

Fall season is coming to an end, the days are getting short and cold, but your children are dreaming of ice, snow, bouncing balls, glass walls and rolling on the mats. As this winter season approaches there are a few things for you as parents to review.

- 1) **Concussions:** Concussions can happen in any sport where contact with another player or playing apparatus can occur. Adolescents are more susceptible than adults and we need to protect them. Middlesex has a very comprehensive approach to the management of concussions.

- a. **At School:**

- i. We educate your children and the coaches to the signs and symptoms of concussions and emphasize the importance of athletes reporting their symptoms to the Athletic Training Staff, or Health Center Staff. Thus allowing the Medical Staff to care for the athlete, aid in their recovery and monitor them so they do not return to activity before they are healed.
 - ii. Middlesex administers Cognitive Baseline testing of all students so, in the unlikely event they sustain a concussion, we have one more tool to assess the athlete for return to activities and return to sport.

- b. **At Home:**

- i. Parents play a key role in reporting signs and symptoms to the Medical Staff at School, under the new Massachusetts law you are required to share this information with the health care team, particularly those head injuries occurring at off campus events.
 - ii. Visit www.cdc.gov/concussions or www.nfhslearning.com and learn more about the signs and symptoms of concussions.

- 2) **Equipment:** Please take a few minutes to inspect your child's equipment before the season starts.

- a. **Shoes:** Is your child in appropriate well-fitting shoes, skates or skis for their sport. Are these items in good condition? Have they been fitted by a professional?

- b. **Clothing:** Does your child have the correct clothing for their sport? Is it clean, free of mold and mildew and in proper working order?

1. Alpine: Ski pants, Ski jacket, warm hats, gloves.
 2. Hockey: Well fitting shin guards, elbow pads, gloves, shoulder pads, chest protection, groin/pelvic protectors. Mouthguard
 3. Wrestling: head gear, wrestling shoes, if in braces: mouthguard

- c. **Helmets:**

1. Skiing: Well fitted, no cracks, quality padded interior. If purchasing a new helmet be sure it is FIS certified.

2. Hockey: Well fitted, HECC and CSA stickers, no cracks, ear flaps attached, facemask, all screws, snaps and straps in good condition. Any helmet without these stickers needs to be replaced. If the date is passed it also needs replacing. *All hockey helmets must pass inspection for quality and fit before athletes may skate.*
- d. **Mouth guards:** If your child's sport requires a mouth guard, be sure it is a quality mouth guard which covers all existing teeth, is well molded and not chewed. The Athletic Training Staff have excellent mouth guards available and will assist in the proper molding and fit.

If you have any questions or concerns about the Health and Safety of your athlete, please contact the Athletic Training Staff:

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