



MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES POLICY

Approved by: Board of Governors
Responsibility within the College: Principal
Next review by: September 2023

Date: March 2022
Sub-Committee Review: Education

Methodist College recognizes that concussions and other head injuries are serious and could result in significant brain damage or even death if not recognised and managed properly. This policy aims to promote the safety of pupils participating in school activities, including but not limited to extracurricular sports activities, and to provide academic support for pupils identified with concussive or other head injuries.

It is the responsibility of staff members involved in school activities to act in accordance with this policy when the staff member recognizes that a pupil may be exhibiting signs and symptoms of a concussion.

What is Concussion?

Concussion is a traumatic brain injury. It is a complex process in which forces are transmitted to the brain and result in temporary impairment of brain function. Concussion can have a significant impact on the short and long term health of a pupil if not handled correctly.

RECOGNISE: What are the visible clues of a suspected concussion?

The following visual clues can indicate a possible concussion:

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on the ground/slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet/balance problems or falling over/incoordination
- Grabbing/clutching of head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look
- Confused/not aware of play or events

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?

The presence of any one or more of the following signs and symptoms may suggest a concussion. They may occur hours or even days after the initial incident.

- Loss of consciousness
- Headache or pressure in the head
- Seizure or convulsion
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Difficulty concentrating or feeling like they are in a fog
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness, feeling slowed down, fatigue or low energy
- More emotional than normal, feelings of sadness
- Blurred vision or sensitivity to light and noise
- Nervous, anxious or irritable
- Difficulty remembering or amnesia
- Neck pain

- Not feeling “quite right”

The College’s approach to managing a concussion injury are based on the accepted principles of STOP-INFORM-REST-RETURN

STOP	A pupil with a suspected concussion must be removed immediately from the activity.
INFORM	A pupil with a suspected concussion must report it to a member of staff, referee, coach, teammate, friend or family member and be properly assessed and managed.
REST	A pupil with a concussion must undertake a mandatory rest period as per established guidelines outlined in this policy.
RETURN	A pupil with a concussion must follow a graduated return to learning and return to play programme.

ACTION IN THE EVENT OF A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION (as defined above)

The member of staff responsible for the pupil at the time of the event will:

- Safely and immediately **REMOVE** the pupil from the activity (n.b. a pupil should not be moved, other than required for airway support, if they are suspected of having a neck injury);
- Make an initial assessment following the guidance in the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool;
- Seek medical attention for the pupil from a qualified medical professional (this may be the College Nurse);
- If no qualified medical professional is available, consider transporting the pupil by ambulance for urgent medical assessment;
- Notify the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil to inform them about the incident, remind them of the College’s concussion policy, ask them to be alert to the symptoms of concussion and advise them to seek advice and assistance from a qualified medical professional;
- For an incident onsite: notify the College Nurse. For an incident offsite, notify the teacher in charge of the activity. This person will then inform all other staff by e-mail on the same school day or at the start of the next school day.

Any pupil suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury during a school activity must be removed safely and immediately from the activity and evaluated by a qualified medical professional. The staged programme of return to learning and return to play will be applied in all cases of suspected or confirmed concussion.

The pupil and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be informed on the day of the concussion:

- that they should seek medical attention from a qualified healthcare professional
- that the 23 day protocol for sporting activities will automatically apply

RETURN TO LEARNING AND RETURN TO PLAY

Following a concussion, a pupil may have difficulties with short- and long-term memory, concentration and organisation. They will require rest while recovering from injury (e.g. avoid reading, texting, computer games, watching television) and may even need to stay home from school for a few days. As they return to school, they may need to start with a few classes or a half-day depending on how they feel. They may also benefit from a formal school assessment for limited attendance or homework if recovery from a concussion is taking longer than expected.

The College will accommodate a gradual return to full participation in academic and physical activities as appropriate, based on the recommendation of the pupil’s concussion trained health care provider and appropriate designated school personnel. In the absence of any such recommendation the 23-day protocol will automatically apply. Progression to return to learning and return to play should be determined on a

case-by-case basis. Medical recommendations will be shared with the pupil's Head of Year, the Head of PE and staff.

Factors that may affect the rate of progression include:

- previous history of concussion,
- duration and type of symptoms,
- age of the pupil,
- the sport/activity in which the pupil participates.

A pupil with a history of concussion, one who has had an extended duration of symptoms, or one who is participating in a contact sport may progress more slowly.

THE RETURN TO LEARNING PROGRAMME (Appendix 1) will be devised by the Head of Year, who will notify the pupil and their parents/guardians, all school personnel responsible for supporting the academic needs of the pupil including but not limited to: the pupil's Head of Year, tutor and subject teachers.

THE GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY PROGRAMME (Appendix 2)

A record of pupils on the Return to Play Programme will be kept in the School Information Management System (SIMS). The progress of pupils through the programme will be monitored and recorded by an appropriate member of the games staff.

Under no circumstances will the pupil be allowed to return to play until the 23-day period is completed.

COMMUNICATION

Staff

Staff should follow the advice outlined in the **Concussion Protocol (Appendix 3)**. The teacher in charge of the activity will notify the pupil and their parents/guardians, and all school personnel involved in supporting the pupil in his/her school sport. A **Concussion Report (Appendix 4)** will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil.

The School Nurse will inform staff of pupils who have a suspected or confirmed concussion. An updated list will be issued to staff at the start of each school week.

At the start of each academic year staff will be made aware of this policy and the standards of care relating to the management of concussive injuries. They will be provided with concussion awareness training that includes recognising the signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussive or other head injury. They will be provided with a copy of the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool.

Pupils and Parents/Guardians

Pupils and parents/guardians should report suspected or known concussion or other head injuries that occur outside of school related activities to the College nurse. It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of signs and symptoms related to concussion or head injuries that are recognised while the pupil is not in school.

At the start of each academic year all pupil and parents/guardians will be provided with information about:

- The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected;
- The signs and symptoms associated with concussion and other head injuries; and

- The school's protocols for:
 - the removal of a pupil from an activity when the pupil is suspected of having sustained a concussion or other head injury,
 - the evaluation of a concussion or other head injury, and
 - the pupil's return to participation in school activities, including classes.

CONCUSSION POLICY MANAGEMENT TEAM

The Principal will appoint a Concussion Policy Management Team which *may* include, but will not necessarily be limited to: the College Nurse, the VP Pastoral Care, the Head of Pastoral Care, the Head of the Preparatory Department, the Head of PE, the Director of Rugby, Teachers in Charge of Hockey.

The team will:

- oversee the implementation of this policy and the related standards of care for concussive head injuries;
- ensure that appropriate training is provided for staff;
- review and update the policy and associated procedures on an annual basis.

May 2019 SN

APPENDIX 1: Return to Learning Programme

APPENDIX 2: Methodist College Graduated Return to Play Record (GRTP)

APPENDIX 3: Concussion Protocol (Staff)

APPENDIX 4: Concussion Report

APPENDIX 1: RETURN TO LEARNING PROGRAMME

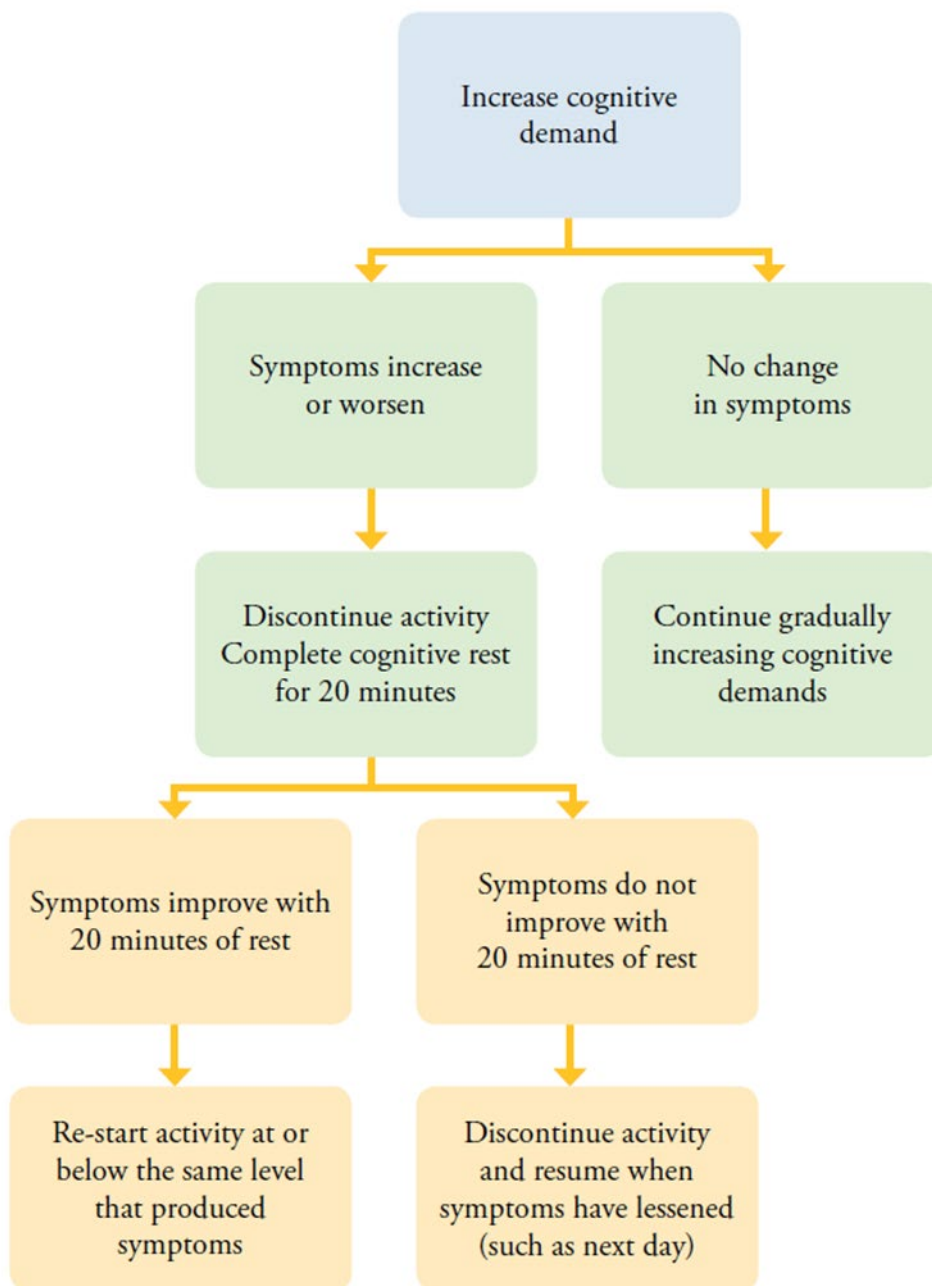
Step 1

Complete physical and cognitive rest. No exertion activity until asymptomatic. This may include staying home from school or limiting school hours (and studying) for several days. Activities requiring concentration and attention may worsen symptoms and delay recovery.

Step 2

Return to school full-time /normal cognitive daily activities (or normal cognitive functions).

Suggested approach to increasing cognitive demand.



APPENDIX 2: METHODIST COLLEGE GRADUATED RETURN TO PLAY RECORD (GRTP)

Methodist College Graduated Return to Play				
Name				
Team				
Date of Suspected Concussion				
			Tick	Signed
GRTP Level 1				
No physical activity 14 days. Walking and light jogging permitted if symptoms not provoked	15/01/1900			(player)
GRTP Level 2				
If symptom free - light aerobic exercise e.g. walking, swimming, stationary cycling, jogging	16/01/1900			(player)
GRTP Level 3				
Rugby/sport specific movement - non contact e.g. side stepping, faster running, body weight resistance training	18/01/1900			(player)
GRTP Level 4				
Rugby Ball work / decision making - non-contact rugby. Progressive resistance training	20/01/1900			(player)
GRTP Level 5				
*Signed off by medical practitioner for contact (rugby only)	22/01/1900			(medical practitioner)
GRTP level 6				
Earliest return to normal game play	24/01/1900			(Parent / Guardian)
* If a doctor would not sign off for return to contact, or if the pupil did not get a doctor's assessment, please tick here				(Parent / Guardian)
The above pupil has completed the GRTP under my guidance				
				(Coach)

APPENDIX 3: CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (Staff)

Concussion Protocol

Sports Concussion – Off Site

Once a concussion is suspected

1. Contact the parent and give the pupil a copy of the concussion letter. At the earliest opportunity:
2. Email the school nurse with the name of the pupil. Rugby concussions must be reported to the Director of Rugby
3. Fill in the concussion register spreadsheet (located in 'My Computer', 'Staff', 'Concussion')
4. Complete the MCB injury report form for all suspected concussions. If it is a rugby concussion, then also complete an IRFU injury report form at <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/injury-reporting.php>
5. Print a GRTP form and give it to the pupil
6. Assist the pupil to complete the protocol
7. Collect the completed GRTP form after the 23 days

Sports Concussion - in School

1. Send the pupil to the school nurse; she will email all staff and contact a parent
2. The nurse will complete the concussion register spreadsheet (located in 'My Computer', 'Staff', 'Concussion')
3. Complete the MCB injury report form for all concussions
4. The nurse will print a GRTP form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter
5. The nurse will manage the GRTP if the pupil does not play for a school team.
6. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach

Non-Sports Concussion

1. Send the pupil to the school nurse; she will email all staff and contact a parent
2. If you were on duty, ensure the MCB injury report form is completed
3. The nurse will complete the register and print a GRTP form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter
4. The nurse will manage the GRTP if the pupil does not play for a school team.
5. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach

Concussion outside of school

If you find out, or 'hear rumours' that a pupil has been concussed at home:

1. Email the details to the school nurse and the Head of PE
2. The nurse will email all staff and contact a parent
3. The nurse will complete the register and print a GRTP form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter
4. The nurse will manage the GRTP if the pupil does not play for a school team
5. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach

Completing the Concussion Register

1. Open 'My Computer', 'Staff', 'Concussion', 'Concussion Register'
2. Click on the relevant date tab at the bottom e.g. 2023-24
3. Enter the pupil name and the date the concussion occurred; the dates of each GRTP stage will populate automatically
4. Click on the 'GRTP Template' tab
5. Complete the form GRTP. Just enter the pupil name and the date of the concussion. The dates of each stage will populate automatically. Print and give to the pupil.
6. Ensure you record that each form has been completed

Paper Trail

All completed GRTP forms should be returned to the PE Administration assistant

The MCB accident report form and a copy of the IRFU form must be sent to Diana Boyd within 4 days.

Once the IRFU form has been completed online, you will receive an email with a link to enable it to be printed.

Completed GRTP forms will be sent to the School Executive Officer for filing with the pupil's file

Weekly Email

The school nurse will email all staff the list of pupils still under concussion GRTP every Monday.

APPENDIX 4: CONCUSSION REPORT



Concussion Report

Pupil _____ Date _____

Treatment given following incident

Dear Parent/Guardian

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

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Loss of consciousness• Seizure or convulsion• Balance problems• Nausea or vomiting• Drowsiness• Player is more emotional• Irritability• Sadness• Fatigue or low energy• More nervous/anxious	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Confusion• “Don’t feel right”• Headache• Dizziness• Feeling slowed down• “Pressure in head”• Blurred vision• Sensitivity to light• Amnesia• Feeling like “in a fog”
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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 tablets/phones/computers, or indeed attend school.

In line with school policy we will apply the compulsory Graduated Return to Play. This involves the following;

1. NO physical activity of any kind for 14 days (including PE)
2. A gradual increase in the level of physical activity up to 23 days
3. An assessment by a medical practitioner to permit a return to normal activity

This is summarised on the GRTP sheet accompanying this letter. The signed GRTP must be returned to school at the end of the 23 days. We would appreciate your co-operation with ensuring the protocol is followed to ensure the welfare of your son/daughter.

Further advice is available at www.patient.co.uk/health/head-injury-instructions . If you have any queries, please contact either Mr Lowe 02890205205.