students to play competitively although all golfers will be taught the basic skills of golf along with the rules, terms, and proper etiquette. Students will find that golf helps build one's character by placing emphasis on honesty, perseverance, and self-control. All golfers will play qualifying rounds in order to play on varsity and reserve levels. Students should provide their own golf clubs. Golf team members are guests of the O'Neill Golf Course during the golf season. Team meetings will begin the first week of March. Golfers will take a golf test on rules and etiquette before playing on the course. Indoor practices will be held prior to outdoor practice at the country club. All boys 9-12 are eligible to participate.

Golf (Girls)

Girls golf is a fall sport that is offered to all girls in grades 9-12. Golf is truly a sport for a lifetime that affords its participants the opportunity for freedom of expression and teaches self-control and self-discipline. It also provides each individual the chance to be involved in a competitive team sport as well as competing on an individual basis. Golf is a sport that does not discriminate against an individual

because of size or physical capabilities. Students who compete on the girls golf team will be taught the rules of the game and the technique for improving their golf skills. This program will emphasize honesty, integrity, mannerly behavior, and enjoyment of the sport.

Softball

Softball is a fall sport that is offered to all girls in grades 9-12. The team plays approximately 30 varsity games and 8 to 10 JV games. Games begin in late August and District play begins in early October. The girls' softball program gives the student athlete an opportunity to develop self-confidence, practice good sportsmanship and learn about teamwork.

Track (Boys)

Track at O'Neill is a spring sport that offers the individual athlete an opportunity to better himself physically. The most important point of emphasis is to instill the feeling of accomplishment. This is accomplished by allowing all athletes on all levels to work to their ability. The coaching staff strives for self-discipline. That is, if an athlete can discipline himself, no one will have to discipline him. Track will only help the athlete who is willing to help himself. By season's end, our goal is for all athletes to fit this description. Training rules are mandatory. We encourage anyone willing to better himself through hard work and discipline to compete in this spring sport. NOTE: All state track events are offered at O'Neill (running, jumping, throwing, etc....). We offer one of the finest facilities in the area. The coaching staff is dedicated to helping the student athlete make himself a better competitor.

Track (Girls)

Girls track is offered to athletes in grades 7-12. The objective of the program is to help the athlete develop mentally, physically, and morally. These objectives will be met by placing emphasis on discipline and self-confidence, physical conditioning and skill development, and above all else, sportsmanship, integrity, and teamwork. Varsity practice begins in March, while the junior high season begins at the beginning of April.

Unified Sports (Bowling & Track)(Coed)

Unified sports are dedicated to promoting social inclusion through shared sports training and competition experiences, Unified Sports® joins people with and without intellectual disabilities on the same team. It was inspired by a simple principle: training together and playing together is a quick path to friendship and understanding. Having sport in common is just one more way that preconceptions and false ideas are swept away. Unified Bowling practice will begin in mid to late October with the state tournament taking place in early December. Unified Track practice will begin with all spring sports practices with the state meeting taking place in mid to late May.

Volleyball

Volleyball is conducted in the fall. The high school teams start practice approximately one week before school begins. Junior High teams usually begin practice the first day of school.

The varsity team is made up of the best 12-14 players in grades 9-12. The junior varsity and "C" teams will consist of the next best players.

Games are held during the week, usually on Tuesday and Thursday. The varsity also competes in Saturday tournaments.

Wrestling (Girls & Boys)

Varsity wrestling is for grades 9-12. The wrestlers will compete in tournaments and duals. The weight classifications allow athletes of various sizes to compete effectively. There are 14 weight classes for both varsity and junior varsity so all participants will have many opportunities to compete. Junior High wrestling is designed to teach the athlete basic wrestling moves. Wrestlers will compete in tournaments and duals. The season runs from mid-October to Christmas vacation.

Activities

Band

The school district sponsors marching band, pep band, and jazz band in addition to concert band. Participants must be enrolled in band class in order to be eligible to participate in these groups.

When a student is accepted into the band program, he/she is automatically a member of the concert band, marching band and pep band. Pep band begins during winter sport season. The students perform pop and current music before games and during half time. The marching band performs during programs and half time for all home football games. They also compete in marching contests in the fall.

The Junior High band is primarily a concert band. They present two concerts a year, one during Christmas and the other in the spring. The band performs a wide variety of music as the students prepare themselves for entrance into the high school band.

Dance Team

The Dance Team consists of students in grades 9-12 who are selected during a spring audition. A combination of pom routines and dances are performed during the half-time of the boys' basketball games.

Eagle Eye Broadcasting

Eagle Eye Broadcasting is a student broadcasting activity that covers live events for O'Neill Junior-Senior High School. Students are exposed to current technology related to the broadcasting of live events and the preparation needed to accomplish this successfully.

This activity is open to all students in grades 7-12 who are interested in live broadcasting. Students will gain "real-world" broadcasting skills by covering live events including, but not limited to: sporting events, music programs, fine arts performances and graduation. Most of the events covered will be in O'Neill, but there may be opportunities to cover events in other towns.

Family Career and Community Leadership of America (FCCLA)

Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America is a national student organization. It was developed to help youth assume their roles in society through Family & Consumer Science Education in areas of personal growth, family life, vocational preparation, and community involvement. Membership is open to both boys and girls in grades 7-12 who are taking or have taken a course in family and consumer science.

The O'Neill FCCLA Chapter has monthly meetings, normally the first Monday of each month. They also carry on various projects to aid the membership, the school, and the community. Some of these projects include: Homecoming project to develop and encourage school spirit, Frolics, FCCLA week observances, and attending district, state, and national conferences.

The competition component of FCCLA is STAR--Students Taking Action with Recognition. These events involve district, state, and in some cases, national competition.

All students are encouraged to join the organization. Questions should be addressed to any FCCLA chapter officer, member or advisor.

Future Farmers of America (FFA)

FFA is an integral part of the agricultural education department and all students of that department are urged to belong. The activities include training in leadership, opportunities for travel and recreation, and safety and community service activities. Students may participate in field trips, conventions, judging contests, and hands-on experience.

"O" Club

"O" Club is an organization of O'Neill High School students who have lettered in a varsity sport either as an athlete, student manager, or cheerleader. Lettering criteria is established by the head coach in each sport. Members must remain current in their lettered sport. Students who letter during the current year are encouraged to sign up for "O" Club in the AD's office.

The purpose of the club is to maintain the highest possible standard in athletics, to foster school spirit and sportsmanship, to promote pride in athletes, to develop high moral character, and to further cooperation among the student body, faculty, and community. Activity credit will be awarded to members who fulfill the service requirements of the organization. This organization plans one fun trip per year. Those members who have completed their service requirements and maintained the ideals of the club listed above are eligible to attend.

Fine Arts Club

Fine Arts Club is an organization for students involved in all aspects of the arts. The purpose of the organization is to foster pride in artistic endeavors, to reach out to the community, to encourage artistic awareness and support. The year culminates in a Fine Arts Night, which showcases and honors outstanding performances from throughout the year.

Musical

Any student in good academic standing in O'Neill High School may audition for the cast/chorus of the musical. It can be beneficial for a student interested in a role with solos to be in choir, but it is not required.

Auditions are held from eight to ten weeks before the show date. Students who wish to be considered for a major role need to have both a reading and vocal audition. Cast/chorus is selected from performances at the auditions and upon their availability for rehearsals.

Rehearsals are held in the mornings and evenings and on Saturday as needed. Cast and chorus start rehearsals after casting. The final 2-3 weeks before the show, full

cast and crew are needed regularly at all rehearsals.

Musical work crews are needed in the following areas: poster delivery, programs, scenery, costumes, properties, makeup, lights, and sound and stage crews. To be on a crew, the student turns in an interest form, from which they are selected. The only unlimited crew is sets. Musical preparation is outside the school day.

National Honor Society

The National Honor Society is a national organization that recognizes student character, scholarship, leadership, and service to the school.

Membership in the local chapter is an honor bestowed upon a student. Selection for membership is by a faculty council and is based on outstanding scholarship, character, leadership, and service. Once selected, members have the responsibility to continue to demonstrate these qualities. Students will become eligible to apply for membership in the second semester of their sophomore year. The results of the selection will be announced at an honors convocation.

One-Act Play

The One-Act Play is a play presented for District One-Act Contest and judged on performance and artistic merit. The contest is generally held the first week in December. Tryouts will be held about three (3) months prior to the contest. Rehearsals will be from one to one and a half hours in length, some longer as needed. It will be necessary for all participants to attend practices. The one act production will also include stage crew members consisting of set designers, sound and lighting engineers, and make-up artists. Commitment to the play is extremely important in order to produce a quality performance. For this reason, if a student misses too many rehearsals, an understudy will be appointed to replace that student.

Quiz Bowl

Quiz Bowl Team members participate in Jeopardy style contests involving questions over a broad range of topics. There are roughly 6 contests during the winter season. Practice generally starts in late November or early December and continues throughout the season. Practice is generally held after school; however, arrangements may be made to accommodate student schedules.

Robotics

Team(s) of highly motivated students with an interest in technology and competitions. Teams will assemble robots, operate and develop programming and logical skills. A series of competitions are held in the spring.

Speech Team

Speech Team members prepare material to be presented at Speech contests. Team as well as individual scoring is awarded. Categories include: Humorous and Serious Prose, Poetry, Persuasive, Informative, Entertainment, Extemporaneous, Duet Acting, and Oral Interpretation of Drama. There are 5-6 invitational meets, District and State meets throughout January, February, and March. Practice generally starts the first week of December and continues throughout the season. Practice is generally held after school; however, arrangements may be made to accommodate student schedules.

Student Council

The purpose of the Student Council is to assist the members in developing their leadership skills. The council also provides a means of communication between the

students and the administration. Another function of the council is to provide service to the school and community. Membership on the council is determined in this manner: one representative is chosen from each recognized organization and two representatives are chosen from each grade, 7 through 12. Representatives must maintain a 2.0 GPA. The executive officers of the Student Council shall consist of a President, Vice-President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Qualifications of Officers:

1. A student eligible for an executive office on the Student Council must maintain a 2.0 cumulative GPA and have no permanent failures from the previous semester.
2. The President must be a Senior and of good moral character. The President cannot be president in other organizations.
3. The Vice-President must be a Senior or Junior and of good moral character.
4. The Secretary and Treasurer may be a Sophomore, Junior or Senior and of good moral character.
5. A student cannot hold an executive office in another student organization.

Yearbook and Journalism

Staff members for the high school yearbook responsibilities are to research, draft, and publish school related articles and manage images for those publications. Image management responsibilities include, but are not limited to, photographing school events, assisting with and managing photo uploads to yearbook creation software, helping with design decisions, and selling books to fund the program.

SECTION THREE

Code of Conduct

All students associated with O'Neill Public Schools and participating in extracurricular or school sponsored activities (including all NSAA activities) are required to avoid conduct that is detrimental to the integrity of, and public confidence in, the school. Rules promoting lawful, ethical, and responsible conduct serve the interests of all people associated with the school. Illegal and irresponsible conduct puts people at risk, tarnishes the reputation of the offender and everyone else associated with the school, and undermines the public support and respect of the school district.

Standard of Conduct. Participation in school-sponsored or extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right. Participants must follow board policy, this code, and all the training rules and rules of conduct of the coaches and/or activity sponsors. Students participating in school-sponsored or extracurricular activities are held to a high standard. Students are expected to conduct themselves in a way that is lawful, responsible, promotes the values upon which the school is based, and that brings credit to themselves and the school. Students who fail to live up to the required standard of conduct are guilty of detrimental conduct and subject to discipline under all school policies, the general student code of conduct, and these Activity Participation Rules.

Coach and Sponsor Rules. Coaches and/or activity sponsors shall establish training rules or rules of conduct for participation in or attendance at the activity or event. General training rules or rules of conduct shall be established prior to the activity or event. This Code shall control in the event that there is a conflict with coach or sponsor rules.

Prohibited Conduct. Students in school-sponsored and/or extracurricular activities may not engage in the following conduct:

1. Receipt of a criminal citation by law enforcement for any reason.
2. Conviction of a crime in adult court or the adjudication of a criminal charge in juvenile court.
3. Any behavior that is illegal under the laws of Nebraska or the United States of America regardless of whether it results in a criminal charge or conviction.
4. Any conduct that substantially interferes with the educational process or disrupts the activity or event.
5. Possession, consumption, use, distribution, or being under the influence of alcohol, illicit drugs, tobacco, controlled substances, or any lookalike or imitations thereof; or being in the presence of alcohol, illicit drugs, controlled substances, or any lookalike or imitations thereof that are being possessed, consumed, used, or distributed by any person under twenty-one (21) years of age without parental supervision. "Lookalike or imitations" means substances such as K2 and products like electronic nicotine delivery systems, vapor pens, etc. (Note: the term "under the influence" for school purposes has a less strict meaning than it does under criminal law; for school purposes, the term means any level of impairment and includes even the odor of alcohol on the breath or person of a student; also, it includes being impaired by reason of the use or abuse of any substance for the purpose of inducing a condition of intoxication, stupefaction, depression, giddiness, paralysis, inebriation, excitement, or irrational behavior, or in any manner changing, distorting, or disturbing the auditory, visual, mental, or nervous processes).

6. Engaging in initiations, defined as any ritualistic expectations, requirements, or activities placed upon new members of a school organization for the purpose of admission into the organization, even if those activities do not rise to the level of "hazing" as defined below. Initiations are prohibited except by permission of the superintendent.
7. Engaging in hazing as defined by state law and this policy. Hazing is defined as any activity by which a person intentionally or recklessly endangers the physical or mental health or safety of an individual for the purpose of initiation into, admission into, affiliation with, or continued membership in any school organization. Under state criminal law, hazing activities include, but are not limited to, whipping, beating, branding, an act of sexual penetration, an exposure of the genitals of the body done with the intent to affront or alarm any person, a lewd fondling or caressing of the body of another person, forced and prolonged calisthenics, prolonged exposure to the elements, forced consumption of any food, liquor, beverage, drug, or harmful substance not generally intended for human consumption, prolonged sleep deprivation, or any brutal treatment or the performance of any unlawful act that endangers the physical or mental health or safety of any person. For purposes of school rules, hazing also includes any activity expected of someone joining a group, team, or activity that humiliates, degrades or risks emotional and/or physical harm, regardless of the person's willingness to participate; personal servitude; restrictions on personal hygiene; yelling, swearing and insulting new members/rookies; being forced to wear embarrassing or humiliating attire in public; consumption of vile substances or smearing of such on one's skin; binge drinking and drinking games; sexual simulation and sexual assault.
8. Bullying which shall include cyber-bullying, defined as the use of the internet, including but not limited to social networking sites such as Facebook, cell phones or other devices to send, post, or text message images and material intended to hurt or embarrass another person. This may include, but is not limited to; continuing to send e-mail to someone who has said they want no further contact with the sender; sending or posting threats, sexual remarks, or pejorative labels (i.e., hate speech); ganging up on victims by making them the subject of ridicule in forums; posting false statements as fact intended to humiliate the victim; disclosure of personal data, such as the victim's real name, address, or school at websites or forums; posing as the identity of the victim for the purpose of publishing material in their name that defames or ridicules them; sending threatening and harassing text, instant messages, or emails to the victims; and posting or sending rumors or gossip to instigate others to dislike and gang up on the target.
9. Using any Internet or social networking websites to make statements, post pictures, or take any other actions that are indecent, vulgar, lewd, slanderous, abusive, threatening, harassing, or terrorizing.
10. Violating any school policy, handbook provision, or a coach's or activity sponsor's training rules or rules of conduct.
11. Dressing or grooming in a manner which is (A) dangerous to the student's health and safety or a danger to the health and safety of others, (B) lewd, indecent, vulgar, or plainly offensive, (C) materially and substantially disruptive to the work and discipline of the school or an extracurricular activity, (D) interpreted to advocate the use of illegal drugs or other substances by a reasonable observer.
12. Failing to report for an activity at the beginning of a season unless excused by the coach or activity sponsor.

13. Failing to attend scheduled practices and meetings unless excused by the coach or activity sponsor.

School Year: Such conduct is prohibited during the school year, regardless of whether it occurs on-campus or off-campus. School year means the period commencing on the first day of fall sports practice through the last day of spring sports practice, events, or attendance at school for a given school year.

Discipline. Students who violate any provision of these Activity Participation Rules may be subject to discipline up to and including expulsion from extracurricular activities and school sponsored events. (including but not limited to graduation ceremonies and related activities). These disciplinary consequences and this Activity Code of Conduct are in addition to and do not prejudice, diminish, impede, or reduce any discipline that is authorized by the Nebraska Student Discipline Act, NEB. REV. STAT. §§ 79-254 to 79-294, Board Policy, or the Student Handbook. Disciplinary action may include a probationary period and conditions that must be satisfied prior to or following reinstatement. Administrators and coaches will take the following into consideration when making disciplinary decisions:

1. Any prior or additional misconduct;
2. The nature and seriousness of the offense;
3. The motivation for the offense;
4. The amount of violence involved;
5. The student's demeanor and attitude regarding the violation;
6. The actual, threatened, or potential risk to the student and others due to the student's behavior;
7. Whether the student has compensated or will compensate the victim in the event of property damage or personal injury;
8. Whether the circumstances of the violation are likely to recur;
9. The student's willingness to participate in evaluations, counseling, or other programs;
10. Any mitigating factors;
11. Any other relevant factors.

If suspended, the student must continue to participate in practices and conditioning during the suspension if required by the coach or activity sponsor. The failure to comply with the practice and conditioning requirement will make the student ineligible for reinstatement to the activity.

Evaluation, Counseling, and Treatment. Apart from any other disciplinary procedures, students who violate any provision of these rules may be required to undergo a formal clinical evaluation at the administration's/coach's/sponsor's discretion. Based upon the results of that evaluation, the student may be encouraged or required to participate in an education program, counseling, or other treatment deemed appropriate by the evaluating professional.

Reporting of Incident. Students shall report any violation of these rules to the coach, principal, or superintendent no later than 30 minutes after the beginning of the next school day after the violation has occurred. Failure to report an incident will constitute a violation of these rules and will be taken into consideration in making disciplinary determinations under this policy.

Discipline Procedures. Prior to any disciplinary action under this activities code, the following procedures shall be followed:

As used in this "Discipline Procedures" section, "Investigator" means the coach or activity sponsor of the team or activity in which the student is participating, or any teacher, school official, or school representative whom the Principal or the Superintendent has authorized to perform the duties and responsibilities of "Investigator" as described below.

1. The Investigator shall make an investigation of alleged violation and provide an opportunity for the student to present his or her version of the facts surrounding the alleged violation.
2. The Investigator shall consider all information obtained as a result of the investigation, including information obtained from the student, and shall render a decision regarding disciplinary action. Within a reasonable period of time of the Investigator's decision, the student and his/her parent or guardian shall be given written notice of the disciplinary action taken by the Investigator.

Review of Investigator's Decision. A student or the student's parents may, within five (5) school days of the notice of disciplinary action from the Investigator, notify the superintendent in writing of their request for a review of the coach or activity sponsor's determination. The superintendent or his or her designee shall review the situation and render a decision within three (3) school days from the date of the request for review. The superintendent's decision shall be in writing and shall be final.

Misrepresentations. Any misrepresentation of fact by a student regarding any alleged violation of these rules shall be considered a separate violation of these rules, and the student shall be subject to additional disciplinary action.

Questions. Any parent or student who has questions about board policy, this code, training rules, or rules of conduct of coaches or activity sponsors, or their interpretation or application shall consult with the activities director and/or the superintendent.

Assistance. Students are encouraged to consult with their coach, an administrator, a counselor, or a teacher to obtain access to educational, counseling, and other programs and resources that may be available to help avoid misconduct that may result in discipline under this policy.

A Parent's Guide to Concussions

WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. An athlete does not have to lose consciousness ("knocked-out") to suffer a concussion.

CONCUSSION FACTS

- It is estimated that more than 140,000 high school athletes across the United States suffer a concussion each year. (Data from NFHS Injury Surveillance System).

- Concussions occur most frequently in football, but girl's lacrosse, girls' soccer, boy's lacrosse, wrestling, and girls' basketball follow closely behind. All athletes are at risk.
- A concussion is a traumatic injury to the brain.
- Concussion symptoms may last from a few days to several months.
- Concussions can cause symptoms that interfere with school, work, and social life.
- Athletes who have symptoms from a concussion should not return to sports because they are still at risk for prolonging symptoms and further injury.
- A concussion may cause multiple symptoms. Many symptoms appear immediately after the injury, while others may develop over the next several days or weeks. The symptoms may be subtle and are often difficult to fully recognize.

WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF A CONCUSSION?

<u>Signs Observed by Parents or Guardians</u>	<u>Symptoms Reported by Athlete</u>
• 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	• Headache or "pressure" in head • Nausea or vomiting • Balance problems or dizziness • Double or blurry vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy • Concentration or memory problems • Confusion • Does not "feel right"

WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK MY CHILD HAS HAD A CONCUSSION?

An athlete who is suspected of having a concussion must be removed from play immediately, whether it is in a game or practice. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk of further injury, and even death. Parents and coaches are not expected to be able to "diagnose" a concussion, as that is the job of a medical professional. However, they must be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and if they are suspicious, the child must stop playing:

WHEN IN DOUBT – SIT THEM OUT!

Every athlete who sustains a concussion needs to be evaluated by a health care professional who is familiar with sports concussions. Parents should call their child's physician, explain what has happened, and follow the physician's instructions. A child who is vomiting, has a severe headache, or has difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions should be taken to the parent's doctor or emergency room immediately.

WHEN MAY AN ATHLETE RETURN TO PLAY FOLLOWING A CONCUSSION?

No athlete who has suffered a concussion should return to play or practice the same day. Previously, athletes were allowed to return to play if their symptoms resolved within 15 minutes of the injury. Studies have shown that the young brain does not recover quickly enough for an athlete to return to activity in such a short time.

Concerns about athletes who return to play too quickly have led state lawmakers in Oregon and Washington to pass laws stating that **no athlete shall return to play on the day he or she suffered a concussion and the athlete must be cleared by an appropriate health care professional before he or she are allowed to return to play in games or practices.** The laws also mandate that coaches receive education on recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion.

Once an athlete is free of symptoms of a concussion and is cleared to return to play by a healthcare professional knowledgeable in the care of sports concussions, he or she should proceed with activity in a step-wise fashion to allow the brain to readjust to exertion. On average, the athlete will complete a new step each day. The return-to-play schedule should proceed as below following medical clearance:

- Step 1:* Light exercise, including walking or riding an exercise bike. No weight-lifting.
- Step 2:* Running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
- Step 3:* Non-contact training drills in full equipment. Weight training can begin.
- Step 4:* Full contact practice or training.
- Step 5:* Game play.

If symptoms occur at any step, the athlete should cease activity and be re-evaluated by a health care provider.

HOW CAN A CONCUSSION AFFECT SCHOOLWORK?

Following a concussion, many athletes will have difficulty in school. These problems may last from days to months and often involve difficulties with short and long-term memory, concentration, and organization.

In many cases, it is best to reduce the athlete's class load after the injury. This may include staying home from school for a few days, followed by a lightened schedule for a few days or perhaps a longer period of time if needed. Decreasing the stress on the brain soon after a concussion may reduce symptoms and shorten the recovery period.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

- Both you and your child should learn to recognize the "Signs and Symptoms" of a concussion as listed above.
- Emphasize to administrators, coaches, teachers, and other parents your concerns and expectations about concussion and safe play.
- Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she experiences such symptoms.
- Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she suspects that a teammate has a concussion.
- Monitor sports equipment for safety, fit, and maintenance.
- Ask teachers to monitor any decrease in grades or changes in behavior that could indicate concussion.

- Report concussions that occurred during the school year to appropriate school staff. This will help in monitoring injured athletes as they move to the next season's sports.

OTHER FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS:

Why is it so important that an athlete not return to play until they have completely recovered from a concussion?

An athlete who has not fully recovered from an initial concussion is very vulnerable to recurrent, cumulative, and even catastrophic consequences of a second concussive injury. Such difficulties are prevented if the athlete is allowed time to recover from the concussion and return-to-play decisions are carefully made. No athlete should return to sport or other at-risk participation when symptoms of a concussion are present and recovery is ongoing.

Is a "CT scan" or MRI needed to diagnose a concussion?

Diagnostic testing which includes CT ("CAT") and MRI scans are rarely needed following a concussion. While these are helpful in identifying life-threatening brain injuries (e.g., skull fracture, bleeding, swelling), they are not normally used, even by athletes who have sustained severe concussions. A concussion is diagnosed based upon the athlete's story of the injury and the health care provider's physical examination.

What is the best treatment to help my child recover more quickly from a concussion?

The best treatment for a concussion is rest. There are no medications that can speed the recovery from a concussion. Exposure to loud noises, bright lights, computers, video games, television, and phones (including text messaging) may exacerbate the symptoms of a concussion. You should allow your child to rest as much as possible in the days following a concussion. As the symptoms decrease, you may allow increased use of computers, phone, video games, etc., but the access must be reduced if symptoms worsen.

How long do the symptoms of a concussion usually last?

The symptoms of a concussion will usually go away within one week of the initial injury. You should anticipate that your child will likely be out of sports for about two weeks following a concussion. However, in some cases, symptoms may last for several weeks or even months. Symptoms such as headache, memory problems, poor concentration, and mood changes can interfere with school, work, and social interactions. The potential for such long-term symptoms indicates the need for careful management of all concussions.

How many concussions can an athlete have before he or she should stop playing sports?

There is no "magic number" of concussions that determine when an athlete should give up playing contact or collision sports. The circumstances surrounding each individual injury, such as the way the injury happened and length of symptoms following the concussion are very important and must be considered when assessing the athlete's risk for further and potentially more serious concussions. The decision to "retire" from sports is a decision best reached following a complete evaluation by your child's primary care provider and consultation with a physician or neuropsychologist who specializes in treating sports concussion.

I've read recently that concussions may cause long-term brain damage in professional football players. Is this a risk for high school athletes who have had a concussion?

The issue of "chronic encephalopathy" in several former NFL players has received a great deal of media attention lately. Very little is known about what may be causing dramatic abnormalities in the brains of these unfortunate retired football players. At this time, we have very little knowledge of the long-term effects of concussions that happen during high school athletics.

In the cases of the retired NFL players, it appears that most had long careers in the NFL after playing in high school and college. In most cases, they played football for over 20 years and suffered multiple concussions in addition to hundreds of other blows to their heads. Alcohol and steroid use may also be contributing factors in some cases. Obviously, the average high school athlete does not come close to suffering the total number or sheer force of head trauma seen by professional football players. However, the fact that we know very little about the long-term effects of concussions in young athletes is further reason to carefully manage each concussion.

Adapted from A Parent's Guide to Concussion in Sports, National Federation of High School Associations.

Some of this information has been adapted from the CDC's "Heads Up: Concussion in High School Sports" materials by the NFHS's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee. Please go to www.cdc.gov/ncipc/tbi/Coaches_Tool_Kit.htm for more information.

Authorization and Acknowledgement

WARNING: SERIOUS CATASTROPHIC AND PERHAPS FATAL INJURY MAY RESULT FROM ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

Many forms of athletic competition result in violent physical contact among players, the use of equipment that may result in accidents, strenuous physical exertion, and numerous other exposures to risk of injury. Students and parents must assess the risks involved in such participation and make their choice to participate in spite of those risks. No amount of instruction, precaution, or supervision will eliminate these risks. Students have suffered accidents resulting in death, paraplegia, quadriplegia, and other very serious permanent physical impairment while playing sports. By granting permission for your student to participate in athletic competition, you, the parent or guardian, acknowledge that such risk exists. Students will be instructed in proper techniques to be used in athletic competition and in the proper utilization of all equipment worn or used in practice and competition. Students must adhere to that instruction and utilization and must refrain from improper uses and techniques.

I understand the statement above and I understand that by allowing my student to participate in athletic events, I assume the risk that he/she may be injured, perhaps severely.

Signature of Parent

Printed Name of Parent

Date

Acknowledgement of Conduct Code

I understand that as a student representing the school district in activities, I am obligated to comply with the athletic handbook, including the code of conduct. **This means that I may not possess, use, or be at parties in the presence of alcohol, illicit drugs, or controlled substances at any time during the school term.** I understand that if I violate the code of conduct or other rules in this handbook, I may be suspended from participation in all co-curricular activities and/or school sponsored activities or events.

Signature of Student

Printed Name of Student

Date

I understand that my student is obligated by this handbook, including the statements above.

Signature of Parent

Printed Name of Parent

Date