

JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL

ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK



“HOME OF THE THUNDERBIRDS”

2017-2018

**JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL
MIDDLE AND HIGH SCHOOL
ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK
2017-2018
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Acknowledgement of Receipt Form

Request for Record Release for Academic All-State

Section 1 Extracurricular Programs

Students are encouraged to participate in those activities and organizations which meet their needs and interests. These activities give the student additional opportunities to develop skills in leadership and cooperation with other people. All students interested in participating in the activities program should contact the sponsors of the activity or the Activities Director. Extracurricular programs enrich the curriculum of the school by making available a wide variety of activities in which a student can participate. Johnson County Central Public Schools will adhere to the rules and regulations set forth in Title IX guidelines on sex discrimination as well as other pertinent rules and regulations.

Golf	Cross Country	Football	Volleyball
Basketball	Wrestling	Track	Cheerleader
National Honor Society	Quiz Bowl	JCC-Club	FFA
Academic Decathlon	Instrumental Music	Speech	Drama
Vocal Music	FBLA	Art Club	Soccer
Student Council	Musical	Annual	Bowling

Section 2 Activity 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 Athletic Director's office the following:

- A. Completed physical form
- B. Parental consent to participate
- C. Parent confirmation of insurance coverage

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. In addition, the District requires that activity team members travel to and from out-of-town events as a unit. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by both the parents and the coach/sponsor and should be done in writing prior to the departure to the event. The note should be given to the

Principal. If a parent wishes to take their student with them after an event the parent has to sign out the student from the sponsor/coach. Only those people involved with the activity will be allowed to travel in the school vehicle.

Warning for Participants and Parents

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.

Section 3: Activity Code of Conduct

This activity code of conduct is supplemental to the Johnson County Central Public Schools student code of conduct which is in Article 8 of the Student Handbook and any action taken hereunder may be in addition to any action under the student code of conduct said policy.

Grounds for Extracurricular Discipline

The grounds for suspension from practices, participation in interscholastic competition, or other participation in extracurricular activities and competitions are set forth below. In becoming familiar with the conduct rules for extracurricular activities, participants need to remember that they are not only representing themselves, but also, their school and community in all of their actions. Special conduct rules exist for the reasons that:

Participants in Activities Assume Responsibility for Leadership and are Representatives of Our School: Participants in extracurricular activities assume a leadership role. The student body, the community and other communities judge our school on the students' conduct and attitudes, and how they contribute to our school spirit and community image. The students' performance and devotion to high ideals make their school and community proud.

Activities are a Privilege: Extracurricular activities have an important place in the educational program of Johnson County Central Public Schools. It is a privilege for the students who choose to participate. Students who participate and are accepted into the program are expected to demonstrate cooperation, patience, pride, character, self respect, self-discipline, teamwork, sportsmanship, and respect for authority. It is the belief that accepting responsibility for one's actions are a part of that philosophy.

It shall be the policy of Johnson County Central Public Schools the following guidelines shall be followed in determining student suspension from extracurricular activities.

The following conduct shall constitute grounds for suspension from practices, participation in interscholastic competition, or other participation in co-curricular activities and competitions, when such conduct occurs on school grounds or during an educational function, or event off school grounds, or in a school vehicle, or at any time during the school year, and also includes the time frame which begins with the official starting day of the fall co-curricular activity season as established by the NSAA and extends to the last day of the spring co-curricular activity season as established by the NSAA, whether or not the student is a participant in an activity at the time of such conduct.

1. Willfully disobeying any reasonable written or oral request of a school staff member, or the voicing of disrespect to those in authority.
2. Use of violence, force, coercion, threat, intimidation, or similar conduct in a manner that constitutes a substantial interference with school purposes.
3. Sexual assault or attempting to sexually assault any person.
4. Willfully causing or attempting to cause substantial damage to property, stealing or attempting to steal property of substantial value, or repeated damage or theft involving property.
5. Causing or attempting to cause personal injury to a school employee, to a school volunteer, to any student, or to any other person.
6. Threatening or intimidating any student for the purpose of, or with the intent of, obtaining money or anything of value from such student.
7. Knowingly possessing, handling, or transmitting any object or material that is ordinarily or generally considered a weapon.
8. Engaging in the selling, using, possessing or dispensing of alcoholic beverages, tobacco, narcotics, drugs, controlled substance, inhalant or being under the influence of any of the above; or possession of drug paraphernalia.
9. Engaging in the selling, using, possessing, or dispensing of an imitation controlled substance as defined in Nebraska state statutes, or material represented to be alcoholic beverages, narcotics, drugs, controlled substance or inhalant. Also engaging in the selling, using, possessing, or dispensing of an imitation or look-alike cigarettes – such as electronic cigarettes.
10. Truancy or failure to attend assigned classes or assigned activities.
11. Tardiness to school, assigned classes or assigned activities.
12. The use of language, written or oral, or conduct, including gestures, which is profane or abusive to students or staff members. Profane or abusive language or conduct includes, but is not limited to, that which is commonly understood and intended to be derogatory toward a group or individual based upon race, gender, national origin, or religion.
13. Public indecency as defined in Nebraska statutes, except that this subdivision shall apply only to students at least twelve (12) years of age but less than nineteen (19) years of age.

14. Repeated violation of any of the rules adopted by the School District or the school.
15. Engaging in any unlawful activity as determined by the United States or the State of Nebraska.
16. Dressing in a manner wherein such dress is dangerous to the student's health and safety or to the health and safety of others or is distracting or indecent to the extent that it interferes with the learning and educational process.
17. Willfully violating the behavioral expectations for those students riding in Johnson County Central Public Schools vehicles.
18. The knowing and intentional possession, use, or transmission of a firearm or other dangerous weapon.
19. The knowing and intentional use of force in causing, or attempting to cause, personal injury to a school employee, school volunteer, or student, except if caused by accident, self-defense, or on the reasonable belief that the force used was necessary to protect some other person and the extent of force used was reasonably believed to be necessary.
20. Failure to report for the activity at the beginning of each season; reporting for one activity may count as reporting on time if there is a change in activity within the season approved by the coach or the supervisor.
21. Failure to participate in regularly scheduled classes without an excuse approved by an administrator on the day of an athletic/activity event.
22. Failure to attend all scheduled practices and meetings. If circumstances arise to prevent the participant's attendance, the validity of the reason will be determined by the coach or supervisor. Every reasonable effort should be made to notify the coach or supervisor prior to all missed practices or meetings.
23. All other reasonable rules or regulations adopted by the coach or supervisor of a co-curricular activity shall be followed, provided that participants shall be advised by the coach or supervisor of such rules and regulations by written handouts or posting on bulletin boards prior to the beginning of the season.
24. Failure to comply with any rule established by the Nebraska School Activities Association, including, but not limited to, the rules relating to eligibility.

A description of possible disciplinary actions pertaining to items “8” and “9” above shall be provided in an Activities Handbook, which shall be approved annually by the Board of Education upon administrative recommendations.

Students may be suspended by the Principal or his/her designee from practices or participation in interscholastic competition or participation in co-curricular activities for violation of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Johnson County Central Public Schools Board of Education or the administrative staff of the school.

The following procedures shall be followed with regard to suspension:

1. The party considering the suspension shall make a reasonable investigation of the facts and circumstances. In addition, suspension shall be made only after a

- determination that the suspension is necessary to help any student, to further school purposes, or to prevent an interference with school purpose.
2. Prior to commencement of the suspension, the student shall be given oral or written notice of the charges against the student. The student shall be advised of what the student is accused of having done, the basis of the accusation, and an explanation of the evidence the authorities have.
 3. The student shall be afforded the opportunity to explain his/her version of the facts to the person issuing the suspension.
 4. Within twenty-four (24) hours or such additional time as is reasonably necessary following suspension, the Principal or his/her designee shall send a written statement to the student, student's parents, or guardian describing the student's conduct, misconduct or violation of the rule or standard, the reason for the action taken, and the right to a hearing upon request on the specified charges.
 5. An opportunity shall be afforded the student, parents, or guardian of the student to confer with regard to the matter with the principal or administrator issuing the suspension.
 6. If the student or student's parents/guardian are not satisfied with the determination, an informal hearing may be requested before the Superintendent. A form or a request for hearing must be signed by such parties and delivered to the Superintendent in person or by registered or certified mail. This request must be received by the building Principal within five (5) days of receiving notice of suspension.
 7. If a hearing is requested, it shall be held within ten (10) days of the request and a notice of the time and place of the hearing will be given to the participants, and parents or guardian within five (5) days of receiving the request. The notice shall contain an outline of the alleged infraction. There shall be no stay of the penalty imposed pending an appeal.
 8. Upon conclusion of the hearing, a written decision will be rendered within five (5) school days. The statement of finding of fact and decision will be mailed to the participant, parents or guardian. A record of the hearing shall be kept by the school.
 9. Nothing contained in this regulation shall prevent the participant, parents, guardian or representative from discussing and settling the matter with the appropriate school personnel at any stage provided herein.

Extracurricular Activities Training Rules

1. Use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco of any kind while involved in extracurricular activities will not be tolerated. Use or possession may be determined by any of the following means:
 - a. Observance by the coaching staff, teachers or administration;
 - b. Charged by the police or other public official;
 - c. The word of a law enforcement officer.
2. a. First offense—use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco of any kind may result in suspension from all extracurricular activities for a period of 30 calendar days that

school is in session. If the offense occurs during the last 30 days of the school year the penalty may carry into the next school year. A student may be afforded the option of enrolling in a drug or alcohol education program at parental expense in exchange for a reduced suspension from activities. Such a program must be approved by the administration ahead of time. A first offense will also preclude the student from being nominated during that school year for local, conference, regional, state, or national honors related to extracurricular activities (i.e., all-conference, all-state, or outstanding local athlete or musician). This clause does not extend to honors that are earned through competition (i.e., qualifying for State Track Meet or State Speech Contest) that the student may be eligible to compete for.

b. Second offense—use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco of any kind at any time during the remainder of the student's junior high/high school career in Johnson County Central Public Schools may result in suspension from all extracurricular activities for a period of 90 calendar days that school is in session. If the offense occurs during the last 90 days of the school year the penalty may carry into the next school year. A second offense of this policy by a student may preclude the student from being nominated for the remainder of the junior high/high school career for local, regional, state or national honors as identified above.

c. Third offense—use or possession of alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco of any kind at any time during the remainder of the student's junior high/high school career in Johnson County Central Public Schools may result in suspension from all extracurricular activities for the remainder of the student's enrollment in Johnson County Central Public Schools.

3. Any student convicted of a felony will be denied participation in extracurricular activities for the duration of legal penalties, including but not limited to incarceration or probation. A student charged with a felony or high misdemeanor may be denied participation in activities at the discretion of the administration.

4. Any penalty for the above offenses will only take place after a reasonable attempt has been made by school personnel to meet with the student and his/her parent or guardian. The administration shall be involved in such meetings and disciplinary actions.

Suspensions from Extracurricular Activities

Students may be suspended by the Principal or the Principal's designee from practices or participation in interscholastic competition or participation in extracurricular activities for violation of rules and standards of behavior adopted by the Johnson County Central Public Schools Board of Education or the administrative staff of the school. Due process rights will be provided to the student as stated in the Student-Parent Handbook.

Attendance and Academics:

The administration has discussed ways to solidify our rules concerning student eligibility for practices and games if school is missed. Following are the guidelines that will be followed for all activities immediately:

1. If a student comes to school, then leaves school during the day because of illness that student will not be allowed to take part in practices, contests, or performances for the remainder of that day and evening.

2. If a student stays at home at the beginning of the day because of illness the student must be in school by the beginning of 5th period to be eligible to take part in practices, contests, or performances for the remainder of that day and evening.
3. Any student who misses the entire day or the last part of the day because of illness will not be allowed to be in attendance at practices, contests, or performances for the remainder of that day and evening. Students in this situation will be asked to go home if they were to show up at practices, contests, or performances, whether they are a part of the activity or not.
4. If a student misses part of the school day because of an appointment the student will be expected to be in school as much as possible in order to be eligible for practices, contests, or performances for the remainder of that day and evening. In most cases students should not expect to miss the entire day for an appointment and still expect to be eligible for participation. Each situation, however, will be handled on a case by case basis. The administration will expect a note from a doctor and/or communication from the parent/guardian before eligibility for practices, contests, or performances on that day or evening will be granted.
5. To be eligible for extra-curricular activities a student must be currently a full-time student.

Section 4 "Team Selection" and "Playing Time":

"Team selection" and "playing time" decisions are the responsibility of the individual coach or sponsor of the activity. Consistent, however, with the purposes of the activities program, the coaches and sponsors shall follow the established guidelines for team selection and playing time decisions, along with such other guidelines as each individual coach and sponsor may develop which are not inconsistent with these established guidelines:

1. School Representative. Student participants must demonstrate that they can and will represent themselves and their school in a manner which reflects the development of high ideals and appropriate values, which shall include good citizenship in the school and in the community.
2. Success. Student participants must demonstrate that they can make the activity program more successful, both from a standpoint of competitive success and success in promoting a positive school spirit. Characteristics for purposes of this criteria include the student's: (1) talent or skill, (2) desire to improve the student's own skills or talents as well as those of others in the activity, and (3) attitude of respect towards teammates, the coach, the school, and the community.

Section 5 Academic Eligibility

Any junior high or high school student failing one (1) class during a two week grading period will be ineligible to participate in any extracurricular activity during the following two week grading period. However, each failing grade will be re-evaluated at the end of the first week and if the student's grades are all passing, he or she will become eligible the following week to participate in extracurricular activities.

To represent a high school in interscholastic competition, a student must abide by eligibility rules of the Nebraska School Activities Association.

All school work to be missed because of extracurricular activity participation must be made up or arrangements to make up approved prior to departure. The coaching staff or activity sponsor shall have the authority to establish any other rules which will aid in the administration of their sport or activity during the season with the approval of the Principal and Athletic Director.

Section 6 Lettering Format

Many of our participants receive awards throughout the activity season. At the end of the school year an Athletic Banquet will be held to recognize students/athletes who have achieved excellence during the school year. One of the most valued awards is the “letter”. Individual coaches/sponsors will set the standards for lettering in their respective activity, and will convey the requirements to their students at the beginning of the activity.

Section 7 Student Fees Policy

This policy is addressed in the Middle and High School Student-Parent Handbook.

Section 8 Student Activity Fee

An activity fee will be required of all middle school and high school students who participate in any extra-curricular activities. The purpose of this fee is to provide support for extra-curricular activities. Cost for the Student Activity Fee is \$25 per high school student and \$25 per middle school student. No family will be required to pay for more than two students. Once the oldest two students have fulfilled this obligation all other students in the family will also be covered.

One benefit to the student in paying the Student Activity Fee is that they will be issued an activity card which will provide them with free admission to most athletic contests and other programs sponsored by the school. Activities that would not be covered by the activity card would be conference and state sponsored activities held at Johnson County Central, or activities run by a specific group (i.e. Prom, Booster Club tournaments, etc.). Students will receive a temporary card early in the school year, and then will receive a permanent card with their picture on it. Activity cards will need to be presented at each game or activity for free admittance. There will be a fee to replace lost or destroyed cards.

Activity cards for elementary students will be available at a cost of \$15 per student.

Middle school and high school students will not be eligible to participate in extra-curricular activities, with the exception of practices, until the Student Activity Fee is paid.

The Student Activity Fee is eligible for a fee waiver for any student who qualifies for free and reduced lunch. However, a written request must be filed with the school on forms provided by the school. These forms will be available in each of the offices.

Section 9 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:

- Require all coaches and trainers to complete one of the following on-line courses 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.
 - Heads UP Concussions in Youth Sports
 - Concussion in Sports – What You Need to Know
 - Sports Safety International
 - ConcussionWise
 - ACTive tmAthletic Concussion Training for Coaches; and
- 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:
 - The signs and symptoms of a concussion;
 - The risks posed by sustaining a concussion; and
 - 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:

- Has been evaluated by a licensed health care professional;
- Has received written and signed clearance to resume participation in athletic activities from the licensed health care professional; and
- 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:

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

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

School official shall deem the signature of an individual who represents that he/she is a licensed health care 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 health care professional. The school will not take any additional or independent steps to verify the individual's qualifications.

A Parent's Guide to Concussion in Sports

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a brain injury which 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 over 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, girl's soccer, boy's lacrosse, wrestling and girl's 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 which interfere with school, work, and social life.
- An athlete should not return to sports while still having symptoms from a concussion as they are 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?

SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS, FRIENDS, TEACHERS OR COACHES

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about what to do
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit

SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE

- Headache
- Nausea
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or fuzzy 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?

If an athlete is suspected of having a concussion, he or she must be immediately removed from play, be it a game or practice. Continuing to participate in physical activity after a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, increased risk for 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, you must be aware of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and if you are suspicious, then your child must stop playing:

When in doubt, sit them out!

All athletes who sustain a concussion need to be evaluated by a health care professional who is familiar with sports concussions. You should call your child’s physician and explain what has happened and follow your physician’s instructions. If your child is vomiting, has a severe headache, is having difficulty staying awake or answering simple questions he or she should be taken to the emergency department immediately.

When can an athlete return to play following a concussion?

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

Concerns over athletes returning to play too quickly have led state lawmakers in both Oregon and Washington to pass laws stating that no player shall return to play following a concussion on that same day 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 no longer has symptoms of a concussion and is cleared to return to play by health care 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 re-adjust 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 weightlifting.

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 reevaluated by their 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 lessen the athlete's class load early on 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 early on after a concussion may lessen symptoms and shorten the recovery time.

What can I do?

- Both you and your child should learn to recognize the "Signs and Symptoms" of concussion as listed above.
- Teach your child to tell the coaching staff if he or she experiences such symptoms.
- 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 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?

Athletes who are not fully recovered from an initial concussion are significantly vulnerable for 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 concussion are present and recovery is ongoing.

Is a "CAT 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 utilized, 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) all may worsen 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 lessen, you can allow increased use of computers, phone, video games, etc., but the access must be lessened 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 how the injury happened and length of symptoms following the concussion, are very important and must be considered when assessing an 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 which 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 shear 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 very carefully manage each concussion.

Concussion Management: Return to Learn

While Nebraska law requires a specified Return to Play protocol, equally important in the academic setting is a Return to Activity policy. “Bridging the Gap from Concussion to the Classroom: Return to Learn” was developed to provide guidance to assist Nebraska school districts in developing a concussion management policy, including the provision of appropriate classroom adjustments for concussed students facing learning challenges.

After a concussion, among other effects, connections within the brain become stressed, resulting in the breaking of some connections between different brain areas and limiting the ability of the brain to process information efficiently and quickly. (Molfese 2013) These changes can lead to a set of symptoms affecting the student’s cognitive, physical, emotional and sleep functions, which may result in reduced ability to do tasks at home, at school, or work. During this time, returning to play or full-time academics before symptoms have cleared can result in **prolonged recovery time or risk of further injury**. Ignoring the symptoms and trying to “tough it out” often makes symptoms worse!

Concussion Management: Recommended Best Practice for Nebraska Schools

Once a concussion has been diagnosed by a healthcare professional, managing the concussion is best accomplished by creating a support system for the student/athlete. **Communication and collaboration** among parents, school personnel, coaches and athletic trainers, and healthcare providers in overseeing both the return to academics and return to play progressions is essential for the recovery process. Teamwork is required to adjust the treatment and management of the concussion. **Best practice indicates that the student should return to school with a RELEASE OF INFORMATION SIGNED BY THE PARENTS that allows for two-way communication between school personnel and the healthcare provider.** (McAvoy, 2012)

Symptoms of concussion often create learning difficulties for students. Immediately after diagnosis of a concussion, an individualized plan for learning adjustments should be initiated with a gradual, monitored return to full academics as symptoms clear. Typical classroom adjustments and accommodations may include:

- Reduce course workload
- Decrease homework
- Allow breaks during the day, i.e. rest in quiet area
- Allow additional time to complete assignments
- Provide instructor’s notes, outline or study guide for student
- Avoid over-stimulation (noise and light)
- Avoid testing or completion of major projects during recovery time when possible

If a student athlete continues to receive academic adjustments due to the presence of any symptoms, they should be considered symptomatic and not be allowed to resume physical activity.

Report of Possible Concussion Injury

Athlete _____ Date of Injury _____ Sport _____

Home Phone _____ Parent/Guardian Name _____

Your son/daughter has sustained a head injury while participating in _____. In some instances, the signs of a concussion do not become obvious until several hours or even days after the injury. Please be especially observant for the following signs and symptoms:

1. Headache (especially one that increases in intensity*)
2. Nausea and vomiting*
3. Difference in pupil size from right to left eye, dilated pupils*
4. Mental confusion/behavior changes
5. Dizziness
6. Memory loss
7. Ringing in the ears
8. Changes in gait or balance
9. Blurry or double vision*
10. Slurred speech*
11. Noticeable changes in the level of consciousness (difficulty awakening or losing consciousness suddenly*)
12. Seizure activity*
13. Decreased or irregular pulse OR respiration*

***Seek medical attention at the nearest emergency department**

The best guideline is to note symptoms that worsen and behaviors that seem to represent a change in your son/daughter. If you have any question or concern at all about the symptoms you are observing, contact your family physician for instructions or seek medical attention at the closest emergency department. Otherwise, you can follow the instructions outlined below.

It is OK to:

- use acetaminophen (Tylenol) for headaches
- use ice pack on head/neck as needed for comfort
- eat a light diet
- go to sleep
- rest

There is NO need to:

- check eyes with a flashlight
- wake up every hour
- test reflexes
- stay in bed

Do NOT:

- drink alcohol
- drive while symptomatic
- exercise or lift weights
- take ibuprofen, aspirin, naproxen or other non-steroidal anti-inflammatory
- no strenuous activity: PE, sports, video games or texting

Please remind your child to check in with the school nurse prior to going to class on the first day he or she returns to school. Your child should also follow up with the Athletic trainer after school.

Recommendations provided to: _____ Phone: _____

Recommendations provided by: _____ Phone: _____

Date _____ Time: _____

**RECEIPT OF 2017-2018 ACTIVITIES HANDBOOK
OF JOHNSON COUNTY CENTRAL PUBLIC SCHOOLS**

This signed receipt acknowledges receipt of the 2017-2018 Activities Handbook of Johnson County Central Public Schools. This receipt acknowledges that it is understood that the handbook contains student conduct and discipline rules. The undersigned, as student, agrees to follow such conduct and discipline rules. This receipt also serves to acknowledge that it is understood that the District's policies of non-discrimination and equity, and that specific complaint and grievance procedures exist in the handbook which should be used to responding to harassment or discrimination.

Date: _____

Date: _____

Student's Signature

Parent or Legal Guardian's Signature

Return to:

Mr. Rick Lester
High School Principal

Mr. Rich Bacon
Middle School Principal
Activities Director

REQUEST FOR RECORD RELEASE

If eligible and nominated by my coach (es)/activity sponsors, please send the necessary information (official school transcript, grade point average, class rank or ACT score) to: Nebraska State Activities Association (NSAA), Lincoln Journal-Star or other award programs.

Student Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Transcript, GPA, Class Rank or ACT score for: Academic All-State
Nomination/Recognition