

Richmond County Board of Education

Awareness of Football Risk

The coaches in our football program are well qualified, professionals that emphasize the proper fundamentals related to playing the game of football. Regardless of this fact, football being a contact sport, injuries will occur. It is the purpose of this handout to inform the player and the parent of this and make them aware of the safety precautions that must be adhered to in order to prevent or minimize injuries.

By rule the helmet is not to be used as a “ram.” It is not possible to play the game safely or correctly without making some contact with the helmet when properly blocking and tackling, but proper technique would be for the initial contact to be made with the shoulder. In addition, the head should never be bent downward when making contact. If the head is bent downward on contact or if the contact is on the top of the helmet, serious injury could occur; including joint dislocation, nerve damage, paralysis, or even death.

Rules also prohibit a player from blocking below the waist outside a two by four-yard area next to the football. This is an important rule which was made to help minimize the number of serious knee and ankle injuries.

It is important that the uniform, especially the helmet and shoulder pads, fit properly. All players should have some basic knowledge of the correct fitting uniform. Shoulder pads that are too small will leave the shoulder point vulnerable to bruises or separations. If they are too tight in the neck area, a pinched nerve could result. Shoulder pads that are too large will leave the neck area vulnerable and will slide on the shoulders, once again making them vulnerable to bruises and separations.

Helmets must fit snugly at the contact points: front, back, and top of the head. Each helmet must be “NOCSAE” branded for safety and a warning sticker must be visible. On contact, a helmet too tightly fitting helmet could produce a headache. One fitting too loosely could produce headaches, concussions, face injuries such as broken noses or cheek bones, or a serious neck injury. No player should practice until both he and the coach are satisfied with the fit of the helmet.

This handout does not cover all possible injuries while playing football, but it is an effort to make both the players and parents aware of the fact that proper techniques, adhering to the rules of the game, and properly fitting equipment are vital to each player’s safety and enjoyment of the game.

We understand the information presented and are aware of the risks involved in playing football. We also understand that the player must accept a major role in the prevention of serious injuries by adhering to the rules, by using proper technique, and by using properly fitted equipment.

Athlete Signature _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____



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