Northeastern Catholic District School Board

STUDENT CONCUSSION

Administrative Procedure Number: APE038

POLICY STATEMENT

The Northeastern Catholic District School Board (NCDSB) prioritizes the health and safety of all students involved in school activities, sports, and physical education. The Board is committed to preventing concussions, recognizing them promptly, and ensuring that students who sustain a concussion only return to learning or play once medically cleared, minimizing the risk of further injury.

REFERENCES

Education Act
Ontario Physical & Health Education Association (OPHEA)
Ontario School Board Insurance Exchange (OSBIE)
Ministry of Education – Concussion Awareness Resources
Heads Together Concussion Coalition Timmins: *Return to School Safety Checklist Educator Guide*
Policy Program Memorandum (PPM)
    158 School Board Policies on Concussion
NCDSB Retention Schedule
NCDSB Policy
    E-24 Personal Information Management
    E-38 Student Concussion

DEFINITIONS

Concussion
A brain injury that causes change in the way in which the brain functions and that can lead to symptoms that can be physical (*headache, dizziness*), cognitive (*difficulty in concentrating or remembering*), emotional/behavioural (*depression, irritability*) and/or relate to sleep (*drowsiness, difficulty falling sleep*).

Concussions may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or by a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull.

PROCEDURES

1.0 GENERAL PROVISIONS

1.1 A student's health and safety will always come before participation in any school or board-sponsored sporting event.

1.2 All provisions of these administrative procedures are used for all school and school board activities, including educational excursions and board-sponsored sporting events for all students, Kindergarten to Grade 12.

1.3 Wherever possible, the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPHEA) shall be used for guidance, information, and response.

1.4 Only a physician or nurse practitioner can officially diagnose a concussion and provide medical clearance to a student.

2.0 AWARENESS AND EDUCATION

2.1 All students, parents/guardians, coaches, and staff involved in board-sponsored interschool sports are required to review Concussion Awareness Resources, available online through the Ministry of Education or OPHEA websites.

2.2 The Principal will meet with school-based coaches at least one time annually to further review the signs of concussion and the related procedures for reporting and return to physical activity provisions.

2.3 Wherever possible, classroom educators will connect student learning about concussions with the curriculum, where relevant.

2.4 All NCDSB schools will recognize and participate in Rowan's Law Day, which occurs on the last Wednesday in September.

3.0 CONCUSSION PREVENTION STRATEGIES

3.1 A Concussion Code of Conduct will be adopted to help minimize the risk of concussion. The requirements include, but are not limited to:

i) Maintaining a safe learning environment;
ii) Teaching and/or learning and applying the rules of a physical activity/sport;
iii) Implementing the skills and strategies for a physical activity in proper progression;
iv) Fair play and respect for all;
v) Acknowledging and respecting the consequences for prohibited play that is considered high-risk for causing concussions;
vi) Providing opportunities to discuss potential issues related to concussions;
vii) Recognizing and reporting concussions;
viii) Acknowledging the importance of communication between the student, parents, school staff, and any sport organization with which the student is registered;
ix) Supporting the implementation of a Return to Learn and Physical Activity plan for students who have a concussion diagnosis;
x) Prioritizing a student's return to learning as part of the Return to Learn and Physical Activity plan.

3.2 The Concussion Code of Conduct will be available online, via the Board's website. The appropriate version must be completed and signed by students, parents/guardians, and staff/coaches.

3.3 The Principal will receive and file signed copies of the Concussion Code of Conduct at least one time annually by students participating in a board-sponsored interschool sport, the parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 years old who are participating in a board-sponsored interschool sports, and NCDSB coaches.

4.0 IDENTIFICATION AND RESPONSE

When a student is suspected of having sustained a concussion during a school activity of event:

4.1 Remove and Assess

i) Stop the activity immediately and, when safe, remove the student from play.
ii) Observe for signs and symptoms of concussion.

4.2 If no signs or symptoms are present:

i) The student may return to activity only if symptom-free, at the discretion of the teacher/coach/supervisor.
ii) Contact the parent/guardians to inform them of the incident that same day.

4.3 If signs or symptoms are present (or uncertain):

i) Do not allow the student to return to play.
ii) Contact the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) to pick up the student and encourage prompt medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner.
iii) Provide the parent/guardian with all relevant information regarding the incident, signs, and symptoms.
iv) Provide the parent/guardian with the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

4.4 If the student is unconscious or has experienced any loss of consciousness:

i) Stop the activity immediately and call 911. Do not move the student and do not remove athletic equipment unless the student is having difficulty breathing.
ii) Stay with the student until emergency medical services arrive.
iii) Contact the parent/guardian (or emergency contact) to inform them of the incident and that emergency medical services have been contacted.
iv) Monitor and document any changes in the student (physical, cognitive, emotional, behavioural).
v) Do not administer any medications related to the suspected concussion, unless required for another condition.
vi) Provide the parent/guardian with the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

4.5 Follow-Up and Reporting

i) The teacher/coach/supervisor must inform the Principal once immediate needs have been addressed.

ii) Complete an OSBIE Incident Report.

iii) Attend to the ongoing completion of the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

5.0 RETURN TO LEARN AND RETURN TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

5.1 When a student has been diagnosed with a concussion, they must follow a gradual, step-by-step process for returning to school and physical activity. Progress through each stage occurs when symptom-free for at least 24 hours and with appropriate medical guidance.

5.2 Step 1 – Rest and Recover

i) The student rests at home until physical and cognitive symptoms begin to improve.

ii) Limit use of screen time, reading, or physical activities in accordance with medical advice provided by a physician or nurse practitioner.

iii) Parent/guardian notifies the school once the student is able to resume light mental activity.

iv) Parent/guardian returns the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

5.3 Step 2 – Return to Learn

i) Student returns to school with supports and accommodations as needed (reduced workload, breaks, modified schedule).

ii) The parent/guardian and Principal sign the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

iii) Staff monitor symptoms and adjust as appropriate.

iv) Full academic participation resumes when the student can tolerate a normal school day without symptoms.

5.4 Step 3 – Return to Physical Activity

i) Return to physical activity will occur through a gradual progression that moves from light activity to full participation, in accordance with medical advice.

ii) Progression is contingent on the student remaining symptom-free for at least 24 hours at each stage.

iii) Written medical clearance from a physician or nurse practitioner is mandatory before returning to full participation.

iv) The parent/guardian and Principal sign the form *Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity.*

5.5 Any recurrence of symptoms requires the student to return to the previous step and resume progression only when symptom-free.

5.6 Written medical clearance from a physician or nurse practitioner is required before the student returns to full contact or competition. A copy of this medical information will be kept in the student's Ontario Student Record (OSR) along with any other relevant Student Concussion documentation.

6.0 CONCUSSION TRACKING AND REPORTING

6.1 Principals will track incidents of student concussions and provided data to a Supervisory Officer upon request.

6.2 Principals will maintain training logs and Concussion Code of Conduct acknowledgement for students, staff, and coaches for accountability purposes.

6.3 A Supervisory Officer will report to the Ministry of Education on their activities to achieve the requirements of PPM 158, upon request.

7.0 RELATED FORMS AND DOCUMENTATION

FORM: Concussion Code of Conduct – Student/Athlete
FORM: Concussion Code of Conduct – Staff/Coach
FORM: Student Concussion: Return to Learn and Physical Activity
RESOURCE: Heads Together: Educator Guide
RESOURCE: Concussion Awareness Resources
https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-awareness-resources
https://safety.ophea.net/tools-resources/concussion-awareness-resources

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