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# Concussion Management Protocols Grades K-12



## Concussion

A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that occurs after a sudden force to the body jolts the brain inside the skull. A concussion manifests itself with physical, emotional, and cognitive symptoms. It is common for someone who has a concussion to experience:

- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Dizziness
- ◆ Nausea
- ◆ Vision problems
- ◆ Sensitivity to noise
- ◆ Sensitivity to light
- ◆ Difficulty sleeping
- ◆ Changes in mood
- ◆ Confusion
- ◆ Problems focusing
- ◆ Difficulty retaining new information

If your child has been diagnosed with a concussion, it is very important to make sure he or she has adequate physical and cognitive (brain) rest in the days immediately following the injury. This rest helps to promote healing. **Encouraging physical rest and sleep is just as important as promoting cognitive rest.** This requires minimizing screen time and limiting use of cell phones, computers, and watching television.

If your child is experiencing many symptoms at home, it may be too early for them return to school and the academic setting. Please contact your child's counselor and school nurse teacher to ensure that all teachers are notified and the team can begin to make academic accommodations.

## Return to Learn

Once your child has improved and is experiencing only minimal symptoms at home, it is important to have them return to the academic setting.

At first, this may involve attending only part of the day, attending a few classes. While some students can tolerate a full day without difficulty, others may not be able to participate in orchestra, band, chorus, and other classes that can worsen their symptoms.

The school nurse teacher will assess how the child is progressing to ensure he or she is not experiencing too many symptoms. She also will request feedback from your child's teachers to see if they have any academic concerns. The district's nurse practitioner will assess the child upon his or her return to school and follow up weekly to ensure adequate healing is taking place.

## Return to Play

When a student can tolerate full academic days without having symptoms and has been medically cleared by a New York State licensed physician, he or she can return to physical education classes and extracurricular activities.

This clearance involves a one-time physical exertion with his or her physical education teacher or the athletic trainer to make sure that symptoms do not recur. In addition, the school nurse will reassess the student. If your child participates in an extracurricular sport, he or she will meet individually with the athletic trainer to perform a six-phase exertion test and have ImPact testing done.