

Post-Concussion Recovery: Information for Educators

Dear teacher,

This is to inform you that _____ suffered a sports concussion on _____ and is currently under the care of the FISD concussion oversight team. The student may need academic accommodations. If this occurs, you may use the following information to facilitate the accommodation. If you have any questions contact _____ at _____. Thanks in advance for your assistance.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury (TBI), caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that can change the way your brain normally works. Concussions can also occur from a blow to the body that causes the head to move rapidly back and forth. Even a “ding,” “getting your bell rung,” or what seems to be mild bump or blow to the head can be serious (CDC.gov).

Concussion presentation differs from individual to individual and students may be at risk if they return to school or play too quickly.

After a few days, the student may participate in any learning activity that doesn't cause increased symptoms. However, if the student's symptoms increase while doing a specific activity, that activity should be discontinued – not doing so can lead to delayed recovery.

Impact of School and Learning on your student's symptoms

Both physical and cognitive exertions can have negative effect on the student. The added stimulation of the school environment can significantly increase symptoms, even when the student has begun to recover.

Many concussed individuals may be unable to concentrate, focus, be able to read or absorb material, and may experience increased symptoms while doing so. If a rest break can be interspersed at intervals, learning activities may be better tolerated; longer intervals can be used as symptoms subside.

School attendance and activities may need to be modified

While some students may be able to attend school without increasing their symptoms, the majority will probably need some modifications depending on the nature and severity of their symptoms.

If students are unable to attend school for an entire day without symptoms, they may attend for a half-day. Some students may only be able to attend for one period or not at all due to their symptoms.

Frequent breaks with rest periods in the nurse's office may be necessary. Often, alternating a class with a rest period may be helpful. Math and computer work tend to cause more symptoms than other classes. As recovery proceeds, gradually hours spent in school may be increased.

Workload and homework may need to be reduced. Frequent breaks while doing homework may be helpful. Term papers should be postponed. Pre-printed class notes and tutors may help to relieve the pressure of schoolwork.

Tests: if there are concentration and memory problems, quizzes, tests, PSAT tests, SAT tests and final exams should be delayed or postponed. If test results are poor, a note to the school should request that the scores be voided. Extra time or un-timed tests may be necessary initially when test taking is resumed.

If noise causes increased symptoms, students with concussions should avoid areas where increased noise is inherent (e.g. band hall, cafeteria, hallways during passing periods). If light causes increased symptoms, the use of sunglasses may be necessary to avoid increased symptoms.

The Role of the Teacher

The classroom teacher should be aware of the student's condition. Moreover, if any unusual behavior is noted, the teacher should report this information to the concussion oversight team. Examples include: poor attention, concentration frustration, reduced short term memory recall or delayed processing, disproportionate reactions to situations, etc.

The classroom teacher may need to implement strategies based on the student's condition. These may include changes in environment, curriculum, methods, organization, and/or behavior. See attached list and Return to Learn Protocol

Return to Learn Protocol

Remember: Progression is individual, all concussions are different. Student may start at any step as symptoms dictate and remain at that step as long as needed. Return to previous step if symptoms worsen.

Steps	Progression	Description
1	HOME – Total Rest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No mental exertion – no computer, texting, video games, or homework Stay at home No driving
2	HOME – Light Mental Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to 30 minutes mental exertion No prolonged concentration Stay at home No driving
Progress to the next level when able to handle up to 30 minutes mental exertion without worsening of symptoms		
3	SCHOOL – Part time Maximum Accommodations Shortened Days/Schedule Built-in Breaks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide quiet place for scheduled mental rest No significant classroom or standardized testing Modify rather than postpone academics Provide extra time, extra help, modified assignments
Progress to the next level when able to handle 30-40 minutes mental exertion without worsening of symptoms		
4	SCHOOL – Part time Moderate Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No standardized testing Modified classroom testing Moderate decrease of extra time, help, and modification of assignments
Progress to the next level when able to handle 60 minutes mental exertion without worsening of symptoms		
<i>At this point student may be considered for Return to Play Protocol with the appropriate healthcare professional approval</i>		
5	SCHOOL – Full time Minimal Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No standardized testing. Routine tests OK Continue decrease of extra time, help, and modification of assignments May require more supports in academically challenging subjects
Progress to the next level when able to handle more than 60 minutes mental exertion without symptoms		
6	SCHOOL – Full time Full Academics No Accommodations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attends all classes Full homework and testing
When symptoms continue beyond 3-4 weeks, Prolonged In-School Support is required. Plan and coordinate with the proper healthcare professional.		

Suggested Classroom Modifications

<u>Environment</u>	<u>Curriculum</u>	<u>Tests/Homework</u>	<u>Organization</u>	<u>Behavior</u>
Home only- no school	Reduced or abbreviated schoolwork/demands; Removal of distracting or extraneous information from materials; provide summary materials (graphs, templates, tables, etc.)	No exams (esp. mid-terms, SAT's, etc.) until clear; Reduced homework at first; printed notes; taped lectures	¼ or ½ day or Full day as tolerated; Provide schedules/checklists for assignments	No technology (phone, text, tv, videogames, ipod, ipad, etc)
Allow nap time/ breaks in school	Reduced class load; Elimination of non-essential assignments; No standardized tests	Extended time on tests and projects; untimed exams; Repetition of important information; Use precise/direct language	Preferential seating to minimize distraction; Meet with teacher at end of day; tutoring, mentoring, or extra supervision as needed	Preferential seating to monitor attention/ Energy level
When frustrated or over stimulated- allow student to leave	Break information/assignments into manageable chunks	Quiet environment to take tests/ quizzes	Lunch in quiet room; leave classes early (crowded hallways)	Allow sunglasses and/or hat to reduce light sensitivity