



Title: **CONCUSSIONS**
Adopted: May 9, 2016
Revised:
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POLICY

It is the policy of the Bloorview School Authority that the prevention, identification and response to concussions or possible concussions is a serious concern and will be treated as such in all school related activities.

BACKGROUND

1. Concussion can have a significant impact on a student – cognitively, physically, emotionally, and socially.
2. The Ministry of Education expects all school boards in Ontario to develop and maintain a policy on concussion including strategies to develop awareness of the seriousness of concussions; strategies for the prevention and identification of concussions; management procedures for diagnosed concussions; and training for board and school staff.
3. The Ontario Physical and Health Education Association has released a concussion protocol as part of the Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines (available at <http://safety.ophea.net>). The protocol, which is based on current research evidence and knowledge, contains information on concussion prevention, symptoms and signs of a concussion, initial response procedures for a suspected concussion, and management procedures for a diagnosed concussion, including a plan to help a student return to learning and to physical activity.
4. The Ministry of Education considers the concussion protocol outlined in the Ontario Physical Education

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

1. The Bloorview School Authority is committed to promoting awareness of safety and recognizing that the health and safety of students are essential preconditions for effective learning. All partners in education, administrators, educators, school staff, students, parents and school volunteers, 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.

2. *Concussion* is the term for a clinical diagnosis that is made by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner. Since concussions can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner, educators, school staff, or volunteers cannot make the diagnosis of concussion.

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

4. 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 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.

It should also be noted that injuries that result from a concussion may lead to “second impact syndrome”, which 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.

5. A concussion is a brain injury that cannot normally be seen on routine x-rays, CT scans, or MRIs. It affects the way a person may think and remember things and can cause a variety of symptoms and signs. One does NOT need to lose consciousness to have a concussion.

Concussions can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner. Educators, school staff, or volunteers cannot make the diagnosis of concussion.

PROCEDURES/GUIDELINES

1. Awareness - On an annual basis, during the first “All Staff” meeting at the beginning of each school year in September, an awareness session will be provided for Bloorview School Authority staff, on the seriousness of concussions. Education and procedures for prevention, protocols to follow when a potential concussion is identified as well as management will occur.
2. Prevention - Concussion prevention is important. There is evidence that education about concussion leads to a reduction in the incidence of concussion and improved outcomes from concussion.

Anytime a student is involved in physical activity, there is a chance of sustaining a concussion. Therefore it is important to take a preventative approach encouraging a culture of safety mindedness when students are physically active.

3. Management - Knowledge of how to properly manage a diagnosed concussion is critical in a student's recovery and is essential in helping to prevent the student from returning to learning or physical activities too soon and risking further complications. Ultimately, this awareness and knowledge could help contribute to the student's long-term health and academic success.

School board staff will take direction from Medical personnel regarding individualized response to a concussion and return to normal activities.

SCHOOL BOARD REPORTING

In accordance with paragraph 27.1 of subsection 8(1) of the Education Act, school boards will be required to report to the Ministry of Education upon implementation and, upon request thereafter, on their activities to achieve the expectations regarding concussions.