

Sandwich Public Schools

Protocol for Medical Excuse from Physical Education

Childhood injuries are a common occurrence and often require medical treatment. Bone fractures are one of the most common childhood injuries. "In most cases, fractures in children are treated with a sling, splint/brace, cast, or walking boot. These immobilize the injured bone while it heals" (Boston Children's Hospital [BCH], 2023). "Fractures heal at different rates, depending on the age of the child and the type of fracture. For example, young children may heal in as few as three weeks, while it may take six weeks for the same kind of fracture to heal in teens (Johns Hopkins Medicine [JHM], 2021)".

Childhood injuries may also involve lacerations requiring sutures or staples to promote healing. Proper healing of lacerations or surgical incisions requires the area to be kept clean and dry, avoiding any impact to the area and avoiding activities that could cause the skin to pull apart (BCH, 2023).

Students arriving at school with a visible injury, cast, splint, sutures or using crutches, a cane, or a wheelchair (not previously in use in school), should report to the nurse's office or may be sent to the nurse by teaching staff for medical assessment with regards to participation in Physical Education and recess periods (if applicable).

- Any student with sutures (stitches) will be excused from Physical Education and recess (if applicable), and will require a written note from their physician to resume Physical Education after suture removal;
- Any student wearing a cast, boot, splint or other medical support apparatus will be excused from Physical Education and recess if applicable and will require a written note from their physician to return to Physical Education and recess if applicable after removal of said apparatus.
 - A plaster cast may weigh anywhere from 2 to 8 pounds depending upon size (BCH, 2023). The weight of a cast may present the risk of injury to other students participating in group activities. For the safety of all students, a student wearing a hard cast will be excused from Physical Education and recess until the cast has been removed and the physician's documentation has been received clearing the student to resume full activity. In grades 7-12, if the cast is on the upper body, the student may be permitted to participate in walking the track (indoor or outdoor) if that is an option and the parent and physician approve;
 - Walking boots protect broken bones and other injuries of the lower leg, ankle, or foot. They prevent more damage and help the area heal. Walking

Sandwich Public Schools

Protocol for Medical Excuse from Physical Education

boots are intended to support the bone / joint / soft tissues while performing essential basic walking activity. Walking boots are not intended for running, jumping or impact.

- Upper grade students wearing a soft cast or walking boot may be permitted to participate in modified Physical Education (walking the track) depending upon the guidance from the treating physician.
 - At the elementary school level, staff is unable to accommodate “gradual return to play” or “modified PE”. In the event of an injury that may require a significant amount of time to heal, families may seek to develop a temporary 504 plan for modified physical activity with the administration and adaptive Physical Education staff.
 - At the middle and high school level, a program of “gradual return to play” or “modified PE” may be developed with the Athletic Trainer per physician’s orders.

Student's under the care of a physician for an injury must provide documentation of treatment and accommodation requirements to the school nurse. (Example: discharge plan from a hospital or emergency room or doctor's note from the family physician or physician specialist).

Students with a minor injury not requiring care from a licensed medical provider may be excused from Physical Education class for one (1) day with a parent note. Physical Education is a requirement of the curriculum per Department of Elementary and Secondary Education.

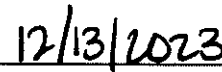
MGL Chapter 71, Section 3. Physical education shall be taught as a required subject in all grades for all students in the public schools for the purpose of promoting the physical well-being of such students. Instruction in physical education may include calisthenics, gymnastics and military drill; but no pupil shall be required to take part in any military exercise if his parent or guardian is of any religious denomination conscientiously opposed to bearing arms, or is himself so opposed, and the school committee is so notified in writing; and no pupil shall be required to take part in physical education exercises if a licensed physician certifies in writing that in his opinion such physical education exercises would be injurious to the pupil.



School Physician



SPS Nursing Department Head



Date



Date

