

SAMPLE SCHOOL BOARD CONCUSSION POLICY TEMPLATE

Concussion Definition:

Concussion is the term for a clinical diagnosis that is made by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner.

A concussion:

- is a traumatic brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to signs and symptoms that can emerge immediately or in the hours or days after the injury. It is possible for symptoms to take up to 7 days to appear.
- signs and symptoms can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- may be caused by a jarring impact to the head, face, neck or body, with an impulsive force transmitted to the head, that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull (for a visual description of how a concussion occurs, see cdn.hockeycanada.ca/hockey-canada/Hockey-Programs/Safety/Concussion/Infographic/english.html);
- can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact, most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness);
- cannot normally be seen on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs; and
- is typically expected to result in symptoms lasting 1-4 weeks in children and youth (under 18 years), but in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.

X School Board recognizes the importance of the health, safety and overall well-being of its students and that the safety of students are essential preconditions for effective learning and as such is committed to providing assiduous attention to the health and safety of its students and taking steps to reduce the risk of injury.

It is very important to students' long-term health and academic success that individuals in schools have information on appropriate strategies to minimize risk of concussion, steps to follow if they suspect that a student may have a concussion and effective management procedures to guide students' return to learning and physical activity after a diagnosed concussion.

X Board recognizes that children and adolescents are among those at greatest risk for concussions and that while there is potential for a concussion any time there is body trauma, the risk is greatest during activities where collisions can occur, such as during school based physical activity programs (curricular, intramural, interschool), playground time or field trips.

Application and Scope:

The policy will address the development and implementation of the following concussion components addressed in the Concussion Protocol.

The components include strategies to develop awareness of the seriousness of concussions; strategies for the prevention and recognition of concussions; management procedures for diagnosed concussions (Return to School/Return to Physical Activity); and training for board and school staff.

Awareness:

- strategies on the seriousness of concussions and on concussion prevention, identification, and management, communicated to students, parents, board employees, administrators, educators, school staff, volunteers, doctors and nurse practitioners and community-based organizations
- connections with the curriculum are to be made, where appropriate
- information on concussion is to be shared with organizations that use the school facilities

Prevention:

- strategies for preventing and minimizing the risk of sustaining a concussion (and other head injuries) in schools and at off-site school events are to be developed, shared and implemented by students

Recognition:

The following are to be developed, shared and implemented by appropriate school personnel:

- a) **Initial response** for safe removal of an injured student with a suspected concussion from the activity;
- b) **Initial recognition of a suspected concussion;**
- c) **Steps required following the initial recognition of a suspected concussion;**
- d) **Steps required when signs and/or symptoms are not identified but a possible concussion event was recognized.**

Management Procedures for a Diagnosed Concussion:

- Home Preparation for Return to School (RTS) and Return to Physical Activity (RTPA) Plan
- School Concussion Management Plan – Return to School (RTS) and Return to Physical Activity (RTPA) Plan
- processes for identifying and documenting modifications/adaptations for student learning are to be established and implemented
- resources for students who are recovering from a concussion and experiencing long term difficulties that are affecting his/her learning e.g. individualized classroom accommodations are to be established and followed

Training:

- strategies for providing regular and ongoing training for concussion awareness, prevention, identification and management to relevant school board employees and

school volunteers basing the timing and intensity of training on staff roles and responsibilities are to be established

The roles and responsibilities of administrators, educators, school staff, student, parents and school volunteers will be clearly outlined throughout.

This policy authorizes the development of administrative procedures for concussion.

In the development of the concussion policy and administrative procedures other stakeholders should be encouraged to participate - e.g., school staff, students, parents/guardians, teacher federations, education support staff unions, public health and other education partners as appropriate.