

Moore Public Schools Post-Concussion Return to Academics Guidelines

A student's best chance of full recovery from a concussion involves two critical components: *cognitive and physical rest*. Continued research has focused on the fact that cognitive rest is essential to the quick resolution of concussion symptoms.

Cognitive stimulation can include: driving, playing video games, using computers and other electronic devices, text messaging, cell phone use, loud and/or bright environments, watching television, reading and studying. All these activities must be limited, and in most cases, completely avoided.

Physical activity such as physical education, sports activities, and strength and/or cardiovascular conditioning must be regulated and/or avoided while recovering from a concussion.

Each student's journey through the Return to Academics (RTA) and Return to Play (RTP) protocols is individualized. Not all diagnosed concussions require academic accommodations. RTA and RTP may run in collaboration with each other, but each should be considered independent of each other and designed specifically for the injured party.

Points of Emphasis:

It is important to note that recovery from a concussion is a very individualized process. Caution must be taken not to compare students with concussions as they progress through the recovery process. The information below is provided to teachers, parents, and students as a guide to assist with concussion recovery.

- For the academic protocol to be initiated, the student must be evaluated by a qualified medical professional (MD, DO, ATC) and documentation must be provided to the school.
- It is important that once the student has returned to school, they report to the athletic trainer daily, in order to monitor symptoms as well as to determine progression to the next stage with the return to academic guidelines.
- For every day the student is within stages 1-3 (see stages below), it is recommended that they be granted the same number of days to complete missed academic work.
- The student should be granted adequate time to complete missed academic work based upon the amount of time needed for complete recovery.
- As the student's recovery progresses through stages 1-3, teachers should be prepared to apply "mastery learning" criteria with their subject matter. By identifying essential academic work, the student's recovery will be aided by reducing workloads, which in turn will help to reduce anxiety levels related to the perceived volume of work that will be required once they are medically cleared to resume a full academic load.
- In reference to eligibility, a student athlete will keep the same status as before the concussive event, or not marked either way, until protocol is complete.
- **If the student cannot complete all, or an agreed upon portion of missed assignments (homework, quizzes, tests, or projects), the teacher has the right to assign the student a grade of incomplete (I) for the nine weeks, semester, or final grade.**

If the student is evaluated by a personal physician, please share this information with the physician during the initial visit.



*Stage 1: **No school attendance**, emphasize cognitive and physical rest*

Characteristics

- Severe symptoms at rest
- Abnormal diagnostic test results
- Symptoms may include but are not limited to:
  - Headache, dizziness, nausea, trouble remembering, feeling like they're in a fog
- Students may be sensitive to light and noise
- Students may complain of intense and continuous/frequent headaches
- Students may not be able to read for more than 10 minutes without an increase in symptoms
- Provide students with copies of class notes (teacher or student generated)
- No tests, quizzes, or homework
- Grades will be frozen; all assignments missed will be entered as EXEMPT (X) while on Stage 1
- Parents reporting athlete's symptoms to site Certified Athletic Trainer (ATC) daily, via email or text, utilizing the same 22 symptoms, 6-point scale as used at each site.

*Progress to stage 2 when:

- Student has returned to school
- Decreased sensitivity to light or noise
- Decreased intensity and frequency of headaches
- Ability to do light reading and stationary bike riding for 10 minutes without increased symptoms

*If the student remains in Stage 1 longer than 2 weeks, it may be necessary to schedule a conference with all teachers, the counselor, and the student's parents in order to discuss impact on school performance.
The student will need to be referred to an MD or DO specializing in concussion management if not already under the care of one.

*It is important that once the student has returned to school that they report to the athletic trainer daily in order to monitor symptoms, as well as to determine progression to the next stage within the return to academics guidelines.



Stage 2: Option for modified daily class schedule

Characteristics

- Mild symptoms at rest, possibly increasing with physical and mental activity
- Abnormal diagnostic testing scores
- Athlete reporting to the site Certified Athletic Trainer daily for evaluations

Example 1: First day may be afternoon class attendance, with the next day being morning class attendance, repeat as symptoms warrant.

Example 2: First half of each class, with the final half of each class period spent in the counselor's office, so that the athlete may relax and recover before their next class.

- Option: Reduce weight of backpack or provide second set of textbooks (arranged by counselor)
- Option: Obtain a "five-minute pass" in order to avoid noisy, crowded hallways between class periods
- Wear sunglasses when viewing Smart Boards (as needed) or in classrooms that are brightly lit.
- No tests, quizzes, daily work, or homework; very limited in-class work, with assistance from the teacher or a classmate, may be assigned so long as it doesn't cause symptoms to increase.
- Provide student with copies of class notes (teacher or student generated)
- Grades will be entered as EXEMPT (X) while on Stage 2, unless able to complete very limited in-class work with the assistance from the teacher or a classmate; grades entered during this stage should not negatively affect the athlete's overall grade in the class.
- Excused from physical education classes and sports activities; this includes but isn't limited to non- school related sports activities
- Report daily to athletic trainer

*Progress to stage 3 when:

- Each of the student's classes have been attended at least once
- School activity does not increase symptoms
- Overall symptoms continue to decrease

***If the student is not able to progress to stage 3 after an extended period of time, where is it unlikely the student will be able to makeup required work, the principal and counselor will discuss with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s), possible class withdrawal, home bound, class load modification, and/or a 504 plan.**



Stage 3: Full day of school

Characteristics:
Symptom free at rest; mild to moderate symptoms with mental and physical activity

- Student athlete should be taking notes on their own at this point and may participate in group projects (with accommodations if needed).
- Normal levels of classwork permitted with limited assistance from teachers or classmates. Athlete may begin to use class time to make up any missed work from previous stages with assistance from teachers or classmates if needed.
- Limited to normal levels of homework may be assigned with open-ended due dates; teacher/classmate assistance if needed.
- Limited quizzes may be taken over the course of several class periods with no time limit for completion; quizzes may also be sent home to be completed over the course of several days, and/or a weekend at the discretion of the teacher, counselor, and principal.
- Very limited tests may be taken over the course of several class periods with no time limit for completion; athletes may also be given time to take those very limited tests in the testing center, or Counselor's Office, over the course of several class periods, with the tests be broken into small portions.
- Assignments may be graded at this point, but they should not negatively affect the athlete's grade; if the graded assignment does have a negative impact, the athlete will be permitted to makeup the assignment(s) in question.
- Excused from physical education classes and/or sports activities; this includes but isn't limited to non- school related sports activities
- Report daily to athletic trainer

*Progress to stage 4 when:

- Symptom free with mental and physical activity
- Student should report any return of symptoms with mental or physical activity
- Diagnostic test scores have normalized and/or symptoms have resolved completely
- Diagnostic testing consists of the SWAY Test, which is an app-based balance & neurocognitive test, along with a variety of other tests, used to help determine balance performance & neurocognitive function.
- SWAY testing will be used to help monitor the recovery process for student athletes when appropriate.

***If the student is not able to progress to stage 3 after an extended period of time, where it is unlikely the student will be able to makeup required work, the principal and counselor will discuss with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s), possible class withdrawal, home bound, class load modification, and/or a 504 plan.**



Stage 4: Full academic load

- Resumption of current academic responsibilities once diagnostic testing scores have normalized and/or symptoms have resolved completely as determined by the appropriate health care professional
- In cooperation with counselor and teachers, create plan for possible modification and the gradual completion of any missed tests, quizzes, and homework that the athlete was unable to make up during stage 3.
- Teacher has the discretion to apply "mastery learning" criteria for their subject matter; meaning that they may choose the most important portions of an assignment then allow the athlete to make up only that portion of the assignment and receive full credit.
- Students are not required to make up missed physical education classes due to a concussion
- Students are not required to make up missed practices or workouts due to a concussion

***Students who are unable to complete stage 4 after an extended period of time and are unable to makeup required work (either all or an agreed upon portion of missed assignments) may be assigned a grade of INCOMPLETE (I) by their teacher.**

****In the event of an INCOMPLETE grade, the teacher will communicate with the student, their parent(s)/ guardian(s), the student's counselor, grade level principal, and head principal, regarding the incomplete grade for the nine weeks, semester, or final grade.**

If you have questions, please contact the student's counselor, principal, or the athletic trainers.