

Dear Parents/Guardians

In preparation for the new rugby season, I wanted to assure you that The Judd School is fully committed to embracing the RFU guidelines and protocols concerning concussions and the New Rules of Play (NROP) for age group rugby.

All rugby staff are fully trained to act in accordance with RFU 'Headcase' policy and will officiate using the NROP as of September 2017.

To avoid confusion and for future reference, I thought it best to summarise the RFU guidelines following a concussion or head injury below:

1. Any player (student) under the age of 19 must have at least two weeks' rest from ANY sport or physical activity and be completely symptom free. This two-week period starts when the student is symptom free.
2. It is advisable to avoid any video games, headphones for music, and long periods of studying during the immediate period that they are experiencing problems. This is to allow the brain to 'settle down'.
3. Following two weeks of being symptom free, the next step is a Graduated Return to Play (GRTP). This involves the U19 player undergoing exercise sessions which gradually increase in intensity. There needs to be 48 hours between each exercise session. There are six steps to the GRTP (see link below for 6 steps). Following completion of level 4, the player may resume full contact practice (level 5) with medical practitioner clearance.

It is the responsibility of the student and their parent to obtain medical clearance before returning to play. Teacher in charge of their team activity has to see this, before giving permission to return to any form of contact sport.

4. It is recommended that the medical practitioner has experience of assessing player's post-concussion. Most GPs are now at this level, but some are not. Do check. A sports medicine physician is probably best qualified to do the assessment. Privately, it can be expensive if not insured, the RFU can provide insurance cover. Please see their website. Dr Jon Houghton, who consults at Sevenoaks Diagnostics Centre and Dr Steven Motto at London Bridge Hospital, are examples of good sports medicine specialists who have done this type of diagnosis for Judd students in the past. Under the RFU guidelines, the minimum time frame that an U19 player can return to ANY sport, following a concussion of any severity, is 23 days. At Judd we build up to full contact using supervised gym and fitness sessions, in the latter week of recovery, proceeding a pupils return.

The above guidelines are based on the findings, following the fourth International Consensus Conference on Concussion in Sport, held in Zurich, in 2012. More information can be found using the link below:

http://www.englandrugby.com/mm/Document/MyRugby/Headcase/01/30/49/57/returntoplayafterconcussion_Neutral.pdf

The school has a responsibility to all students and as a result will exclude any pupil with a diagnosed concussion (suspected or confirmed) from any type of physical activity, training or sport, until they have progressed through the RFU timeframe guidelines without exception. We respectfully ask all adults with parental responsibility to ensure I am advised ASAP after concussion has been diagnosed.

If you have any more questions about concussion or NROP please contact me on DReilly@judd.kent.sch.uk or 07766 823 906.

Yours sincerely

Damien Reilly

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