

By Jan Schultz

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Chase County Schools is doing its part in meeting the requirements of LB 260, the Nebraska Concussion Awareness Act.

Activities Director Troy Hauxwell and School Nurse Angie Paisley, R.N., said administrators, coaches and athletes all should be up to speed on the law's requirements.

Basically, the Concussion Awareness Act has two major facets—education and how suspected concussions are handled.

Hauxwell said all of the CCS coaches have been given the information on accessing an online training program, which is followed by a test they can take.

Once the training and testing is completed, each coach must present their certificate of “successful completion” to Hauxwell.

It is also expected that each coach review concussion education and how they will be handled with parents and guardians at their individual parent meetings, and well as with their players.

In addition to education, the new Nebraska law also spells out how a suspected concussion will be handled.

Paisley noted that, now, anytime a student is removed from practice or a contest with a suspected concussion or brain injury, their parents must be notified and the player must be evaluated by a licensed health care professional.

The athlete can return to practice and games only with a written clearance from both the health care professional and parents, and then it's a “progressive” return to play, Paisley emphasized. She said that may be just running initially, or a gradual return to practice.

Education about concussions is key, Paisley said.

“The big thing now is that kids know if they get hit hard, they need to tell somebody,” she said.

CCS actually started IMPACT testing of all athletes two years ago as concern with concussions among young athletes started to mount.

That baseline test is given to each CCS athlete before fall sports practices begin. The test measures neuro-cognitive responses including verbal memory, visual memory, reaction time, processing speed and impulse control, Paisley said.

If there is a suspected injury, the school will do another IMPACT test no less than 24 hours after the injury. Often, Paisley said, the doctor seeing the injured athlete will want to see that athlete's IMPACT tests for comparison.

Athletes are required to retake the IMPACT test every two years after initial one.