

BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL CONCUSSION PROTOCOL

Introduction

Concussion can be described as a brain injury caused by either a direct blow to the head or where an impulsive force has been transmitted to the head. It causes a range of symptoms which does not always include loss of consciousness. All concussions are serious and can happen in any sport or activity. Most people recover in a few days but recovery can take longer, especially in young people.

Second Impact Syndrome (SIS) is a rare condition that occurs when a person with symptoms relating to concussion suffers a second head injury. SIS may occur days or weeks after the initial concussion. Although the second injury may be relatively minor, it can lead to collapse and can be fatal.

The purpose of this protocol is to help:

- Recognise the dangers of concussion;
- Educate everyone to be able to recognise and manage concussion and hence minimise the associated risks;
- Remind everyone that the benefits of sport and activities far outweigh the risks.

Roles and Responsibilities

Board of Governors and Senior Management Team

To educate pupils, parents and all staff and outside coaches on how to recognise concussion and follow the guidance in this protocol, in the interest in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.

Teaching and Non-Teaching Staff

Every teacher should be aware of the signs of concussion as detailed in the Concussion Recognition Tool provided by DENI. They should report any suspected concussion to the school nurse or seek immediate emergency medical assistance as appropriate. In addition, they should complete an Incident Report Form, available from the School Nurse. The School Nurse should notify all staff of any pupil who has presented with suspected concussion.

Sports Staff

If concussion is suspected based on the application of the guidelines outlined in the Concussion Recognition Tool, the following actions should be followed:

- Remove the player from the game at once;
- The player should not be returned to any activity until they are assessed medically;
- No-one with suspected concussion should be left alone or allowed to drive;
- Clear information must be passed on when handing the player over to parents/guardians of what you know about the suspected concussion;
- Appropriate training should be undertaken to help reduce the risk of concussion.
- If you are the member of staff who is supervising when a pupil takes a knock to the head please send an email to all staff and copy the email to Nuala so that she knows about the incident and can keep a formal record as required by Health & Safety Legislation.

Parents

The primary responsibility of parents is to discuss the details of the guidance included in the 'Recognise and Remove' leaflet with their son or daughter. The leaflet was distributed to all parents in September 2014 and will be distributed to new Year 8 parents every subsequent September. It is also accessible on the school website: Pastoral Care →Concussion Protocol.

In addition, parents should inform the school of any suspected concussion that their son or daughter may have suffered outside school hours and confirm that the child has been medically assessed.

Pupils

Pupils should be aware of the signs of concussion as outlined in the Concussion Recognition Tool and if you suspect that you or a friend has suffered concussion, you should speak to an adult immediately.

Managing a Pupil with Suspected Concussion

Concussion may impact on the child's cognitive ability to learn at school. The following principles should be applied to any pupil who presents with possible concussion due to any cause, not just due to a sporting activity:

- The pupil should be medically assessed either at the scene or taken by the school/parents to A&E or a GP. Parents of a pupil who has suspected concussion following an incident in school will be given guidelines on points to look for when dealing with suspected concussion. (Appendix 1)
- There should be no return to play or strenuous or sport related activity on that day;
- When a pupil is placed on a graduated return to play protocol by a health care professional, it is important that the school, parents and external coaches understand that this means restrictions to the levels of exertion or physical contact should be applied to all their activities. The school will follow the following Graduated Return to Play Protocol:

Rehabilitation Stage	Exercise at each stage of rehabilitation	No of Days	Total Days
1. No activity.	Complete physical and mental rest.	14 days	14 days
2. Light aerobic exercise.	Walking/swimming/stationary cycling.	2 days	16 days
3. Sport-specific exercises.	Running drills. No contact.	2 days	18 days
4. Non-contact training drills.	Progression to more complex training drills.	2 days	20 days
5. Following medical clearance* full contact practice.	May participate in normal training activities.	2 days	22 days
6. After 24 hours, return to play.	May return to full play.	1 day	23 days

*The School's preferred protocol is to receive clearance from a medical practitioner. Parents must complete and return a concussion clearance form after stage 4 of the graduated return to play protocol. (Appendix 2)

- When a pupil is placed on a graduated return to learn protocol, the exact details will be unique to each individual but will involve a graduated reintroduction to school activities and will include some/all of the following:
reassurance from all in the school that the pupil will be supported through their recovery;
shortened school days ; extra time for assignments; no/limited homework; postponement of exams/assessments and regular review of progress.

Appendix 1
INFORMATION FOR BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL PUPILS
WITH SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following an incident your son/daughter has a suspected concussion. They have been assessed and have displayed one or more of the following symptoms:

- Loss of consciousness
- Seizure or convulsion
- Balance problems
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness
- Mood changes
- Fatigue or low energy
- Confusion
- “Don’t feel right”
- Headache
- Dizziness
- Feeling slowed down
- “Pressure in head”
- Blurred vision
- Sensitivity to light
- Amnesia
- Feeling like “in a fog”
- Changes in normal behaviour

It is our recommendation that they be checked by a medical professional to assess the severity of the injury. Until symptoms have disappeared they should not be allowed to drive, use mobile devices or computers and they may need to rest at home.

In line with school policy we will apply the compulsory Graduated Return to Play protocol, which can be accessed on the school website: Pastoral Care →Concussion Protocol.

Appendix 2

**BELFAST HIGH SCHOOL
CONCUSSION CLEARANCE FORM**

Pupil's name:

D.O.B:

Contact telephone no:

Date of suspected concussion:

Number of days that concussion symptoms persisted for (tick 1):

Less than 1 day

1-3 days

4-7 days

8-14 days

More than 14 days

Total number of previous suspected concussions:

Number of concussions, including this one, this academic year:

My son/daughter has completed Belfast High School's graduated return to play protocol up to stage 4.

After stage 4 my son/daughter did/did not attend a doctor for medical clearance and I have/have not attached a signed medical clearance form from the doctor.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____

I confirm that my son/daughter has no on-going concussive symptoms and I give permission for them to return to play.

Signed: _____ (Parent/Guardian)

Date: _____

Received by the School Nurse:

Signed: _____ (Nurse)

Date: _____