

TITLE: CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

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1.0 OBJECTIVE

To ensure awareness about head injury prevention and establish practices to manage concussions.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

In this policy,

2.1 **Board** refers to the Board of Trustees.

2.2 **Concussion** refers to a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to signs and symptoms that can be physical, cognitive, emotional and/or related to sleep. A concussion can occur from a direct blow to the head, face or neck but may also occur from a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. A concussion can occur with or without a loss of consciousness and cannot normally be seen by means of medical imaging tests or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans.

2.3 **District** refers to the Ottawa-Carleton District School Board.

2.4 **Return to School Plan** is a personalized strategy to support a student's Return to Learning and Return to Physical Activity after having sustained a concussion.

2.5 **Return to Learn** refers to the student's return to doing school work, including activities that involve reading and writing. It does not include physical activities.

2.6 **Return to Physical Activity** refers to the student's return to participation in any physical activity that increases the student's heart rate. It includes a student's return to activities such as sports or physical education classes.

3.0 POLICY

Guiding Principles

3.1 The Board is committed to ensuring the safety and well-being of students.

- 3.2 The Board recognizes that:
- a) head injuries and/or concussions can adversely impact the cognitive, physical, emotional and social development of students; and
 - b) head injuries and/or concussions can occur in any activity and are not restricted to only sports or other high-risk activities.
- 3.3 The Board believes that:
- a) activities that pose a higher risk for head injuries and/or concussions require additional consideration based on the type of activity and its associated risk;
 - b) awareness of the signs and symptoms of concussion and effective concussion management practices are key preventative strategies; and
 - c) administrators, educators (including occasional teachers), school staff, students, parents, and school volunteers play an important role not only in the prevention of concussion but also in the identification of a suspected concussion, as well as the ongoing monitoring of students with a diagnosed concussion throughout their Return to School Plan.
- 3.4 The Board recognizes the international consensus statement on concussion in sports.
- 3.5 The Board recognizes the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)'s concussion protocol, as part of the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE).

4.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

Awareness and Training

- 4.1 The Board recognizes Rowan's Law Day and shall ensure annual concussion awareness events for students and parents are held on or around Rowan's Law Day, which occurs on the last Wednesday in September.
- 4.2 The District shall make available information and resources regarding concussion prevention, identification, and management to:
- a) all staff;
 - b) students;
 - c) parents;
 - d) volunteers;
 - e) community partners; and
 - f) childcare providers.
- 4.3 Annual training shall be made available to relevant school staff and extra-curricular leaders to promote awareness and understanding of concussion management practices.

- 4.4 The District shall engage students in concussion-related discussions, including the following:
- a) the importance of fair play and respect for all;
 - b) understanding prohibited play that is considered high-risk for causing concussions;
 - c) understanding the risks of concussion in everyday activities; and
 - d) the importance of the recognition and reporting of concussion symptoms.
- 4.5 Other Prevention Strategies shall include:
- a) minimizing slips and falls in compliance with the Occupiers Liability Act;
 - b) incorporating the rules of a physical activity/sport in the District's learning materials; and
 - c) the proper progressive implementation of the skills required for any physical activity.

Identification and Management

- 4.6 The District shall have practices and procedures in place to govern the identification and management of concussions based on the safety guidelines established by the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA).
- 4.7 The management of a student's concussion is a shared responsibility, requiring regular communication between home, school, sports organizations with which a student is involved and registered, and the student's medical doctor or nurse practitioner or other licensed healthcare providers, such as nurses, physiotherapists, chiropractors, and athletic therapists, who may play a role in the management of a diagnosed concussion.
- 4.8 The District shall use a multi-step Return to School plan which includes: Rest, Return to Learn (symptoms improving), Return to Learn (symptom-free), Return to Physical Activity (light), Return to Physical Activity (specific sports) and Return to Physical Activity (full participation).
- 4.9 Where there is a reason for concern about the possibility of a head injury and/or concussion, the safe practice shall be to discontinue student participation in the activity.
- 4.10 The District shall make it a priority to communicate with parents immediately when a concussion is suspected.
- 4.11 A student with a suspected concussion shall not return to full participation in physical activity unless they are medically cleared by a physician or a nurse practitioner.

Implementation

- 4.12 Every year prior to participation in inter-school Board sponsored sports, confirmation of the review of one of the Ministry of Education approved concussion awareness resources and the respective concussion code of conduct will be submitted to the District from the following individuals:
- a) participant students;

- b) their parents/guardians;
- c) participant coaches;
- d) team trainers; and
- e) other participating staff.

4.13 The Director of Education is authorized to issue such procedures as may be necessary to implement this policy.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Education Act, 1990, Section 321

Rowan's Law, 2018

[Consensus Statement on concussion in sport](#) by the Concussion in Sport Group.

[OPHEA-Concussion Protocol](#)

Ministry of Education [PPM 158, School Board Policies on Concussion](#)

[The Berlin Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, October 2016](#)

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