

Concussion Safety	
Adopted: December 8, 2014	Last Reviewed/Revised: February 3, 2025
Next Scheduled Review: 2027-2028	
Associated Policies & Procedures: II-42 Medical Conditions II-26 Managing Student Risk in Interschool Sports II-31 Risk Management - First Aid V-05 School Accidents – Prevention and Safety VI-21 OSBIE Online Incident Reporting	

Purpose

The Halton Catholic District School Board (HCDSB) acknowledges that there is medical evidence to support significant health risks caused as a result of a concussion. A diagnosed concussion can have a mild or an extensive impact on a child's learning – cognitively, physically, emotionally and/or socially.

This procedure provides school administrators, school staff, students, appropriate others (e.g., coaches, volunteers, etc.) and parents/guardians with information, requirements and resources in the training, awareness, prevention, identification and management of concussions, in accordance with PPM 158 School Board Policies on Concussion; Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety) 2018, and amended Education Act (Part Xiii.1, Subsection 321) July 1, 2019.

Application and Scope

This procedure for concussions is a guideline to be used by school administrators, school staff (teachers, coaches of HCDSB sponsored interschool activities, intramural supervisors), students, parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age, and where applicable team trainers and officials of HCDSB sponsored interschool sports and identified volunteers at all HCDSB/school sponsored activities whether on school site or off school site.

References

[Education Act](#)

[Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education \(OPASSE\) Concussion Protocol](#)

[PPM 158](#)

[Rowan's Law, 2018](#)

Definitions

A concussion:

- is a brain injury that causes changes in the way in which the brain functions, which can lead to signs and symptoms that can emerge immediately or in the hours or days after the injury. It is possible for symptoms to take up to 7 days to appear;
- signs and symptoms 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;
- is typically expected to result in symptoms lasting 1-4 weeks in children and youth (18 years or under), but in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.

Principles

1. HCDSB is committed to promoting awareness of safety in schools and recognizes that the health and safety of students are essential for effective learning.
2. All partners in education have important roles to play in promoting student health and safety and in fostering and maintaining healthy and safe environments in which students can learn.
3. A concussion can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
4. Research indicates that without identification and proper management, a concussion can result in permanent brain damage and in rare occasions, even death.
5. Students who have been diagnosed with a concussion may require temporary and/or on-going accommodations in their cognitive, physical, emotional and/or social learning in the classroom.
6. All school staff and appropriate others are to be provided with the necessary training to assist students diagnosed with a concussion with both their cognitive, physical, emotional and/or social learning.

7. The role of the school is to work collaboratively with parents/guardians and medical personnel to provide appropriate support for the student as they transition back to school in both the learning and physical participation environments. Medical personnel provide information regarding diagnosis, amount of rest required and when full participation in learning/physical activities can resume.

Requirements

1. The Principal or designate has the responsibility to coordinate communication of information to all school staff and to ensure that appropriate staff and others are familiar with the requirements and expectations of the HCDSB's Concussion Protocol.
2. The HCDSB Concussion Protocol addresses the following requirements (per PPM 158):
 - Awareness
 - Interschool Sport: Concussion Awareness Resources and Concussion Code of Conduct
 - Training
 - Prevention Strategies
 - Identification of a Suspected Concussion
 - Return to School Plan: supporting student's return to learning and their return to physical activity.
 - Tracking: school-based and system-based

Awareness:

- Provisions are made for connecting students' learning about concussions with the curriculum, as appropriate, and implementation of an annual concussion awareness event for students to take place the last Wednesday of September, Rowan's Law Day.
- Information and/or training sessions by the HCDSB /schools regarding the seriousness of concussions, and the components of the concussion policy (Awareness, Prevention, Identification, Return to School Plan - RTL - RTPA) is to be shared, as appropriate, with administrators, educators, school staff students, parents/guardians, HCDSB employees, volunteers, medical doctors and nurse practitioners and community-based organizations.

Interschool Sport Concussion Awareness Resources:

- Strategies in place to implement the government developed and approved Concussion Awareness Resources to the following stakeholders involved in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports: coaches, team trainers, officials, students and parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age.
- Interschool stakeholders are to receive age-appropriate Concussion Awareness Strategies: 10 and under; 11-14 years of age; 15 and up.

- Strategies developed to receive confirmation that an approved Concussion Awareness Resource was reviewed, from each interschool stakeholder, every school year prior to participation in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports.
- Annual concussion training established for relevant school staff involved in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports about the content in the approved Concussion Awareness Resources.

Interschool Sport Concussion Code of Conduct:

- Strategies in place to develop HCDSB Concussion Codes of Conduct using the requirements outlined in PPM 158 (page 7) and the sample codes of conduct from OPASSE for the following stakeholders involved in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports: coaches and team trainers; students; and parents/guardians of students under 18 years of age.
- Strategies in place to inform, review, train and implement the Concussion Code of Conduct with the above stakeholders involved in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports.
- Strategies developed to receive confirmation that the relevant Concussion Awareness Resource was reviewed, from each of the above interschool stakeholders, prior to participation in HCDSB sponsored interschool sports.
- Strategies in place to review the Concussion Codes of Conduct whenever the concussion policy is reviewed or updated, at a minimum.

Training:

- Annual concussion training for relevant school staff on the contents of the HCDSB Concussion Protocol and affiliated resources and the content in the approved Concussion Awareness Resources
- The scope of training will be consistent with expected duties of school staff, as outlined in policy.
- Provisions in the training, plans for new school staff to access training throughout the school year.

Prevention Strategies:

- Strategies in place for preventing and minimizing the risk of sustaining concussions at school.

Identification of a Suspected Concussion:

- A process established to immediately remove a student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion from physical activity.
- Emergency Medical Services called if there is an emergency or if a student has any 'red flag' signs or symptoms.

- Students are informed to report signs and symptoms to a responsible adult and where they observe signs or symptoms in a teammate, to inform a responsible adult.
- Student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion is to undergo a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner.

Return to School Plan:

- A process established for those diagnosed with a concussion to return to regular cognitive and physical activities. The Return to School Plan includes two parts; a Home Concussion Management Plan followed by a School Concussion Management Plan. During the home and school plans, the student participates in graduated return to learn and return to physical activity stages.
- Student, parents/guardians of student under 18 years, are informed of the Return to Learn and Return to Physical Activity graduated stages that a student is expected to follow in order to return to regular cognitive and physical activities.
- Student, parents/guardians of student under 18 years, are informed of the importance of sharing with the school any medical advice or recommendations.
- Parents/guardians are informed of the importance of disclosing the concussion diagnosis to any relevant organizations with which the student is involved or registered (e.g., sport organization).
- Process in place for parents/guardians to provide confirmation of medical clearance by a physician or nurse practitioner as a prerequisite for the student's return to full participation in physical activity.

Tracking:

In accordance with relevant privacy legislation:

- A process established to document, and track, a student's progress from removal from an activity due to a suspected concussion, to the return, through graduated stages to learning and to physical activity.
 - Establishment of a process to track additional information on an ongoing basis in order to inform updates to their concussion policy, as part of the regular review cycle.
3. The Principal or designate has the responsibility to coordinate communication of information to all school staff and to ensure that appropriate staff and others are familiar with the requirements and expectations of the HCDSB's Concussion Protocol and associated resources.

Resources

Occasional Teachers and/or external coaches are to be familiar with the requirements and expectations of HCDSB's Concussion Protocol and associated resources, where applicable, to support a student in identifying and managing their concussion.

Parents/Guardians

The school administrator (or designate) is to provide parents/guardians and students with the resources and information that outline the responsibilities of the parent/guardian and students.

HCDSB Concussion Protocol (available on the HCDSB website + Parents + Your Child's Health + Medical Conditions + Concussion)

APPROVED: Regular Meeting of the Administrative Council

AUTHORIZED BY: _____
 Director of Education and Secretary of the Board