



NIAGARA CATHOLIC
DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL
2014-2015

PROTOCOL CONTENTS

- **'KEY MESSAGES' FOR IMPLEMENTATION**
- **SUMMARY OF APPENDIX**
- **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**
- **CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT OVERVIEW**
- **CONCUSSION PROTOCOL 'LETTER TO PARENTS'**
- **APPENDIX**
- **LIST OF SUPPORT RESOURCES, WEBSITES & LESSONS ON CONCUSSION**

CONCUSSION PROTOCOL 'KEY MESSAGES'

- In March 2014, Ontario Ministry of Education issued policy (PPM 158) requesting school boards have guidelines and policy in place by January 2015.
- PPM 158 specifies that the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA) protocol on head injuries from the Ontario Safety Guidelines be the minimum standard.
- Major thrust of OPHEA Guidelines for Concussion is the emphasis on **RETURN TO LEARN**....not just Return to Activity.
- Head Injury/Trauma and Concussions impact STUDENT SUCCESS and should be treated no differently than students impacted by family dysfunction, mental health issues, substance abuse, trauma or associated challenges.
- School 'Success team' (SST) and School Based Team (SBT) support concussions the same as they would all students who have learning issues.
- It is NOT the responsibility of one staff/coach/moderator to implement Concussion Protocol....it has to be a 'team' approach.
- No part of this protocol is asking staff/teacher/coach to take the responsibility of deciding if a student has had a concussion!

SUMMARY OF APPENDIX

C-2 TOOL TO IDENTIFY A SUSPECTED CONCUSSION

- It's a resource...excellent to use **if comfortable**....checklist of possible things you'd see as signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion.
- Includes a **QUICK MEMORY FUNCTION ASSESSMENT'** test you/staff can do with child...assesses short term memory.
- If child should **show symptoms or fail** this Quick Memory test, you should sign this form , make a copy for school file and give to parent
- The form is telling the parent to get there child to a doctor
- If you don't get any signs or symptoms and child has no problem with QMFA test, you still contact home about the incident

NOTE: *If staff/teacher/coach is **not comfortable administering C-2 'Tool...'** the recommendation is the parent is still contacted, given Appendix C-3 'Documentation of Medical Exam' and advised that you suspect a concussion is possible based on the nature of the incident involving child.*

C-3 DOCUMENTATION OF MEDICAL EXAM

- This form **also goes home** with parent so they can sign off that they did take child to doctor and provides school with results of **Medical Exam**
- If doctor says no concussion, this form, signed by parent, verifies that student can participate in activity.
- If form states indeed a concussion **has been diagnosed**, we now **collaboratively begin the Return to Learn/Return to Activity as outlined in Appendix C-4**

C-4 DOCUMENTATION FOR A DIAGNOSED CONCUSSION-RETURN TO LEARN...

- This **COLLABORATIVE** plan facilitates parent communication with school and doctor to ensure child is progressively supported to return to learn and return to physical activity.
- Note that the **'Six Steps' process** stipulates what level of learning/activity is appropriate based on symptoms...
- In **STEP 4**, a second medical exam is required to allow student to resume participation in activities and sports.

C-5 POCKET CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ **IN-SERVICE FOR ERT'S AND STUDENT SUCCESS TEACHERS EARLY SEPTEMBER.**
- ✓ **BOTH ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY CURRICULUM COUNCILS WILL PRODUCE 'LESSON PLANS' FOR SYSTEM USE.**
- ✓ **FURTHER SUPPORTS ARE PLANNED BY OPHEA...ONGOING INCLUDING VIDEO LINKS AND 'BEST PRACTICES'**



BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To assist in the development of concussion procedures, Niagara Catholic administrators, teachers and coaches are to reference the appropriate concussion information as established by this protocol.

Definition of a Concussion

A concussion is a brain injury where the brain makes contact with the inside of the skull that causes changes in how the brain cells function, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., memory problems, decreased concentration), or emotional (e.g., feeling depressed). The brain injury cannot be seen on X-rays or CT scans. Concussion can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness; in fact most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness. A concussion can occur from a direct blow to the head but may also occur from a major physical trauma to other parts of the body (e.g., a sideways check to the body) that causes a whiplash effect on the head and neck.

(Adapted from 'ThinkFirst' Position Statement on Concussion.)

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF POSSIBLE CONCUSSION

Signs and Symptoms of Suspected Concussion	
Possible Signs Observed	Possible Symptoms Reported
<p><i>A sign is something that is observed by another person (e.g., parent/guardian, teacher, coach, supervisor, peer).</i></p>	<p><i>A symptom is something the student will feel/report.</i></p>
<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> vomiting <input type="checkbox"/> slurred speech <input type="checkbox"/> slowed reaction time <input type="checkbox"/> poor coordination or balance <input type="checkbox"/> blank stare/glassy-eyed/dazed or vacant look <input type="checkbox"/> decreased playing ability <input type="checkbox"/> loss of consciousness or lack of responsiveness <input type="checkbox"/> lying motionless on the ground or slow to get up <input type="checkbox"/> amnesia <input type="checkbox"/> seizure or convulsion <input type="checkbox"/> grabbing or clutching of head <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty concentrating <input type="checkbox"/> easily distracted <input type="checkbox"/> general confusion <input type="checkbox"/> cannot remember things that happened before and after the injury (<i>see Quick Memory Function Assessment on page 2</i>) <input type="checkbox"/> does not know time, date, place, class, type of activity in which he/she was participating <input type="checkbox"/> slowed reaction time (e.g., answering questions or following directions) <p>Emotional/Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> strange or inappropriate emotions (e.g., laughing, crying, getting angry easily) <p>Other</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: 0;"/>	<p>Physical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> headache <input type="checkbox"/> pressure in head <input type="checkbox"/> neck pain <input type="checkbox"/> feeling off/not right <input type="checkbox"/> ringing in the ears <input type="checkbox"/> seeing double or blurry/loss of vision <input type="checkbox"/> seeing stars, flashing lights <input type="checkbox"/> pain at physical site of injury <input type="checkbox"/> nausea/stomach ache/pain <input type="checkbox"/> balance problems or dizziness <input type="checkbox"/> fatigue or feeling tired <input type="checkbox"/> sensitivity to light or noise <p>Cognitive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> difficulty concentrating or remembering <input type="checkbox"/> slowed down, fatigue or low energy <input type="checkbox"/> dazed or in a fog <p>Emotional/Behavioral</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> irritable, sad, more emotional than usual <input type="checkbox"/> nervous, anxious, depressed <p>Other</p> <hr style="width: 30%; margin-left: 0;"/>
If any observed signs or symptoms worsen, call 911.	

MINIMIZING THE RISKS OF CONCUSSION

Education is a prime factor in supporting the prevention of concussion.

Any time a student/athlete is involved in any physical activity, play, or athletics, there is a chance of sustaining a concussion.

Therefore it is important to take a preventative approach when dealing with concussions. Prior to activity the teacher/coach meets with student/athlete to go over the following information on concussion:

- The definition and causes of a concussion, signs and symptoms, and dangers of participating in an activity while experiencing the signs and symptoms of a concussion
- The risks associated with the activity/sport for a concussion and how to minimize those risks
- The importance of immediately informing the teacher/coach of any signs or symptoms of a concussion, and removing themselves from the activity
- The importance of respecting the rules of the game and practicing fair play
- The importance of wearing protective equipment that is properly fitted (e.g., with chin straps done up according to the one-finger rule [only one finger should fit between the strap and chin])

Where helmets are worn, inform students that there is no such thing as a concussion-proof helmet. Helmets are designed to prevent major brain injuries such as bruises to the brain, blood clots, facial injury and skull fractures. However, helmets do not prevent all concussions.

Teacher/coach responsibility in minimizing the risk of concussion:

- Skills and techniques must be taught in the proper progressions.
- Students must be instructed and trained in the appropriate body contact skills and techniques of the activity/sport prior to contact practice/game situations.
- Students who are absent for concussion safety lessons must be provided with the information prior to the next activity session.
- The rules of the sport must be enforced. Emphasize the principles of head-injury prevention (e.g., keeping the head up and avoiding collision).

Physical Education Safety Guidelines 'key messages'

- Eliminate all hits to the head
- Eliminate all hits from behind
- Check protective equipment is approved by a recognized Equipment Standards Association (e.g. CSA, NOCSAE) and is visually inspected prior to activity and well maintained.
- Check (where applicable) that protective equipment is inspected by a certified re-conditioner as required by manufacturer (e.g., football helmet). If students are permitted to bring their own protective equipment (e.g. helmets), students and parent/guardians must be informed of the importance of determining that the equipment is in good working order and suitable for personal use.
- Document safety lessons (e.g., date, time, brief content, student attendance).
- Many resources are available at www.thinkfirst.ca including videos and Concussion Cards.

An excellent video "Concussions 101, a Primer for Kids and Parents" by Dr. Mike Evans is available on YouTube.