

## Concussion Policy

**What is a concussion?**

A concussion is a brain injury that cannot be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things and can cause a variety of symptoms and signs. You do NOT need to lose consciousness to have a concussion.

**What causes a concussion?**

Any blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head may cause a concussion, e.g., a ball to the head in soccer, being checked into the boards in hockey.

**What are the symptoms and signs of a concussion?**

Any one or more of the following symptoms and signs may suggest a concussion:

	Symptoms Reported:		Signs Observed:	
<b>Physical</b>	Headache Neck pain Stomach ache Blurred vision	Pressure in head Dizziness Nausea Sensitivity to light/noise	Loss of consciousness Nausea/vomiting Seizure/convulsion Poor coordination/balance	Amnesia Slowed reaction time Slurred speech
<b>Cognitive</b>	Feeling in a fog Difficulty concentrating	Difficulty remembering	Difficulty concentrating Difficulty remembering	Confusion Slowed reaction time
<b>Behavioural</b>	Irritability Sad/emotional	Nervous/anxious Depressed	Inappropriate emotions Depression	
<b>Sleep</b>	Drowsiness	Difficulty falling asleep	Drowsiness	

**Action plan: What to do if you suspect a student has a concussion**

If the person is **unconscious**:

- Initiate the Emergency Action Plan and call 911.
- Assume a possible neck injury and, only if trained, immobilize the student before EMS arrives.
- Do not move the student or remove athletic equipment; wait for EMS to arrive.
- Do not leave the student alone.
- Contact the student’s parent/guardian.

If the person is **conscious**:

- Stop the activity immediately.
- When the person can be safely moved, remove from activity.
- Conduct an initial concussion assessment – review Symptoms and Signs, perform Memory Testing and Balance Testing (optional).**i.** Following the initial assessment, if a **concussion is suspected**: Do not allow the person to return to activity.
- Contact the person’s parent/guardian to pick up them up.
- Stay with the person until parent/guardian arrives.
- If any signs or symptoms worsen, call 911.

Inform the parent/guardian that the person needs to be examined by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner as soon as possible and provide them with a copy of this tool.

Following the initial assessment, if a **concussion is not suspected**: The person may return to activity. Contact the person's parent/guardian to inform them of the incident.

Provide the parent/guardian with a copy of this tool and inform them that the person should be monitored for 24-48 hours since signs and symptoms may take hours or days to emerge

### **Memory Testing**

Failure to answer any one of these questions correctly may suggest a concussion.

- What activity/sport are we playing right now?
- What field/facility are we at today
- What part of the day is it?
- What school do you go to?

NOTE: Questions should be geared to child's age and activity.

### **Balance Testing:**

Ask the person to stand heel-to-toe with non-dominant foot in back. Weight should be evenly distributed across both feet. The person should try to maintain stability for 20 seconds with hands on hips and eyes closed. Count the number of times the person moves out of this position. If the person stumbles out of this position, have the person open his/her eyes and return to the start position and continue balancing. Start timing when the person is set and has eyes closed.

Observe the person for 20 seconds. If the person makes errors (e.g. lifts hands off hips; opens eyes; lifts forefoot or heel; steps, stumbles, or falls; or remains out of the start position for more than 5 seconds), this may suggest a concussion.