



## Concussion Protocol

### STATEMENT

This Concussion Protocol is part of our commitment to keeping children safe. The information contained in this Protocol is intended for educational and guidance purposes only and is not meant to be a substitute for appropriate medical advice or care.

If you believe that you or someone under your care has sustained a concussion we strongly recommend that you contact a qualified health care professional for appropriate diagnosis and treatment.

### DEFINITION

Concussion is temporary unconsciousness or confusion, with other symptoms, caused by a blow or acceleration/deceleration of the head. More severe traumatic brain injuries can cause bruising, damage to the blood vessels and injury to the nerves.

### TYPICAL CAUSES OF CONCUSSION IN SCHOOLS

Concussion incidents can occur in a whole range of incident scenarios in the school environment. Students can have a fall, knock their head and get a concussion from an incident in the hallway, playground, sports field, canteen or school yard brawl.

The most common cause of concussion in school is incidents occurring on the sporting field from high risk 'contact sports' such as rugby, football, cricket, hockey, soccer, basketball, etc.

### PREVENTION PROCEDURE

In order to try and reduce the risk of concussion in the sporting field, the following guidelines should be followed:

- Staff are to ensure the playing or training area is safe e.g. playing area condition, safety equipment utilised
- Staff are ensure correct playing techniques are coached and performed consistently by all players
- Staff will explain the dangers of inappropriate tackles or styles of play and penalise them immediately if they occur
- Staff will encourage players and parents to report any concussions that occur during any game and training sessions and to report concussions that occur out of school. It is essential that all parties involved communicate if a player is concussed
- Staff will encourage players to wear protective equipment including headgear, padding, mouth and eye guards. If the player wears protective equipment, where possible, staff will ensure the equipment meets industry safety standards, is properly fitted, well maintained and worn consistently.

### IDENTIFYING CONCUSSION

All players with a suspected concussion, where no appropriately trained personnel are present, **MUST** be assumed to have a diagnosed concussion and **MUST** be removed from the field of play and not return to play or train on the same day. In this situation, players must be referred to a healthcare professional for further assessment.

If a medical practitioner (doctor) or healthcare professional (nurse / paramedic) is available at the time of injury, the player should immediately seek their advice.

### **TYPICAL SYMPTOMS AND WARNING SIGNS OF CONCUSSION**

Concussions can be difficult to diagnose as the signs and symptoms of concussion can be present immediately following the injury but may not appear or be noticed until hours or days after the injury. Symptoms take many forms and may be emotional, physical, affect memory or exhibit several signs of tiredness. It is important to recognise the signs of a concussion so the proper steps are taken to treat the injury.

Warning signs include:

- Student is unable to recall events before or after the knock
- Student shows behaviour or personality changes
- Student appears dazed or stunned; is confused about events
- Student feels dizzy or vomits
- Student can only answer questions slowly, constantly reports questions
- Loses consciousness (even briefly)
- One pupil (the black part in the middle of the eye) becomes larger than the other
- Student has difficulty recognising people or places
- Student shows increasing signs of confusion, restlessness, or agitation
- Student experiences visual problems
- Student experiences fatigue

### **FIRST AID AND MEDICAL RESPONSE FOR SUSPECTED CONCUSSION**

All concussions must be treated seriously. Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness and a prompt, proper response is required. The following steps are a guide for the action that should be taken:

- 1 Remove the player from field of play, in a sporting situation.
- 2a. If the incident happened on site then the student should be assisted to Student Services for assessment
- 2b. If the incident happened off site then the appropriate medical / first aid representative should be advised
- 3 Advise the student's parents or guardians of the incident.
- 4 Complete ERM Incident Report

If the student is still in your care:

- 5 Monitor the student closely within the first four hours of the incident.
- 6 Medical attention from a medical/healthcare practitioner should be sought for the student.
- 7 Any instruction given by a medical practitioner should be complied with, including undertaking a CT scan or MRI and taking prescribed medication.
- 8 Ensure the student seeks follow-up medical attention within 24 to 72 hours if symptoms worsen.

### **GUARD AGAINST REPEATED CONCUSSIONS**

There is concern that repeated concussions may cause cumulative effects on the brain and have serious consequences, including permanent brain damage and long-term effects.

If a student has suffered repeated concussions, ensure the student is seeking the appropriate medical advice for their condition before allowing them to participate in sporting activities.