

## CONCUSSIONS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS - FACT SHEET FOR PARENTS

### 1. *What is a concussion?*

A concussion:

- is a brain injury that causes changes in the way in which the brain functions and that can lead to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty in concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability), and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty in falling asleep);
- may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or by a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness);
- cannot normally be seen by means of medical imaging tests, such as X-rays, standard computed tomography (CT) scans, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans

### 2. *Where can I find a copy of PPM 158?*

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/158.pdf>

### 3. *What is the deadline for full implementation of my school board's concussion policy?*

School boards should fully implement their policy no later than January 30, 2015.

### 4. *What happens to my child if a suspected concussion occurs at a school event?*

School staff have been in-serviced to identify possible concussions. Specific steps must be followed in the process of which one is to contact the parent/guardian. The health and safety of the child is the priority. If a concussion is diagnosed by a medical practitioner, the student will follow the return-to-learn/return-to-participate procedure.

### 5. *What happens to my child if a suspected concussion occurs out of school?*

If your child has an incident outside the school day or school related activity where a suspected concussion or a diagnosed concussion is determined, then the school administration should be informed so that the proper process and plan is followed. Monitoring of possible signs or symptoms or following a return-to-learn/return-to-participate procedure could be required.

**6. *Who can tell me if my child has a concussion?***

Only a medical doctor or nurse practitioner can make a diagnosis of a concussion.

**7. *How will a concussion affect my child's academics?***

A concussion will affect every person differently. It may be difficult to concentrate in school and signs and symptoms may interfere with the child's ability to learn. Creating a plan that allows the child to gradually return to school may be required. Depending upon the situation a child may return to school with some symptoms but needs to be monitored.

**8. *Can a concussion affect my child's ability to obtain one or more credits during a semester?***

If a child has been diagnosed with a concussion, the health and well-being of the student is the primary focus. Allowing the appropriate amount of time for them to heal is necessary for them to be successful and functional in all aspects of life. The school will work with the child and parents to allow for various accommodations to be put in place if the child is capable of returning to learn. However, it is possible that a child will not be able to return to learn due to the severity of the concussion and has not been able to demonstrate the learning expectations of the program. In such cases a credit may not be granted to the student. Once again, we want to ensure that the child is set up for success as they heal and this could relate to completing required courses.

**9. *How long will my child be off of physical activities?***

A child who has been diagnosed with a concussion will be required to follow the return-to-participate steps outlined in the HCDSB protocol. Once symptom free, they will be able to start off with light aerobic exercise and build up to full participation. Documentation from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner will be required indicating that the child remains symptom free and is able to return to full participation. It is important that a child is symptom free before returning to physical activity as injuries that result from a concussion may lead to "second impact syndrome", which is a rare condition that causes rapid and severe brain swelling and often catastrophic results, if an individual suffers a second concussion before he or she is symptom free.