

Individualized Learning Accommodations Following a Concussion

Cognitive activities can cause a student's concussion symptoms to reappear or worsen. Knowing the signs and symptoms and how to properly manage a diagnosed concussion is critical in a student's recovery.

Once a student is ready and able to return to school, the school principal/designate will serve as the main point of contact for the student and the parents/guardians.

The **principal/designate**, in consultation with other members of the collaborative team (student, parents/guardian, healthcare provider and teachers), will identify learning accommodations that will support the student as they move through the stages of the Return-to-School Strategy.

We encourage parents/guardians and students to use the **Learning Accommodations for Students Following a Concussion Table** to help identify which learning accommodations will support the student's Return-to-School Strategy.

It is important to note:

- Cognitive or physical activities can cause a student's symptoms to reappear.
- Most students who sustain a concussion will make a complete recovery and be able to return to school and sport/physical activity within 1-4 weeks.
- Approximately 15-30% of individuals will experience symptoms that persist beyond this time frame.
- If a student's symptoms are persistent (i.e., last longer than 4 weeks for youth under 18), they may benefit from a referral to a medically supervised multidisciplinary concussion clinic.

Learning Accommodations for Students Following a Concussion Table

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Headache and Fatigue	Difficulty concentrating, paying attention or multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure instructions are clear (e.g., simplify directions, have the student repeat directions back to the teacher) • Allow the student to have frequent breaks, or return to school gradually (e.g., 1-2 hours, half-days, late starts) • Keep distractions to a minimum (e.g., move the student away from bright lights or noisy areas) • Limit materials on the student's desk or in their work area to avoid distractions • Provide alternative assessment opportunities (e.g., give tests orally, allow the student to dictate responses to tests or assignments, provide access to technology)
Difficulty remembering or processing speed	Difficulty retaining new information, remembering instructions and accessing learned information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide a daily organizer and prioritize tasks • Provide visual aids/cues and/or advance organizers (e.g., visual cueing, non-verbal signs) • Divide larger assignments/assessments into smaller tasks • Provide the student with a copy of class notes • Provide access to technology • Repeat instructions • Provide alternative methods for the student to demonstrate mastery
Difficulty paying attention and/or concentrating	<p>Limited/short-term focus on schoolwork</p> <p>Difficulty maintaining a regular academic workload or keeping pace with schoolwork demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate assignments and projects among all teachers • Use a planner/organizer to manage and record daily/weekly homework and assignments • Reduce and/or prioritize homework, assignments and projects • Extend deadlines or break down tasks • Facilitate the use of a peer note taker • Provide alternate assignments and/or tests • Check frequently for comprehension • Consider limiting tests to one per day and student may need extra time or a quiet environment
Anxiety	<p>Decreased attention/concentration</p> <p>Overexertion leading to learning delays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inform the student of any changes in the daily timetable/schedule • Adjust the student's timetable/schedule as needed to avoid fatigue (e.g., 1-2 hours/periods, half-days, full-days) • Build in more frequent breaks during the school day • Provide the student with preparation time to respond to questions
Irritable or Frustrated	Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage teachers to use consistent strategies and approaches • Acknowledge and empathize with the student's frustration, anger or emotional outburst if and as they occur • Reinforce positive behaviour • Provide structure and consistency on a daily basis • Prepare the student for change and transitions • Set reasonable expectations • Anticipate and remove the student from a problem situation (without characterizing it as punishment)
Light/Noise Sensitivity	Difficulties working in classroom environment (e.g., lights, noise, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange strategic seating (e.g., move the student away from window or talkative peers, proximity to the teacher or peer support, quiet setting) • Where possible provide access to special lighting (e.g., task lighting, darker room) • Minimize background noise • Provide alternative settings (e.g., alternative work space, study carrel) • Avoid noisy crowded environments such as assemblies and hallways during high traffic times • Allow the student to eat lunch in a quiet area with a few friends • Where possible provide ear-plugs/headphones, sunglasses
Depression/Withdrawal	Withdrawal from participation in school activities or friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Build time into class/school day for socialization with peers • Partner student with a "buddy" for assignments or activities