

**THE  
EXTRACURRICULAR  
PARTICIPANT  
“PLEDGE PROGRAM”**

**AND**

**STUDENT-ATHLETE  
CONCUSSIONS DURING  
EXTRACURRICULAR  
ACTIVITIES  
HANDBOOK**

**Dickenson County Public Schools**

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### THE EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPANT PLEDGE PROGRAM

I. Background & Justification for an Extracurricular Participant “Pledge Program” .....	3
II. Dickenson County School Board Policies .....	4
A-Policy Determination .....	4
B-The Extracurricular Participant “Pledge Program” .....	4
C-Procedures for Suspected Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs .....	5
D-Random Drug Testing Policy .....	6
E-Intervention .....	7
F-Reinstatement .....	7
G-Prescription Drugs .....	7
III. Community Support for the “Pledge Program” .....	8
IV. Implementing the Extracurricular Participant “Pledge Program” .....	8
A-Virginia High School League-Sanctioned Extracurricular Activities in the Dickenson County Schools .....	8
B-The Pledge Cards .....	10
C-Seasonal Extracurricular Meetings .....	11
D-Random Drug Testing of Extracurricular Participants .....	11
1-Use of School Personnel in Random Drug-Testing Procedures ad Protocol .....	11
2-Training of School Personnel in Random Drug-Testing Procedures & Protocol .....	11
3-How Extracurricular participant are Selected for Random Drug-Testing Each Season .....	12
4-How Positive Random Drug Tests are Treated .....	12
E-Alcohol and Drug Testing of Suspected “Pledge Program” Offenders .....	13
F-Intervention Procedures and Programs for “Pledge Program” Offenders.....	14
V. Evaluating the Effectiveness of the “Pledge Program” .....	16

### STUDENT-ATHLETE CONCUSSIONS DURING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

General Information on Concussions.....	18
Concussion Fact Sheet for Athletes .....	19
Concussion Fact Sheet for Parents.....	21
Appendix A.....	23

## **I. Background and Justification of an Extracurricular Participant “Pledge Program”**

Over the last two decades, there have been many initiatives and programs sponsored by the public schools to educate our nation’s youth about alcohol, tobacco and other illegal drugs as well as their detrimental effects on ones mental and physical performance, motivation, long-term health, etc...Many communities and cities throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia have encouraged its school officials and teachers to adopt various programs like the D.A.R.E. Program, Drug-Free Schools initiatives, Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, Project Prom, Fellowship of Christian Athletes and more intensified health education curricula in order to win the “war on drugs” in our schools as well as create safer, healthier and more productive environments for their children and youth.

One particular initiative that many Virginia public school divisions have implemented has been directed at athletics and other extracurricular activities teams, clubs, etc...Since all athletic teams, cheerleader squads and many school clubs/organizations have various training and membership rules, these participants were asked to “pledge” their word not to use alcohol, tobacco or any other illegal drug while being a member of their team, club, etc...If it were determined that the member or player broke their “pledge” then he/she was asked to participate in some type of educational, counseling and/or rehabilitative intervention for a specified period if he/she wanted to continue being a member of that extracurricular team, club or organization.

In October, 2002, the Dickenson County Public Schools asked the Research Department of the University of Virginia College at Wise to administer the Youth Behavior Risk Survey to all its middle and high school students, parents, teachers and principals. In these surveys, there were specific items that asked about the use of tobacco, alcohol and other illegal drugs by middle and high school students currently attending the Dickenson County Public Schools. According to the “Evaluation Report” written by Dr. Mary Oquinn in June 2003, the following findings were cited:

- “Parents indicate that alcohol abuse is a serious problem in the county.” “Eighty-six percent of the sample said it was a problem, only fourteen percent did not note this as a critical issue.”
- “Ninety percent of the parents felt that drug abuse by juveniles was a significant problem.”
- “Ten percent of the (high school) students say that they drove under the influence of alcohol during the last 30 days.”
- “About 65% (of high school students) say that they have used alcohol over the past 12 months.”
- Student (high school) usage of (other illegal) drugs is as follows: Benzodiazepenes (9%), Cocaine (10%), Ecstasy (8%), Heroin (4%), Hydrocodone (13%), Marajuana (28%), Methanphidamines (7%), Oxycodone (5%), Oxycontin (8%), Sniffed glue or other inhalants (7%).
- “Fifty-nine percent of the (high school) students say that most of their peers have used some form of illicit drugs.”
- “Twenty-five percent (of middle school students) reported riding in a car with someone who had been drinking.”
- “Approximately two percent of (age 11-13) students reported using Hydrocodine, Oxycodone, Oxycontin or Ritalin during the past year.”
- At least 50% of the teachers and principals who answered the survey reported that (Dickenson County) students need help with “self esteem”, “decision-making skills”,

“the use of alcohol and drugs” and “education regarding drugs and alcohol”  
(additional areas were listed).

## **II. DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARD POLICIES**

### **A. POLICY DETERMINATION.**

As a result of the information provided by the “Evaluation Report” of the Youth Behavior Risk Survey administered by the Dickenson County Public Schools as well as from the growing concerns by community leaders and agency officials, the Dickenson County School Board made the following findings with respect to the operation of the Dickenson County School System:

- 1) Student participants in extracurricular activities sanctioned by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) occupy leadership roles for all the students in the Dickenson County School System.
- 2) Because of their leadership positions, students participating in the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities in the Dickenson County School System influence the conduct of all the student body.
- 3) Dickenson County School students participating in extracurricular activities endanger their physical and psychological health and their performance level by the use of alcohol and illegal drugs as well as have a negative impact on the conduct of the general student body.
- 4) The Dickenson County School Board believes that the use of tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs among some students participating in extracurricular activities in the Dickenson County School System is sufficiently prevalent to be a danger to those students and to have a bad impact upon the student body as a whole.
- 5) For those reasons, students who wish to participate in VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities in the Dickenson County School System should pledge that they will not use tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs throughout the school year. They should be subject to random alcohol and drug testing to assure compliance with that pledge.
- 6) Students participating in VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities in the Dickenson County School System who violate their pledge as determined by whatever reasonable evidence of such violation may exist, should lose some eligibility for participation and if they become repeat offenders, should ultimately lose all rights to participate in extracurricular activities in the Dickenson County School System.
- 7) Evidence gathered for purposes of enforcing the pledge program in the Dickenson County School System shall be made available only to such school personnel as are necessary to enforce the policy. Said evidence shall not be available to any persons outside the School System except for parents or guardians of said student participant, including, without limitation, local law enforcement. The records of said evidence of violation of the pledge program shall be kept separate and distinct from other scholastic records of said student but shall be considered scholastic records for purpose of the Freedom of Information Act and shall not be made available outside the above restrictions.
- 8) The rationale for the restrictions on the sharing of said information is that said restrictions are necessary in order to make the intrusion into the privacy of student extracurricular participants constitutionally permissible.

### **B. THE EXTRACURRICULAR PARTICIPANT “PLEDGE PROGRAM”**

- 1) Every participant in a VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity that is afforded to any student in the System by the Dickenson County School System shall execute and sign a pledge that said student shall not use tobacco, alcohol or any other illegal drug during the school year in which they are participant in said extracurricular activity.

- 2) Every such pledge shall also be signed by the parents and/or guardians of said student, whereby they shall agree that their son or daughter will be disciplined in accordance with this policy if there is a violation and that they will help their child or ward to live up to the pledge and/or to participate in such intervention program and disciplinary matters as may be imposed for a failure to live up to such pledge.
- 3) The pledge to be executed by each student and the parents thereof for extracurricular participants in the Dickenson County School System shall be that which is attached hereto as Appendix A.
- 4) **Refusal to sign said pledge by the student and parents will cause the exclusion of said student from all the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities.**

## **C. PROCEDURES FOR SUSPECTED USE OF ALCOHOL OR ILLEGAL DRUGS**

### ***FIRST OFFENSE***

Step 1. The sponsor or coach discusses with the student participant in an extracurricular activity the reasons for suspecting alcohol, tobacco or other illegal drug use. The sponsor or coach may end the process with this step if he believes that there is no justification or proof of his suspicions. If, however, the sponsor or coach determines that the student has not been forthright, the sponsor or coach will contact the principal and student's parents and inform them that the student will be required to take a drug screen\*, the results of which will be provided to school officials. This screening procedure will be provided at no cost to the student, but must be administered at a facility chosen by the school. If a student participant in an extracurricular activity has tested positive in any random drug screen\* pursuant to this policy, the procedure shall move to Step 2 immediately.

Step 2. If the student participant in an extracurricular activity confesses to the use of alcohol, tobacco or other illegal drugs, or the sponsor or coach has other proof of the student's involvement with tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs, the sponsor or coach will contact the building principal who will schedule a meeting with the student and parents on the first school day following the confirmation of such use. At this meeting the student and parents will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. If the principal determines that the student has violated his or her tobacco pledge, a minimum 7 day suspension will begin at that time. If the principal determines that the student has violated his or her alcohol and drug pledge, a minimum 14 day suspension will begin at that time. Written notification will be provided to the parents that will detail the conditions and the endpoint of the suspension of seven calendar days for tobacco usage after its imposition or fourteen calendar days for alcohol or other illegal drug usage after its imposition. At the end of the suspension, the student participant will be allowed to return to the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity.

Step 3. The Intervention Coordinator will have a screening interview with the student participant and parents within the aforementioned suspension. Based on the interview, the coordinator will design an intervention program suitable for the student participant.

\*Alcohol consumption is also screened

Step 4. The student participant in VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity and parents must satisfactorily participate in the recommended intervention program. Progress reports will be provided to the Intervention Coordinator and the school to document participation. If the student pledge offender does not satisfactorily participate in or misses an intervention session for a unexcused reason then he/she is prohibited from participating in any games, events, etc...for seven consecutive days following the intervention session at issue.

Step 5. Upon satisfactorily attending all the prescribed intervention sessions, the student participant will be released from the intervention program.

Step 6. The student participant remains subject to random drug and alcohol testing for the remainder of that school year at the discretion of school officials.

### ***SECOND OFFENSE***

Step 1. Upon confirmation of a second incidence of a student participant's use of alcohol, tobacco or other illegal drugs, the principal is notified and a conference is scheduled for the student participant, parents, sponsor or coach and the Intervention Coordinator on the first school day following the confirmation of such use. At this meeting the student and parents will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. If the principal determines the student has violated his or her tobacco pledge, a minimum four-week (28 day) suspension will begin at that time. If the principal determines that the student has violated his or her alcohol or drug pledge, a minimum of a twelve-week (84 day) suspension will begin at that time. Written notification will be provided to the parents that will detail the conditions and the endpoint of the suspension.

Step 2. The Intervention Coordinator will have a screening interview with the student participant and parents within two weeks of the beginning of the suspension. Based on the interview, the coordinator will design an intervention program suitable for the student participant.

Step 3. The student participant in the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity and parents must participate in the recommended intervention program. Progress reports will be provided to the Intervention Coordinator and the school in order to document participation.

Step 4. Upon satisfactorily attending all the prescribed intervention sessions and a negative urinalysis at the end of the suspension period, the student participant will be permitted to return to full participation status.

Step 5. The student participant remains subject to random drug and alcohol testing for the remainder of that school year at the discretion of school officials.

### ***THIRD OFFENSE***

**Upon confirmation of a third incident of use of alcohol, tobacco or other illegal drugs a student is prohibited from any further participation in extracurricular activities while enrolled at the school.**

## **D. RANDOM DRUG TESTING POLICY**

- 1) The Superintendent of the Dickenson County School System shall implement a generally accepted method for randomly selecting student participants in VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities on a school-by-school basis during the school year, with particular emphasis on that portion of the school year said student's extracurricular activity or activities are ongoing for a urinalysis test to be administered as hereinafter set forth.

- 2) Testing procedure. Student participants in extracurricular activities who have been selected at random to be tested shall be accompanied to the appropriate restroom based on gender by a staff member of the same sex. Said student shall be required to leave all personal effects, including purses, contents of pockets, jackets and other things except for their clothing, with an appropriate member of school personnel for safekeeping. Said student shall be allowed the privacy of a stall for purposes of giving a urinalysis sample, using medically acceptable equipment and procedures, the same to be directed by the accompanying same-sex school personnel member. Said accompanying staff member shall position himself/herself in such a position that they can assure by sound that a urinalysis sample is being given. Said sample shall be given to such staff member at its completion, appropriately marked in accordance with the requirements of the lab to which it is to be sent for analysis and provided to the lab for analysis. The results back from the lab shall be such as to assure chain of possession. The results back from the lab shall be provided to the principal of the school of which the student participant in an extracurricular activity is a student. If positive, the disciplinary procedure set forth above shall be instituted. If the lab determines that the sample has been tampered with or failed to be accurate, a second test shall be administered. Should the second test be determined by the lab to be tampered with, the test will be treated as though positive for purposes of the institution of disciplinary and intervention procedures.
- 3) Parents or guardians of students who have a positive test shall be notified of the same immediately. Only such school personnel as are required to implement the disciplinary and intervention policy shall be notified of a positive test result. Other than the parents aforescribed, no other outside individuals will be notified of the results of said testing.

#### **E. INTERVENTION**

The members of the Board and staff of the Dickenson County School System will need to determine what kind of tobacco, alcohol and/or drug intervention methods using school and community personnel, should be used to afford the student education and an opportunity to assist in breaking and habit or dependence on tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs.

#### **F. REINSTATEMENT**

A student participant in a VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity who has; a- been suspended pursuant to the above provisions from participation in the extracurricular activity, b-is satisfactorily attending 1<sup>st</sup> offense intervention sessions or has completed 2<sup>nd</sup> offense intervention sessions as well as other requirements as may have been imposed upon him or her, and c-wishes to return to participation in any extracurricular activity in the Dickenson County School System shall submit to an alcohol and drug urinalysis test prior to reinstatement.

#### **G. PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

The Dickenson County School Board recognizes that many illegal drugs are also drugs which are legal if properly prescribed by a physician. No student who is in possession or uses a legal prescription drug, defined as a scheduled substance which has been prescribed by a physician in good standing to that student, shall be subject to any of the disciplinary and/or intervention provisions herein set out.

### **III. Community Support for the Pledge Program**

Throughout Dickenson County, Virginia there has been growing concerns from its citizens, parents, community leaders, as well as school personnel that its youth's illegal use of alcohol, tobacco and other illegal drugs is increasing. These concerns are not unlike those concerns being voiced from communities, counties, school systems, etc...throughout America, Dickenson County's concerns were further confirmed by the results of the Youth Behavior Risk Survey of Fall 2002.

According to a recent publication by the Office of National Drug Control Policy entitled "What You Need to Know About Drug Testing" (2003), it was stated that a decision in June 2002 by the U.S. Supreme Court expands the authority of public schools to test students for drugs. Still, it is up to individual communities and schools to decide if drugs are a significant threat, and if testing is a appropriate response.

The Dickenson County Schools has decided that tobacco, alcohol and illegal drug usage by its youth is a significant threat and community problem. Furthermore, with the encouragement and support of many community leaders and agencies, Dickenson County School System policies for establishing a "Pledge Program" has been adopted by its Board. Such responsible educational actions by Dickenson County's school leaders have the support of the following:

- Judge of the 29<sup>th</sup> Judicial Court
- Dickenson County Commonwealth Attorney
- Dickenson County Drug Prevention Team
- Dickenson County Sheriff's Department
- 29<sup>th</sup> Court Service Unit-Juvenile Services
- Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services
- Clintwood Police Department
- Haysi Police Department
- Dickenson County Health Department
- Dickenson County Department of Social Services
- Dickenson County Education Association

### **IV. Implementing the Extracurricular Participant "Pledge Program"**

#### **A. Virginia High School League-Sanctioned Extracurricular Activities in the Dickenson County Schools.**

On July 23, 2003, the Dickenson County Schools initiated a "Pledge Program" whose primary goal is to assist in maintaining an atmosphere of both physical and emotional well being for any student participant in the following extracurricular activities that are sanctioned by the Virginia High School League:

- Varsity and Junior Varsity Athletics
- Varsity and Junior Varsity Cheerleading
- Drama Club
- Forensic Club
- P.A.C.E. Program Team



The “Pledge Program” is designed to encourage all extracurricular activity participants in the Dickenson County Schools to avoid the unlawful purchase, possession, use, distribution, or intention to distribute tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs at any time or place during the school year of the extracurricular activity(ies).

If a student participant confesses to or is proven by random drug/alcohol testing to have broken his/her “pledge”, the extracurricular participant is informed by his school principal that he/she is not in good standing with his/her school’s and the Virginia High School League’s eligibility standards for participation. In order for the offending student participant to regain “good standing” status in order to practice and compete for his/her team or club then he/she must comply with the following conditions:

1. Undergo a prescribed suspension from the extracurricular activity.
2. Satisfactorily participate in and complete a series of intervention sessions prescribed by the Pledge Program’s Intervention Coordinator according to the particular substance(s) involved.

After condition 1 (suspension from the team) has occurred, the participant can begin practicing and competing with his/her team or club as long as he/she attends and satisfactorily-participates in the prescribed intervention sessions. If the “Pledge” offender misses or does not satisfactorily participate in any intervention session then he/she would be immediately declared “not in good standing” and would not be permitted to compete with his/her team, club, etc...until attending and satisfactorily participating in the next intervention session. Thus, a pledge program offender maintains his/her “good standing” school and VHSL eligibility status by attending and successful participating in the prescribed intervention sessions as monitored by the Pledge Program’s Intervention Coordinator.

**B. The Pledge Cards**

The following are the student and parent pledge cards adopted by the Dickenson County School System for the Pledge Program:

DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
EXTRACURRICULAR STUDENT PARTICIPATION PLEDGE PROGRAM

STUDENT PLEDGE

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge that I will not use tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs during the school year \_\_\_\_\_.

If I break this pledge, I understand that I may be suspended or dismissed from the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity in which I am participating. Furthermore, I understand, upon reasonable suspicion, I may be tested for the use of alcohol or other illegal drugs. I also understand that I shall be subject to random testing by urinalysis under the terms and conditions hereinafter set out for the use of alcohol or other illegal drugs without the necessity of any probable cause or reasonable suspicion.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Student Signature

PARENT PLEDGE

The undersigned are all of the parents and/or guardians of the above student who have the legal authority to direct our child and/or ward with respect to the above matters. The undersigned do hereby understand and support the above pledge signed by my son/daughter/ward and will help him or her to uphold the pledge. I/We understand and agree that this program in no way supercedes the Dickenson County School Student Conduct Code regarding drugs, alcohol or tobacco violations on school grounds or at school sponsored or coached activities. I/We also understand and agree that a violation of this pledge shall result in my son/daughter/ward being subject to the disciplinary provisions of the pledge program and I agree to submit my child to those provisions, including such intervention programs in accordance to policy adopted by the Dickenson County School System on July 23, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_

Date

\_\_\_\_\_

Parent/guardian signature

The above pledges can be found in Appendix A which is located on the back page of this Handbook. School personnel can tear them off for student/parent use or duplication purposes.

### **C. Seasonal Extracurricular Meetings**

The extracurricular activities sponsored by the Dickenson County Schools that are sanctioned by the Virginia High School League (VHSL) generally occur during three seasons of extracurricular activity-Fall, Winter and Spring. For example, Football is a Fall sport (August-November), Basketball occurs in the winter season (November-February), and Baseball and girls Softball are two extracurricular activities which occur in the Spring season (March-May). There are some VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities like Cheerleading, Drama and Debate Clubs that occur during two or all three seasons.

At the beginning of the extracurricular activity's season(s), the participant and their parents/guardian(s) must attend a mandatory Seasonal Meeting in the high school auditorium having the following agenda:

- Welcome Remarks
- Major VHSL Eligibility Rules Discussed
- Pledge Program Overviewed and Guest Speaker (optional)
- Student and Parent Pledge Cards Signed\*
- Team and Club Meetings with Coaches and Sponsors Talking about the Upcoming Activity, Answering Questions from Parents, etc...

\*If one has not been signed previously during the present school year.

### **D. Random Drug Testing of Extracurricular Participants**

#### 1. Use of School Personnel in Random Drug Procedures and Protocol

At each Dickenson County high school, the principal will designate an appropriate number of male and female coaches, club sponsors, etc...in order to implement random drug testing during specific intervals throughout the three extracurricular activity seasons. Other professionals who may be available to assist with random drug testing are Dickenson County School D.A.R.E. Resource Officers, school nurses and athletic trainer, schedules and duty placements permitting. Generally, male and female coaches, club sponsors, etc... whose extracurricular activity is currently "in season", will be designated to implement the Pledge Program random drug testing in each high school. Part-time coaches, club sponsors, etc...not under a standard teachers or para-professional contract with the Dickenson County Schools will not be designated to assist in the random drug testing.

#### 2. Training of School Personnel in Random Drug-Testing procedures and Protocol

All high school personnel designated by the principal to administer random drug- testing of extracurricular activity participants shall first successfully complete a training course on random drug-testing procedures and protocol. The professional staff of the 29th Court Service Unit will present this course. The training course will be tailored to either the random drug-testing procedures and protocol of male students or the random drug testing procedures and protocol of female students. Only male coaches, club sponsors, etc... will take the former; and, only female coaches, club sponsors, etc... will take the latter.

Coaches and club sponsors designated to be administering the random drug-testing should be particularly mindful of the Testing Procedure section of Policy IV. Random Drug Testing Policy cited earlier in this text.

### 3. How Extracurricular Participants are Selected for Random Drug Testing

Random drug testing of the extracurricular participants of a season's VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities will be consistently implemented as follows at each Dickenson County High School:

- A- The principal shall construct an enumerated list of all participants in a season's (Fall, Winter or Spring) extracurricular activities sanctioned by the VHSL. (For example-at Haysi High School, the Fall list may be a numerated listing of those members of the Football team (#1-#33), Cheerleaders (#34-#46), Girls Basketball (#47-#58), Golf (#59-#66), Drama Club (#67-#76), Forensic Team (#77-#85), etc...
- B- 10% of the seasonal list of extracurricular participants will be randomly selected for a drug-testing session. The Pledge Program Intervention Coordinator will randomly select 10% of the numbers (names) on each high school's seasonal list.
- C- During each extracurricular season, there will be five 10% random drug-testing sessions which will be jointly determined by the Dickenson County high school principals and Pledge Program Intervention Coordinator.
- D- After a student has been selected for one random drug-testing session, he/she could be selected for subsequent random drug testing during the same or a later season.
- E- Once the high school principal is notified which numbers/names from the seasonal list are to be randomly drug-tested, then the students are escorted from class by a designated coach, sponsor, or other school professional of the same sex and the drug-testing protocol and procedures are implemented.

### 4. How Positive Random Drug-Tests are Treated

The urine samples taken at all drug-testing sessions are sent away for overnight delivery to the toxicological lab used by the Dickenson County School System. The individual student reports of the urinalyses will be returned only to the principal of the student's Dickenson County High School within 3-5 days after receipt at the laboratory. If a student who was selected for random drug-testing, has positive testing result(s) for Barbituates, Benzodiazepines, Cocaine, Opiates, Alcohol, THC (Marijuana) and/or Creatinine then the principal will contact the student participant and his/her parent(s) for a meeting within 24 hours after receiving the student's positive drug testing results. At this meeting, the student's extracurricular activity coach or sponsor and the Dickenson County Pledge Program Intervention Coordinator will also be in attendance. After the results of student's positive drug testing are discussed, the student and his/her parents will have an opportunity to present any information relevant to the situation. If the principal determines that the student has violated his/her "pledge" then the next steps are undertaken for disciplinary sanctions and intervention according to whether the present violation is the first, second or third offense of the "Pledge Program."

Unless the toxicology lab reports that a student's random drug-testing results have been tampered with or failed to be accurate shall a second drug-testing (urinalysis) be administered. The results of the second drug testing (urinalysis) will be handled accordingly by the principal. If it is determined that the second drug testing has also been tampered with

then the principal will interpret these findings as a positive testing for purposes of instituting the Pledge Program's disciplinary and intervention procedures.

## **E. ALCOHOL AND DRUG TESTING OF SUSPECTED PLEDGE PROGRAM OFFENDERS**

There will be occasions when a coach or sponsor will receive some type of information or signs that an extracurricular participant may be violating their "Pledge" not to use tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs. Besides the more common signs of the participant having a tobacco, alcohol or illegal drug odor, the participant could be unusually hyper, sluggish, distractible, irritable, impulsive, forgetful, agitated, moody, tired-acting, suspicious, indecisive, uncoordinated, unmotivated, and/or underperforming. The above signs must be carefully weighed relative to how the student typically acts both in and away from the extracurricular activity.

When a coach or sponsor just feels in his/her "gut" that something is going on with a particular athlete, cheerleader or club member, there may be a need to further investigate if he/she is going to draw "reasonable suspicion" that the participant of concern may be breaking his/her "pledge". The following are some ways of gaining some additional information which may either negate or verify a coach or sponsor's suspicion about one (or more) possible pledge violator(s) before being directly confronted by the coach or sponsor.

\*Listen inconspicuously to what other players, club members are saying about the suspect participant at practice, on bus rides, in the classroom, outside the locker-room, auditorium, cafeteria. Also listen inconspicuously to other students' comments about him or her around school or around the community.

\*Be aware that there may be other participants who are genuinely concerned and disapproves of their fellow teammate or club member violating their "pledge". These disapproving participants may even attempt to drop a hint or an anonymous note to an assistant coach, team captain, or even another educator saying that  
"\_\_\_\_\_ is not upholding his/her training rules," "I'm worried about what is going on with \_\_\_\_\_!"

\*Talk to your extracurricular activity's captain, lead member, #1 position player, etc...regarding your general concerns for the suspected pledge offender's drop in performance. Although most team or club members-including leaders, will seldom "tattle" on one of their peers; it is important to examine closely the unspoken "body language" when talking with these key people.

\*Get a favorite assistant coach or club sponsor to talk or spend extra time with the suspected "pledge" violator. Notice his/her body language or other signs when the topics of alcohol, drugs, partying, weekend activities, etc... come up in casual conversation. If from the common signs and from other sources of information, the coach or sponsor has sincerely drawn "reasonable" suspicions that the student has violated their "pledge" then Step 1 of the "Procedures for Suspected Use of Alcohol or Illegal Drugs" (p.7) polices should be initiated by the coach or sponsor.

\*Be cautious also that there could be one or more participants on the team or club who would love to see the suspected "pledge" offender suspended and vacate a "starting" position or role of status. Be mindful if he/she is possibly being "framed."

**F. INTERVENTION PROCEDURES AND PROGRAMS FOR “PLEDGE PROGRAM” OFFENDERS**

One of the major goals of the Pledge Program is to extend to youth that break their “pledge” the highest quality of educational and habilitative experiences, activities, etc...that the Dickenson County area has to offer. The Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services will be the main local agency for providing this vital function of the “Pledge Program”.

If an extracurricular participant is determined by his/her high school principal to have broken their pledge not to use tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs, the Dickenson County Pledge Program’s Coordinator will have a screening interview with the pledge offender and his/her parent(s) during the suspension phase of sanctions. Based on the interview, the Intervention Coordinator will establish a series of intervention sessions that are appropriate to the substance(s) involved and whether the current pledge offense was the first, second or third offense while being a participant in VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities at his/her current Dickenson County high school or previous high school(s) in the county.

The intervention sessions provided to the pledge offender and his/her parent(s) will be provided by the Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services at a minimal cost. Furthermore, it will be the responsibility of the pledge offender and his/her parent(s) to pay for the costs of the intervention program sessions based on the family’s ability-to-pay. The following is a brief description of the types of intervention programs which will be provided to pledge offenders and their associated fees:

**A. First Time Offenders for Tobacco:**

1. Initial assessment for service will be scheduled as soon as possible but no more than 10 days from the date of referral. The fee for this assessment is \$20.00.
2. After initial assessment individuals will participate in an interactive CD Rom program called “Quitting Tobacco”. This program offers information about nicotine dependency and therapies, strategies for quitting cold turkey or easing off, reason to quit and information on understanding the smoking habit. This program will be offered in two (2) one hour sessions. The students will take a pre and post test. The cost for each of these sessions will be \$7.00 per student, with a total cost of the Quitting Tobacco program being \$34.00.

**B. First Time Offenders for Alcohol or Drugs:**

1. Initial assessment for service will be scheduled as soon as possible but no more than 10 days from date of referral. The fee for assessment is \$20.00.
2. Moral Reconance Therapy will be utilized for first time offenders. Moral Reconance Therapy or MRT is a systematic, step-by-step treatment strategy designed to enhance self-image, promote growth of a positive, productive identity and facilitate the development of higher stages of moral reasoning. MRT significantly raises moral reasoning levels, life purpose, and other positive personality variables. MRT is completed over a 12-week period and is used in a group setting. Cost for this program will be \$7.00 per student per session; additionally there is a one-time fee of \$25.00 for the workgroup. The total cost of the MRT program will be \$129.00.

C. Second Time Offenders of Tobacco:

1. An assessment will not be required for those individuals who have had one in the six months previous to the new referral. If the assessment is over six months old, a new one will be required for a \$20.00 fee.
2. A more intensive program will be used for second time offenders. The program called Tobacco Free Cessation & Prevention Curriculum will be utilized. This program will be covered over seven (7) one hour sessions. The sessions will be as follows:
  1. Pre-existing ideas about tobacco myths and realities. Current laws related to tobacco and youth.
  2. The addictive process.
  3. Breaking the cycle/how to quit.
  4. Continuation of breaking the cycle/how to quit.
  5. Tobacco advertising/what it is and how it works.
  6. Relapse
  7. Relapse continued/Being tobacco free/long term benefits.

This program will be presented in group sessions or classes. The cost will be \$7.00 per student per session, for a total cost \$49.00, plus \$20.00 for the assessment if necessary.

D. Second Time Offenders of Alcohol or Drugs:

1. An assessment will not be required if one has been completed within the past six months. If an assessment is required the \$20.00 fee will be applied.
2. For any student who has completed the MRT program and once again is in violation of the Pledge program or who has, through random drug screening, tested positive for a prohibited substance, individual counseling will be recommended. The nature of individual counseling dictates a person-centered approach to treatment and for that reason, it is impossible to set a time frame on completion of this service. There will be a minimum of eight sessions based on individually assessed needs. These sessions will cost \$18.00 per session.

The Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services' staff that will be providing the Pledge Program's intervention services are certified MRT therapists, Qualified Mental Health Professionals, prevention specialists and Substance Abuse Counselors.

Since confidentiality is a top priority in the Pledge Program, the Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services will ensure that student information is handled in accordance with procedures established by the Federal Confidentiality Regulations, 42 C.F.R., Part 2. In addition Dickenson County Behavioral Health Services will adhere to all other Federal and state laws and regulations regarding confidentiality of student information. Individuals will be asked to sign the appropriate release of information documents.

## V. EVALUATING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE “PLEDGE PROGRAM”

The Pledge Program is a responsible, new initiative that is being implemented in the Dickenson County School System. Its mission is to encourage students who are participating in all Virginia High School League-sanctioned extracurricular activities to “Pledge” not use the detrimental illegal substances of tobacco, alcohol and other illegal drugs throughout the school year. If they should break their pledge then the student offender must accept disciplinary actions and attend an intervention program designed to educate and give professional counsel in assisting the offender to stop using the harmful substance. In view of the above, the Pledge Program will be an important dynamic in Dickenson County to help decrease the amount of tobacco, alcohol and other illegal drug use by its youth.

In view of the above, the following are major evaluation goals of the “Pledge Program” in the Dickenson County School System:

1. How consistently the Pledge Program’s procedures, interventions, etc...were implemented in all Dickenson County High Schools.
2. How Pledge Program’s administration and effectiveness is perceived by:
  - a-Extracurricular activity participants
  - b-Parents of extracurricular activity participants
  - c-High school coaches and sponsors of VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activities
  - d-High school principals, guidance personnel and youth resource officers throughout Dickenson County
  - e-Community law enforcement and human service agency professionals, leaders, etc...

Much of the responsibility for the above evaluation activities will rest with the Pledge Intervention Coordinator and an independent consultant to the Pledge Program. Interview and survey instruments will be developed to measure the various perceptions of the Pledge Program’s administration and effectiveness on reducing youth usage of illegal substances throughout Dickenson County. These evaluation activities will take place in May 2004 and then in May every other year thereafter...i.e. 2006, 2008, etc...

It is further suggested that the Dickenson County School System administer the Youth Behavior Risk Survey every other year beginning in the Fall of 2005. This will provide school and community leaders, decision-maker, etc...with comparative statistical data relative to the results of the 2002 Youth Behavior Risk Survey. In being able to analyze such comparative information, the impact of the Dickenson County School Pledge Program on decreasing youth use of tobacco, alcohol and other illegal drugs should be seen.



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## STUDENT-ATHLETE CONCUSSIONS DURING EXTRACURRICULAR ACTIVITIES

The Dickenson County School Board adopted Policy JJAC: *Student-Athlete Concussions During Extracurricular Activities*, on June 22, 2011. As stated in the policy, Dickenson County Public Schools desires the safe return to activity for all student-athletes participating in extracurricular physical activities following an injury, but particularly after a concussion. The goal of this policy is to ensure (i) that coaches, school staff, volunteers, student-athletes, and their parents or guardian are aware of the short-term and long term effects of concussions; (ii) that concussed student-athletes are identified, removed from play immediately, and referred appropriately; and (iii) that concussed student-athletes are returned to play only after receiving appropriate medical care, given adequate time to heal, and are symptom free.

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury, or TBI, caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works.

The severity of a TBI may range from “mild,” i.e., a brief change in mental status or consciousness, to “severe,” i.e., an extended period of unconsciousness or amnesia after the injury.

TBI can cause a wide range of functional short- or long-term changes affecting thinking, sensation, language, or emotions.

- **Thinking** (i.e., memory and reasoning);
- **Sensation** (i.e., touch, taste, and smell);
- **Language** (i.e., communication, expression, and understanding); and
- **Emotion** (i.e., depression, anxiety, personality changes, aggression, acting out, and social inappropriateness).

TBI can also cause epilepsy and increase the risk for conditions such as Alzheimer’s disease, Parkinson’s disease, and other brain disorders that become more prevalent with age.

About 75% of TBIs that occur each year are concussions or other forms of mild TBI.

Repeated mild TBIs occurring over an extended period of time (i.e., months, years) can result in cumulative neurological and cognitive deficits. Repeated mild TBIs occurring within a short period of time (i.e., hours, days, or weeks) can be catastrophic or fatal.

For these reasons, a student-athlete that is removed from an extra-curricular activity because he/she is suspected of having sustained a concussion or brain injury shall not be allowed to return to extracurricular physical activities, which includes the student-athlete’s practices, games, or competitions, until the student presents a written medical release from the student-athlete’s licensed health care provider. The written medical release shall certify that (i) the provider is aware of the current medical guidance on concussion evaluation and management; (ii) the student-athlete no longer exhibits signs symptoms or behaviors consistent with a concussion at rest or with exertion; and (iii) that the student-athlete has successfully completed a progressive return to sports participation program. The length of progressive return to sports participation program shall be determined by the student-athlete’s licensed health care provider but shall last a minimum of five calendar days.

Furthermore, the coach of a student-athlete may elect not to allow a student-athlete to return to extracurricular physical activities, even after the production of a written medical release from the student-athlete’s licensed health care provider, if the coach observes signs and symptoms of sports-related concussions. If the student-athlete’s coach makes such a decision, the coach shall communicate the observations and concerns to the student-athlete’s parent or guardian within one day of the decision not to allow such student-athlete to return to extracurricular physical activities.

Please contact your school’s principal or coach if you have any questions or concerns.

# CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR ATHLETES



## CONCUSSION FACTS

- A concussion is a brain injury that affects how your brain works.
- A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or body.
- A concussion can happen even if you haven't been knocked out.
- If you think you have a concussion, you should not return to play on the day of the injury and until a health care professional says you are OK to return to play.



## CONCUSSION SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

Concussion symptoms differ with each person and with each injury, and may not be noticeable for hours or days.

Common symptoms include:

- Headache
- Confusion
- Difficulty remembering or paying attention
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feeling irritable, more emotional, or "down"
- Nausea or vomiting
- Bothered by light or noise
- Double or blurry vision
- Slowed reaction time
- Sleep problems
- Loss of consciousness

During recovery, exercising or activities that involve a lot of concentration (such as studying, working on the computer, or playing video games) may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.

## WHY SHOULD I REPORT MY SYMPTOMS?

- Unlike with some other injuries, playing or practicing with concussion symptoms is dangerous and can lead to a longer recovery and a delay in your return to play.
- While your brain is still healing, you are much more likely to have another concussion.
- A repeat concussion in a young athlete can result in permanent damage to your brain. They can even be fatal.

## WHAT SHOULD I DO IF I THINK I HAVE A CONCUSSION?

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### **DON'T HIDE IT. REPORT IT.**

Ignoring your symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Tell your coach, parent, and athletic trainer if you think you or one of your teammates may have a concussion. Don't let anyone pressure you into continuing to practice or play with a concussion.

### **GET CHECKED OUT.**

Only a health care professional can tell if you have a concussion and when it's OK to return to play. Sports have injury timeouts and player substitutions so that you can get checked out and the team can perform at its best. The sooner you get checked out, the sooner you may be able to safely return to play.

### **TAKE CARE OF YOUR BRAIN.**

A concussion can affect your ability to do schoolwork and other activities. Most athletes with a concussion get better and return to sports, but it is important to rest and give your brain time to heal. A repeat concussion that occurs while your brain is still healing can cause long-term problems that may change your life forever.



▶ **"IT'S BETTER TO MISS ONE GAME,  
THAN THE WHOLE SEASON."**

JOIN THE CONVERSATION AT [www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp](https://www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp)

**HEADS UP**

TO LEARN MORE GO TO [www.cdc.gov/concussion](http://www.cdc.gov/concussion)

Content Source: CDC's Heads Up Program. Created through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).

# CONCUSSION FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS



## WHAT IS A CONCUSSION?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury. Concussions are caused by a bump or blow to the head. Even a "ding," "getting your bell rung," or what seems to be a mild bump or blow to the head can be serious.

You can't see a concussion. Signs and symptoms of concussion can show up right after the injury or may not appear or be noticed until days or weeks after the injury. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms yourself, seek medical attention right away.

## WHAT ARE THE SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION?

If your child has experienced a bump or blow to the head during a game or practice, look for any of the following signs of a concussion:

### SYMPTOMS REPORTED BY ATHLETE:

- Headache or "pressure" in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Balance problems or dizziness
- Double or blurry vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Sensitivity to noise
- Feeling sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Concentration or memory problems
- Confusion
- Just not "feeling right" or is "feeling down"

### SIGNS OBSERVED BY PARENTS/ GUARDIANS:

- Appears dazed or stunned
- Is confused about assignment or position
- Forgets an instruction
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily
- Answers questions slowly
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- Shows mood, behavior, or personality changes



## DANGER SIGNS

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Be alert for symptoms that worsen over time. Your child or teen should be seen in an emergency department right away if s/he has:

- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) larger than the other
- Drowsiness or cannot be awakened
- A headache that gets worse and does not go away
- Weakness, numbness, or decreased coordination
- Repeated vomiting or nausea
- Slurred speech
- Convulsions or seizures
- Difficulty recognizing people or places
- Increasing confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Unusual behavior
- Loss of consciousness (even a brief loss of consciousness should be taken seriously)

## WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IF YOU THINK YOUR CHILD HAS A CONCUSSION?

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### 1. SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION RIGHT AWAY

A health care professional will be able to decide how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to return to regular activities, including sports.

### 2. KEEP YOUR CHILD OUT OF PLAY.

Concussions take time to heal. Don't let your child return to play the day of the injury and until a health care professional says it's OK. Children who return to play too soon - while the brain is still healing - risk a greater chance of having a second concussion. Repeat or later concussions can be very serious. They can cause permanent brain damage, affecting your child for a lifetime.

### 3. TELL YOUR CHILD'S COACH ABOUT ANY PREVIOUS CONCUSSION.

Coaches should know if your child had a previous concussion. Your child's coach may not know about a concussion your child received in another sport or activity unless you tell the coach.

## HOW CAN YOU HELP YOUR CHILD PREVENT A CONCUSSION OR OTHER SERIOUS BRAIN INJURY?

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- Ensure that they follow their coach's rules for safety and the rules of the sport.
- Encourage them to practice good sportsmanship at all times.
- Make sure they wear the right protective equipment for their activity. Protective equipment should fit properly and be well maintained.
- Wearing a helmet is a must to reduce the risk of a serious brain injury or skull fracture.
  - However, helmets are not designed to prevent concussions. There is no "concussion-proof" helmet. So, even with a helmet, it is important for kids and teens to avoid hits to the head.

## HOW CAN I HELP MY CHILD RETURN TO SCHOOL SAFELY AFTER A CONCUSSION?

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Children and teens who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks as needed
- Spend fewer hours at school
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments
- Receive help with schoolwork
- Reduce time spent reading, writing, or on the computer

Talk with your child's teachers, school nurse, coach, speech-language pathologist, or counselor about your child's concussion and symptoms. As your child's symptoms decrease, the extra help or support can be removed gradually.



JOIN THE CONVERSATION  [www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp](http://www.facebook.com/CDCHeadsUp)

TO LEARN MORE GO TO >> [WWW.CDC.GOV/CONCUSSION](http://WWW.CDC.GOV/CONCUSSION)

Content Source: CDC's Heads Up Program. Created through a grant to the CDC Foundation from the National Operating Committee on Standards for Athletic Equipment (NOCSAE).

APPENDIX A

**DICKENSON COUNTY SCHOOL SYSTEM  
EXTRACURRICULAR STUDENT PARTICIPATION PLEDGE  
PROGRAM**

**STUDENT PLEDGE**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, pledge that I will not use tobacco, alcohol or other illegal drugs during the school year \_\_\_\_\_.

If I break this pledge, I understand that I may be suspended or dismissed from the VHSL-sanctioned extracurricular activity in which I am participating. Furthermore, I understand, upon reasonable suspicion, I may be tested for the use of alcohol or other illegal drugs. I also understand that I shall be subject to random testing by urinalysis under the terms and conditions hereinafter set out for the use of alcohol or other illegal drugs without the necessity of any probable cause or reasonable suspicion.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student Signature

**PARENT PLEDGE**

The undersigned are all of the parents and/or guardians of the above student who have the legal authority to direct our child and/or ward with respect to the above matters. The undersigned do hereby understand and support the above pledge signed by my son/daughter/ward and will help him or her to uphold the pledge. I/We understand and agree that this program in no way supercedes the Dickenson County School Student Conduct Code regarding drugs, alcohol or tobacco violations on school grounds or at school sponsored or coached activities. I/We also understand and agree that a violation of this pledge shall result in my son/daughter/ward being subject to the disciplinary provisions of the pledge program and I agree to submit my child to those provisions, including such intervention programs in accordance to policy adopted by the Dickenson County School System on July 23, 2003.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/guardian signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/guardian signature

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF RECEIPT- CONCUSSION TRAINING MATERIALS**

By signing below, the student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian acknowledges they have received and reviewed the concussion training materials provided by the Dickenson County Public Schools Concussion Management Team.

Furthermore, the student-athlete and the student-athlete's parent or guardian acknowledges by signing below the concussion training requirements will be met and valid for all of the student-athlete's extracurricular physical activities for one calendar year.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent/Guardian Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Student-Athlete Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

**\*Please return this form to your school's principal or coach\***