

Toronto District School Board

Policy P087

Title: **Concussions**
Adopted: March 11, 2015
Effectuated: March 11, 2015
Revised: **February 5, 2020**
Reviewed: **February 5, 2020**
Authorization: Board of Trustees

1. RATIONALE

The Concussions Policy (the “Policy”) affirms the Toronto District School Board’s commitment to student safety, injury prevention, and well-being by supporting concussion awareness, prevention, identification, management, tracking and training in schools.

This Policy supports the implementation of the Board’s obligations under the *Education Act* and the direction of the Ministry of Education stated in Policy/Program Memoranda (PPM) 158 – School Board Policies on Concussion.

The Policy is also aligned with the Board’s Student Health Support Policy (P092) and operates within the legislative environment which governs student health support services in school settings, including but not limited to *the Regulated Health Professions Act, the Good Samaritan Act, Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (MFIPPA), *Personal Health Information Protection Act* (PHIPA), *Rowan’s Law, Ontario Human Rights Code*, and collective agreements.

2. OBJECTIVE

- To develop awareness and training to support a student’s safe return to the classroom and physical activity.
- To develop awareness including strategies for sharing information on the seriousness of concussion, and on concussion prevention, identification, and management.
- To develop strategies for preventing and minimizing the risk of sustaining concussions (and other brain injuries) in schools and at off-site events.
- To inform staff on initial concussion-assessment strategies, steps to take following an initial assessment and safe removal of a student from activity as outlined in the Emergency Action Plan.

- To develop and implement management procedures for students with a diagnosed concussion including the development of an individualized and gradual “return to learning and/or return to physical activity” plan for every student with a diagnosed concussion.
- To provide regular and ongoing training on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management to relevant school board employees and school volunteers.

3. DEFINITIONS

Approved Concussion Awareness Resource refers to documents made available on the Ontario government’s concussion website. It may also refer to resources that have been approved by the school board, provided that the school board has ensured they are consistent with the government’s Concussion Awareness Resources (Source: PPM 158).

Board refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the “TDSB”.

Coach refers to and includes any type of coach, including a head coach or assistant coach (Source: PPM 158).

Concussion refers to the term for a clinical diagnosis that is communicated by a physician or nurse practitioner (Source: Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education and PPM 158).

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 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.

Concussion Codes of Conduct refers to the steps to prevent and minimize the risk of sustaining concussion (and other brain injuries) in schools and at off-site events. PPM 158 directed school boards to develop the Concussion Codes of Conduct for groups participating in board-sponsored interschool sports (e.g. students and

parents of students under 18 years of age, as well as coaches and team trainers). The Concussion Codes of Conduct outlines the protocol for initial concussion assessment strategies, steps to take following an initial assessment and safe removal of student from activity. It also consists of management provisions for students with a diagnosed concussion including the development of an individualized and gradual return to learning and/or return to physical activity plan.

Health Care Professional refers to a member of a College under the Regulated Health Professions Act, 1991 (e.g., Health Care Professionals hired by the board, this includes, psychologists, occupational therapists, physiotherapists, and speech language pathologists).

Official refers to an umpire, a referee or a judge, but only if the official presides over the field of play. Students who are acting as officials under the supervision of a coach or teacher are not included in this definition (Source: PPM 158).

Return to Learn refers to a process/plan developed to assist a student with their return to learning activities with individualized classroom strategies and/or approaches (Source: Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education).

Return to Physical Activity refers to an internationally recognized graduated stepwise approach to return to physical activity (Source: Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education).

Second Impact Syndrome refers to 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 (Source: PPM 158).

Team trainer refers to an individual who is assigned by a school board to respond to athlete injuries. Students who are acting as team trainers under the supervision of a coach or teacher are not included in this definition (Source: PPM 158).

TDSB refers to the Toronto District School Board, which is also referred to as the "Board".

4. RESPONSIBILITY

The Director of Education holds primary responsibility for this Policy.

Within the Director's Office, the executive oversight and responsibility for the implementation, coordination and day-to-day management of the Policy is assigned to the Associate Director, Equity, Well-Being, and School Improvement.

5. APPLICATION AND SCOPE

This Policy applies to all employees of the Board.

The Policy also covers students, parents/guardians, coaches, team trainers, officials, occasional staff, volunteers, and Board employed or affiliated registered medical/health professionals.

6. POLICY

6.1. The TDSB recognizes that:

- a) Providing students with opportunities to be physically active on a daily basis has a positive impact on their physical, mental and social well-being.
- b) Promoting awareness of safety in schools and recognizing that the health and safety of students are essential preconditions for effective learning.
- c) Research demonstrates that a concussion can have a significant impact on a student cognitively, physically, emotionally and socially.
- d) The concussion protocol outlined in the current Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education is the minimum standard.

6.2. The TDSB will establish a Concussion Codes of Conduct for individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports.

6.3. The Concussion Codes of Conduct will include the following requirements:

- maintaining a safe learning environment;
- teaching and/or learning and applying the rules of a physical activity/sport;
- implementing the skills and strategies for a physical activity in a proper progression;
- fair play and respect for all;
- acknowledging and respecting the consequences for prohibited play that is considered high-risk for causing concussions;
- providing opportunities to discuss potential issues related to concussions;
- recognizing and reporting concussions;
- acknowledging the importance of communication between the student, parents; school staff, and any sport organization with which the student is registered;
- supporting the implementation of a Return to School Plan for students who have a concussion diagnosis;
- prioritizing a student's return to learning as part of the Return to School Plan.

6.4. The TDSB will ensure that Concussion Awareness Resources and the Concussion Codes of Conduct are made available and accessible (e.g. through letters or emails, in a student handbook, and/or on the board website) for staff, students, parents/guardians, and volunteers.

- 6.5. The TDSB will ensure annual concussion training for relevant staff and volunteers.
- 6.6. The TDSB will require the receipt of confirmation of the annual review of Concussion Awareness Resources and the Concussion Codes of Conduct by the following individuals:
- Students participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - parents and guardians of students under 18 years of age who are participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - coaches participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - team trainers participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - officials participating in board-sponsored interschool sports; and
 - volunteers participating in board-sponsored interschool sports.
- 6.7. The TDSB is committed to:
- a) The development of awareness on the seriousness of concussions, concussion prevention, identification and management through effective community engagement and sharing of resources and information with board employees, students, parents/guardians, educators, , volunteers, coaches, doctors and nurse practitioners, and relevant community-based organizations.
 - b) Supporting student achievement and well-being with student participation in a variety of physical activities in a safe and caring environment.
 - c) Supporting schools in the implementation of the TDSB Return to Learn procedure which supports a student's individualized and gradual return to regular learning activities successfully.
 - d) Supporting schools in the implementation of the TDSB Return to Physical Activity procedure which supports a student's safe, individualized and gradual return to all forms of physical activity.

7. EVALUATION

This Policy will be reviewed as required, but at a minimum every four (4) years after the effective date.

8. APPENDICES

Not applicable

9. SPECIFIC DIRECTIVES

The Director of Education has authority to issue operational procedures to implement this Policy.

10. REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policies:

- Equity Policy (P037)
- Student Health Support Policy (P092)

Procedures:

- Concussions (PR712)
- Excursions (PR511)

Legislative Acts and Regulations:

- *Education Act*
- *Good Samaritan Act*
- *Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA)*
- *Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC)*
- *Personal Health Information Protection Act (PHIPA)*
- *Rowan's Law (Concussion)*

Other Documents:

- PPM 158: School Board Policies on Concussions
- OPHEA - Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education