

# Toronto District School Board

Policy P087

Title: **CONCUSSIONS**

Adopted: March 11, 2015

Revised:

Reviewed:

Authorization: Board

## 1.0 OBJECTIVE

To develop awareness and training to support a student's safe return to the classroom and physical activity.

To develop awareness including strategies for sharing information on the seriousness of concussion, and on concussion prevention, identification, and management.

To develop strategies for preventing and minimizing the risk of sustaining concussions (and other brain injuries) in schools and at off-site events.

To inform staff on initial concussion-assessment strategies, steps to take following an initial assessment and safe removal of a student from activity as outlined in the Emergency Action Plan.

To develop and implement management procedures for students with a diagnosed concussion including the development of an individualized and gradual "return to learning and/or return to physical activity" plan for every student with a diagnosed concussion.

To provide regular and ongoing training on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management to relevant school board employees and school volunteers.

## 2.0 RESPONSIBILITY

Director of Education/Associate Director

## 3.0 DEFINITIONS

3.1 *Concussion* is the term for a clinical diagnosis that is made by a medical doctor. The definition of concussion below is adapted from the definition provided in the concussion protocol in the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines.

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, irritability), and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty in falling asleep); and/or social (e.g. isolation, inappropriate behaviour) and/or emotional (e.g. depression, anxiety);
- may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or by a blow to the body that transmits force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- most often occurs without a loss of consciousness;
- cannot normally be seen by a means of medical imaging tests, such as X-rays, standard computed tomography (CT) scans, or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scans; and
- is an invisible injury and due to the complexity of the brain is unique to each individual.

*Second Impact Syndrome* 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 free from symptoms sustained from the first concussion.

(definitions quoted from Ministry of Education Policy/Program Memorandum No. 158, School Board Policies on Concussions, March 19, 2014)

3.2 *Return to Learn* is a process/plan developed to assist a student with his or her return to learning activities with individualized classroom strategies and/or approaches.

*(Adapted from Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines from OPHEA: Appendix C-1 – Concussion Protocol: Prevention, Identification and Management Procedures)*

3.3 *Return to Physical Activity* is an internationally recognized graduated stepwise approach to return to physical activity.

*(Adapted from Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines from OPHEA: Appendix C-1 – Concussion Protocol: Prevention, Identification and Management Procedures)*

## 4.0 POLICY

The Toronto District School Board (TDSB) recognizes that:

- 4.1 Providing students with opportunities to be physically active on a daily basis has a positive impact on their physical, mental and social well-being.
- 4.2 Promoting awareness of safety in schools and recognizing that the health and safety of students are essential preconditions for effective learning.

- 4.3 Research demonstrates that a concussion can have a significant impact on a student cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially.
- 4.4 The concussion protocol outlined in the current Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines is the minimum standard.

The Toronto District School Board is committed to:

- 4.5 The development of awareness on the seriousness of concussions, concussion prevention, identification and management by sharing information with students, parents/guardians, board employees, administrators, educators, school staff, volunteers, coaches, doctors and nurse practitioners, and community-based organizations and training relevant board employees through yearly professional learning sessions with connections to the Ontario curriculum and the sharing of educational materials.
- 4.6 Strong collaboration among students, parents/guardians, board employees, administrators, educators, school staff, volunteers, coaches, doctors and nurse practitioners, the community and the Board through effective community engagement, outreach, sharing of resources and research to facilitate development of awareness of concussions.
- 4.7 Supporting student achievement and well-being with student participation in a variety of physical activities in a safe and caring environment.
- 4.8 Supporting schools in the implementation of the TDSB Return to Learn procedure which supports a student's individualized and gradual return to regular learning activities successfully.
- 4.9 Supporting schools in the implementation of the TDSB Return to Physical Activity procedure which supports a student's safe, individualized and gradual return to all forms of physical activity.

## **5.0 SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES**

The Director is authorized to issue operational procedures to implement this policy.

## **6.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS**

Operational Procedure PR 511 SCH: Excursions  
Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines  
PPM 158: School Board Policies on Concussion  
Ontario Neurotrauma Foundation -[Concussion Tool](#)  
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care: [Concussions](#)