



## Township High School District 113

Deerfield High School  
Highland Park Highland



# Concussion Care Protocol Return to Learn and Return to Play

### General Information:

A student's best chance of full recovery from a concussion involves two critical components: cognitive and physical rest. Continued research has shown cognitive rest to be essential, especially for adolescents with a growing brain, in the quick resolution of concussion symptoms.

Cognitive stimulation includes, but is not limited to:

Academics: reading, writing, studying, keyboarding, test-taking, labs, visual and applied arts, extracurriculars.

Loud, bright environments: chorus, orchestra, band, acting, tech theatre, cafeteria

Physical exertion: PE, dance, marching band, extracurriculars, athletics, strength or cardiovascular conditioning

Screen time: computers, whiteboards, in class/homework movies and videos

Recreational screen time: cell phone use, texting, social media, video, TV, online viewing

Driving.

These stimuli must be limited, and in most cases, completely avoided or regulated for a period of time during recovery from a concussion.

It is recommended that this protocol is shared with the student's health care provider during the initial visit.

### Stages of Concussion Recovery and Academic/ Extracurricular Participation:

1. Complete Rest if indicated by health care provider
2. Return to School
3. Full Day of School Attendance
4. Full Curricular (Academic) and Extracurricular (Activity and Athletic) Participation

### Points of Emphasis:

- It is important to note that the 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/support staff/sponsors/coaches, parents/guardians/guardians, and students as a guide to assist with concussion recovery.
- For the concussion care protocol to be initiated, the student must first be evaluated by a healthcare provider and documentation of that visit must be given to the school nurse. An emergency room/acute care note is only temporary and will retain the student at Stage 1 until the student is seen by the health care provider within one week.
- The student's missed academic work will be reviewed and extra time to complete will be granted, in conjunction with the health care provider's recommendations, counselor/case manager, and school nurse guidance.
- As the student's recovery progresses through Stage 1-3, teachers should identify essential academic work in each subject and collaborate with the department supervisors, as needed, to determine potential reduction in coursework. Limited work can promote healing, but lessening stimuli and reducing anxiety related to the perceived volume of work will be required once a student is medically cleared to resume a full academic load.
- The teacher has the option of assigning the student a grade of incomplete for the progress report/quarter grade, final exam, and/or semester grade.
- If the student remains in any stage or recovery longer than anticipated, the counselor will present the student's case to multidisciplinary team review and possible interventions. The school nurse will consult with the health care provider.
- It is important upon return to school that the student report to the school nurse that day (and athletic trainer if school athlete and in season) to monitor symptoms and determine progression to the next stage within the concussion care protocol.
- For in-season student athletes: Report daily to the athletic trainer. Separate written clearance from the health care provider to the trainer before the student is allowed watch practice or competition.
- For in-season Activities: Report to your sponsor. Separate written clearance from the health care provider to the school nurse is required before the student is allowed to attend meetings or activities.

## **Four Stage Progression to Full Return to Curricular (Academic) and Extracurricular (Activity and Athletic ) Participation**

### **Stage 1: No School Attendance; emphasize physical and cognitive rest**

- Characteristics:
  - Severe symptoms at rest
  - Symptoms may include but are not limited to:
    - Headache or pressure in the head, dizziness, nausea, light and/ or noise sensitivity, inability to focus/concentrate, memory loss/lack of recall, feeling mentally "foggy", unusual changes in mood, fatigue.
    - Student may complain of intense and continuous/frequent headaches
    - Student may not be able to read or keyboard for more than 10 minutes, with or without annotation, without increased/worsening symptoms
- Initial evaluation by health care provider
- Interventions (including but not exclusive):

- Attendance: No School attendance for at least 1 full day-emphasizing full cognitive and physical rest
- Curricular: Academics:
  - No tests, quizzes or homework;
  - Provide students with copies of class notes
  - No assigned computer or other screen time
  - no PE
  - student to meet with counselor/case manager upon return to school.
- Extracurricular: Athletics:
  - student may not attend practices and/or games
- Extracurricular: Activities:
  - may not attend before/after school meetings or events
- School Nurse
  - school nurse will email the Return To Learn (RTL) plan to student's teachers and appropriate staff
  - If the student remains in stage 1 for longer than one week, the school nurse will consult with the health care provider.

**Progress to Stage 2 when:**

- Decreased sensitivity to light and/or noise.
- Decreased intensity and frequency of headaches and dizziness.
- Ability to do light reading or keyboarding for 10 minutes or more, with or without annotation, without increased symptoms. Chromebook helpful modifications link: <https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/157fYtIxhyfqvaxd1NsB657v0OTRRuJ6ponEms1aqidc/edit?usp=sharing>
- Decreased feeling of "fogginess or confusion"; increased ability to focus, memory/recall.

**Stage 2: Return to School (Options for modified daily class schedule)**

- Characteristics:
  - Mild symptoms at rest, but increasing with mental and physical activity.
- Interventions (including but not exclusive):
  - Attendance: partial or full days as symptoms warrant
  - Curricular : Academics:
    - As the student recovers through stages 1-3, teachers should be prepared to apply "mastery learning" criteria within their subject matter.
    - No test, quizzes, homework
    - Math and science computations and world language translation may be more difficult during recovery
    - Provide to student copies of class notes
    - Audiobooks are helpful for students struggling with visual processing
    - Limit computer work, video/movie clips in class
    - Student to decrease weight of backpack by using locker, purchasing second set of books through Bookstore, talk to counselor about other options.

- Obtain “five-minute pass” from the school nurse to avoid noisy, crowded hallways between class periods
  - Divide up work into smaller portions (15-20 minutes at a time)
  - Wear sunglasses when viewing smart boards, power points, or other blue light enabled presentations
  - No PE, must rest in Health Services during this period.
- Extracurricular: Athletics:
  - may not attend practices and/or games
  - check in with trainer upon return to school
- Extracurricular: Activities:
  - may not attend before/after school meetings or events
  - student to check in with sponsor upon return to school
- School Nurse
  - student to meet with school nurse in Health Services office on the first day back to school
  - Update email to teachers and appropriate staff when updated medical notes received
  - Rest in Health Services office as needed for breaks in attending academic classes

**\*Progress to stage 3 when:**

- School activity does not increase symptoms
- Overall symptoms continue to decrease

**Stage 3: Full day of School Attendance**

- Characteristics:
  - Symptom free at rest
  - Mild to moderate symptoms with cognitive and school day activity
- Interventions (including but not exclusive):
  - Attendance: full school day attendance with rest as needed in Health Services
  - Curricular: Academics:
    - As the student recovers through stages 1-3, teachers should be prepared to apply “mastery learning” criteria within their subject matter.
    - Continue with interventions listed in Stage 2 as needed
    - Progress to limited homework, tests, quizzes (may split tests into halves, limit to one test per day)
    - No PE
      - may report to PE teacher(DHS)/ PE study hall (HPHS)as symptoms warrant
      - No physical activity unless specifically prescribed by the student’s health care provider who sometimes will prescribe light aerobic activity at a pace and duration below that which triggers symptoms. This “subsymptom threshold exercise training” has been shown to facilitate

concussion recovery. The student can do this at school in place of their regular PE class, by walking, riding a stationary bike, swimming, or jogging.

- Extracurricular: Athletics:
  - no participation in practice or competition
  - continue to report to athletic trainer as directed by the trainer
- Extracurricular: Activities
  - may not attend before/after school meetings or events until cleared by health care provider
  - check in with sponsor as directed by the sponsor
- School Nurse:
  - student to report to the school nurse as directed by school nurse
  - update email to student's teachers and appropriate staff as updated medical notes received

\*If the student is not able to progress past stage 3 after an extended period of time, where it is unlikely the student will be able to make up required work, a multidisciplinary team will discuss with the student and their parents/guardians/guardians, possible class withdrawal, class load modification, and/or other building accommodations.

#### **Progress to Stage 4 when:**

- Symptom free with cognitive and physical activity
  - Student should report any return of symptoms with cognitive or school day activity immediately to school nurse or athletic trainer
- Written concussion clearance by health care provider to school nurse for return to full curricular academics, and extracurricular Activities, and Athletics.

#### **Stage 4: Full Academic and Athletic Participation**

- Characteristics:
  - Asymptomatic with academic/cognitive and physical activity
- Interventions (including but not exclusive):
  - Attendance: full days
  - Curricular: Academics:
    - Resumption of full academic responsibilities once symptoms have resolved completely as determined by the health care provider.
    - Create plan for possible modifications and gradual completion for required make-up work (counselor, teacher, student)
    - Consider building support services if student has more than three weeks of required academic work to make up.
    - teachers have discretion to identify essential academic work for their class
    - PE:
      - Students are not required to make up missed PE classes due to concussion:

- More than one quarter out may result in a medical waiver.
    - Written clearance to full participation from health care provider to the school nurse will be sent to PE teacher.
    - PE teacher will consult with PE Dept. Chair regarding appropriate return to full participation within current PE scheduled activity
      - Stage 1: Light aerobic activity
      - Stage 2: Increased aerobic activity
      - Stage 3: scheduled class activity as tolerated
  - Extracurricular: Athletics:
    - written clearance from health care provider to school nurse required to return to Athletics
    - School nurse will send copy of activity clearance to trainer
    - Required to follow the IHSA Return-to-Play Protocol under the direction of the athletic trainer
    - report to athletic trainer as directed
  - Extracurricular: Activities:
    - written clearance from health care provider to school nurse required to return to sponsored activity.
    - school nurse will send copy of activity clearance to Activities Dept. Chair.
  - School Nurse:
    - student to report to the school nurse with clearance note
    - student to return to Health Services as needed based on symptoms and nursing assessment
    - send clearance email to student's teachers and appropriate staff
    - see student in one week for follow up, then as needed.

**District 113 Athletics Return-To-Play Protocol (in- season HPHS athletes)**

- Written clearance from the health care provider is required to begin physical activity
- The IHSA Return-To-Play Protocol includes five phases of activity with increasing intensity. Each phase will take place 24 hours following the previous step. If symptoms return during any phase, a 24-hour period of rest is required before repeating that phase:
  - Stage 1: Light aerobic activity
  - Stage 2: Increased aerobic activity
  - Stage 3: non-contact activity related to specific sport/skill
  - Stage 4: Full contact activity
  - Stage 5: Return to competition
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For additional questions, please contact the School Nurse, Activities Director or Athletic Trainer

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