

CHAPTER 54
CONCUSSION OR OTHER BRAIN INJURY RETURN-TO-PLAY PROTOCOL

Chapter rescission date pursuant to Iowa Code section 17A.7: 1/1/28

641—54.1(280) Purpose. This chapter describes the return-to-play protocol for concussion or other brain injury to be adopted by July 1, 2019, by the board of directors of each school district and the authorities in charge of each accredited nonpublic school with enrolled students who participate in an extracurricular interscholastic activity in grades seven through twelve. Concussions are a type of brain injury that can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Concussions can occur in an organized or unorganized sport or recreational activity and can result from a fall or from players colliding with each other, with the ground, or with obstacles. Concussions can occur with or without loss of consciousness, but the vast majority of concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

[ARC 4193C, IAB 12/19/18, effective 1/23/19]

641—54.2(280) Definitions. For the purpose of these rules, the following definitions shall apply.

“Asymptomatic” means the student is no longer showing signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other brain injury.

“Contest” means an interscholastic athletic game or competition.

“Extracurricular interscholastic activity” means any dance or cheerleading activity or extracurricular interscholastic activity, contest, or practice governed by the Iowa High School Athletic Association or the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union that is a contact or limited contact activity as identified by the American Academy of Pediatrics.

“Licensed health care provider” means a physician, physician assistant, chiropractor, advanced registered nurse practitioner, nurse, physical therapist, or athletic trainer licensed by a board designated under Iowa Code section 147.13.

“Medical clearance” means written clearance from a licensed health care provider releasing the student following a concussion or other brain injury to return to or commence participation in any extracurricular interscholastic activity.

“Rest” means a recovery state at which physical and cognitive activities are reduced or removed with the intent to eliminate the signs, symptoms, or behaviors of brain injury.

“Return-to-learn plan” means the plan developed by personnel of a school district or accredited nonpublic school based on guidance developed as required under Iowa Code section 280.13C(6)“b” to provide adjustments or accommodations as the student returns to the classroom.

“Return-to-play” means the gradual, step-wise approach to returning a student to participation in any extracurricular interscholastic activity following a concussion or other brain injury.

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641—54.3(280) Return-to-play protocol. The following return-to-play step-wise process shall begin when the student who has been removed from participation in any extracurricular interscholastic activity governed by the Iowa High School Athletic Association or the Iowa Girls High School Athletic Union is no longer showing signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other brain injury for a minimum of 24 hours and has received written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider to return to or commence such participation.

54.3(1) Return-to-play process. Each step shall take a minimum of 24 hours.

a. If the student shows signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other brain injury at any step of the return-to-play protocol, the student must stop the activity and the student’s licensed health care provider and parent or guardian shall be contacted.

b. If the student shows signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other brain injury during this process, an additional 24-hour period of rest shall take place. After the 24-hour period of rest, the student shall drop back to the previous level when the student showed no signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion or other brain injury and begin the progression again.

54.3(2) *Return-to-play steps.*

Step 1	Athlete has received written medical clearance from a licensed health care provider to begin the return-to-play process, AND the athlete is back to regular activities, including school, without experiencing any concussion signs, symptoms, or behaviors for a minimum of 24 hours.
Step 2	Low impact, light aerobic exercise. Walking or stationary cycling at slow to medium pace. No resistance/weight training.
Step 3	Basic exercise, such as running in the gym or on the field. No helmet or other equipment.
Step 4	Noncontact, sport-specific training drills (dribbling, ball handling, batting, fielding, running drills) in full equipment. Resistance/weight training may begin.
Step 5	Full contact practice and participation in normal training activities.
Step 6	Contest participation.

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These rules are intended to implement Iowa Code section 280.13C.

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