

CONCUSSIONS

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FOR PARENTS

1. What is a concussion?

A concussion:

- Is a form of traumatic 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 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 by a jarring impact to the head, face or neck or 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.

2. What happens to my child if a suspected concussion occurs at school?

School staff have been in-serviced to identify a possible concussion. The health and safety of your child is our top priority, and specific steps must be followed, which includes contacting you as the parent/guardian. If a concussion is diagnosed by a medical practitioner, your child will follow the Return to School Plan.

3. What happens to my child if a suspected concussion occurs outside of school?

If your child has an incident outside of school or during a school related activity where a concussion is suspected or diagnosed, please inform your school principal immediately. Informing your child's school about a suspected or diagnosed concussion is important so that your child's school team can follow the appropriate 'Concussion Protocol'. Monitoring for signs or symptoms of a concussion, or following a return-to-learn/return-to-participate procedure could be required.

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

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

5. How will a concussion affect my child's learning?

A concussion will affect every individual differently. It may be difficult for your child to concentrate in school and signs and symptoms may interfere with your child's ability to learn. Creating a plan that allows your child to gradually return to school may be required. Depending on the situation, your child may return to school with some symptoms but will need to be monitored closely.

6. Can a concussion affect my child's ability to obtain one or more credits during a semester in secondary school?

If your child has been diagnosed with a concussion, the health and well-being of your son or daughter will be our primary focus. Allowing the appropriate amount of time for them to heal is necessary for your child to be successful and functional in all aspects of life. Your child's school will work with you to provide accommodations if your child is capable of returning to school. However, it is possible that your child will not be able to return to school immediately, due to the severity of the concussion and other factors involved. In such cases, a secondary credit may not necessarily be granted to your son or daughter.

7. How long will my child be absent from physical activities?

If your child has been diagnosed with a concussion, they will be required to follow the Return to School Plan outlined in the HCDSB [Concussion Safety Procedure](#). Documentation from a physician or nurse practitioner will be required for your child's return to full participation in physical activity. It is important that your 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, if an individual suffers a second concussion before he or she is symptom-free.

8. Where can I find more information about concussion identification and prevention?

Parents can visit the Ministry of Education's website for helpful information and resources about concussions: [Healthy Schools: Concussions Safety](#)