City of Norwalk Recreation Department

Concussion Guidelines for Youth Athletics

I. INTRODUCTION.

In recognition of the dangers posed to youth athletes as a result of sports related head injuries, the City of Norwalk hereby adopts the following guidelines in an effort to reduce the occurrence and to encourage the proper management of such injuries for youths involved in organized sports programs.

II. DEFINITIONS.

*Athletic Activities and/or Athletic Programs* shall mean any organized athletic activities involving participants up to age 19 engaging in an athletic game or competition, including athletic performances and scrimmages involving physical or athletic activities; and the practice, practicing or training for organized athletic games or competitions.

*Recreation Department* shall mean the City of Norwalk Department of Recreation and Parks.

*User Group or Organization* shall mean any group or organization that conducts, coordinates, organizes or otherwise oversees any youth athletic activity and, for purposes of these guidelines, has been granted permission to use any City of Norwalk recreation facility.

*Youth Athlete* means any youth, between the ages of 7 and 19, who participates in any organized Athletic Activities or Athletic Program either conducted by the City of Norwalk or permitted to take place on or in any property or facility owned or operated by the City of Norwalk.

III. APPLICATION.

The requirements set out in these guidelines shall apply to all City of Norwalk sponsored Athletic Activities and Programs and to those Athletic Activities and Programs operated or conducted by any User Group or Organization on or in any facility belonging to the City of Norwalk.
IV. TRAINING AND EDUCATION REQUIREMENTS.

A. Annual Training Requirements

All coaches and volunteers who interact with Youth Athletes participating in organized Athletic Activities and Athletic Programs either sponsored or permitted by the City of Norwalk and using any City of Norwalk facility, shall annually complete training in the prevention and recognition of sports related head injuries and associated health risks. Such training shall meet all standards and requirements adopted by the U.S. Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)\(^1\) and may utilize information and training materials published by the CDC, which are currently found at www.cdc.gov/concussion/HeadsUp/online-training. Any training not meeting these standards must be pre-approved in writing by the Director of the Recreation Department in order to comply with these requirements.

It shall be the responsibility of the User Group or Organization to ensure that all required personnel (i.e. coaches and volunteers who interact with Youth Athletes) (1) have completed the required training as set forth herein and (2) maintain proper documentation evidencing such training and produce the same for verification by the Recreation Department prior to any permit or license being granted for the use of any City of Norwalk facility for each sport season. Such training must be completed on an annual basis in order to be valid.

B. Instruction for Athletes and Parents

All Recreation Department staff and all coaches, staff and volunteers of User Groups and Organizations who participate in organized Athletic Activities and Athletic Programs sponsored or permitted by the City of Norwalk, shall, prior to the commencement of the first Athletic Activity for each season present the following

\(^1\) Currently the mandatory topics that must be covered by the training must include the following:

- The recognition of signs and symptoms of concussion
- The means of obtaining proper medical treatment for a person suspected of sustaining a concussion
- The nature and risks of a concussion, including the danger in continuing to engage in athletic activity after sustaining a concussion
- The proper procedures for allowing a student who has sustained a concussion to return to athletic activity
- Current best practices in the prevention and treatment of concussion
information in instructional format to all Youth Athletes and their parents or guardians:
(i) the most current CDC information on proper injury prevention techniques and skills,
(ii) the signs and symptoms of concussions, (iii) the applicable procedure for notifying
parents when an athlete has been removed from play for a head injury or suspected
concussion; iv) the means of obtaining proper medical treatment for any person
suspected of sustaining a concussion, v) the nature and risks of concussions, including
the danger of continuing to engage in youth athletic activity after sustaining a
concussion, and vi) the proper procedures for allowing a Youth Athlete who has
sustained or is suspected of having sustained a concussion to return to play following
a head injury, including the responsibilities of parents and/or guardians pertaining to a
physician’s evaluation and clearance. Such information shall be presented orally as
well as provided in written format to each Youth Athlete and a parent or legal guardian
of each Youth Athlete participating in each Athletic Activity and Athletic Program. Such
written information shall be provided upon registration of each Youth Athlete for any
Athletic Activity or Program.

C. Additional Responsibilities of User Groups and Organizations

In addition to the above responsibilities, all User Groups and Organizations shall
promote current standards for protective equipment in order to minimize sports-
related head injuries; and prohibit athletes from engaging in any unreasonably dangerous
athletic technique that may endanger the health or safety of any athlete, in accordance
with all current best practices and prevailing standards of care.

V. INFORMED CONSENT.

Prior to the first day of any Athletic Activity or Athletic Program, all Youth Athletes and
their parents or guardians must sign an informed consent form presented by the
Recreation Department in order to attest that they are aware of the dangers of head
injuries and of the signs and symptoms of such injuries; that the information required
above has been presented and provided to them by the User Group or Organization;
and that they agree to abide by all recommended procedures in the event that they are
(in the case of Youth Athletes) or (in the case of parents and guardians), their Youth
Athlete is suspected of sustaining or has sustained a concussion, including all return-to-
play requirements. It shall be the responsibility of every User Group and Organization
to obtain such written, signed consent forms from each Parent or Guardian of every
Youth Athlete participating in an Athletic Activity or Athletic Program and to provide
copies of the same to the City’s Recreation and Parks Department.
VI. GUIDELINES FOR RESPONDING TO INJURIES.

A. The City of Norwalk has adopted the State of Connecticut’s applicable procedures for responding to Athletes suspected of having concussions and the “return to play” requirements for such Athletes. Accordingly, the following shall apply to all Recreation Department and User Group sponsored Athletic Activities and Programs:

(1) The coach of any Athletic Activity or Athletic Program shall immediately remove from participation in any Athletic Activity any Youth Athlete who is observed to exhibit signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion, particularly when such signs, symptoms, or behaviors occur following an observed or suspected blow to the head or body, or when such Youth Athlete is diagnosed with a concussion, regardless of when such concussion may have occurred. Upon such removal, a responsible adult shall immediately notify the Youth Athlete’s parent or legal guardian of the circumstances prompting removal and that such Youth Athlete should be evaluated by a licensed health care professional and receive medical clearance prior to returning to play. In no event shall any Youth Athlete who has been removed due to a suspected concussion return to play sooner than twenty-four hours after such removal.

(2) The coach shall not permit such Youth Athlete to participate in any supervised team activities involving physical exertion, including, but not limited to, practices, games or competitions, until such Youth Athlete receives written clearance to participate in such activities from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions. Following such general clearance the coach shall not permit the Youth Athlete to participate in any full, unrestricted supervised team activities without limitations on contact or physical exertion, including, but not limited to, practices, games or competitions, until such Youth Athlete no longer exhibits signs, symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion at rest or with exertion, and receives specific written clearance to participate in such full, unrestricted supervised team activities from a licensed health care professional trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

(3) For purposes of this section “licensed health care professional” means a physician licensed pursuant to Connecticut General Statutes(CGS) Chapter 370, a physician assistant licensed pursuant to CGS Chapter 370, an advanced practice registered nurse licensed pursuant to CGS Chapter 378, and an athletic trainer licensed pursuant to CGS Chapter 375 a.
(4) In lieu of obtaining written clearance from a licensed health care professional, a parent or guardian of a Youth Athlete may sign a written consent form permitting their Youth Athlete to return to supervised team activities involving physical exertion, no earlier than ten days following the removal. In such event the parent or guardian executing the consent form shall assume all responsibility related to their Youth Athlete’s participation in team activities and shall agree to hold the City of Norwalk harmless and release it, its officers and employees from and against any liability in connection with such participation by their Youth Athlete.

VII. COMPLIANCE AND PENALTIES.

All coaches and volunteers of all permitted User Groups Organizations and all Youth Athletes who participate in organized Athletic Activities or Programs are responsible for understanding their responsibilities and obligations as set forth in these Guidelines. Any failure to comply with these Guidelines may, at the discretion of the Director of the Recreation Department, subject the violator to discipline, and/or result in the revocation of any open Recreation Department or City of Norwalk facility permit granted to the User Group or Organization with which such individual is connected. Any Youth Athlete who fails to comply with the provisions of these Guidelines may be subject to discipline, including exclusion from participation in future youth sports activities taking place on or within City of Norwalk facilities.

VIII. REPORTING OBLIGATIONS.

All User Groups and Organizations shall collect and report to the Director of the Recreation Department, all occurrences of concussions at the conclusion of each sport season, or such other date as may be mandated by the Director. Each such report shall be in writing and shall contain, if known, (i) a full description of the nature and extent of each concussion and the date when and the circumstances under which the concussion was sustained. Required information should be sent to the Director, Department of Recreation and Parks, Norwalk City Hall 125 East Avenue, Norwalk Connecticut.