



Fairbanks North Star Borough School

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Dear Parent/Guardian of a student with concussion:

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) information on concussions includes this statement:

Rest is very important after a concussion because it helps the brain to heal. Ignoring symptoms and trying to "tough it out" often makes symptoms worse. Be patient because healing takes time. Only when your symptoms have reduced significantly, in consultation with your health care professional, should you slowly and gradually return to your daily activities, such as work or school. If your symptoms come back or you get new symptoms as you become more active, this is a sign that you are pushing yourself too hard. Stop these activities and take more time to rest and recover. As the days go by, you can expect to gradually feel better.

The Fairbanks North Star Borough School District concussion policy (1062.4) and accompanying administrative regulation supports students in recovering from concussions. We know a diagnosis of a concussion can be unsettling. This letter is intended to give you a general outline of what to expect as your child returns to school. No two concussions are alike. This policy is written to provide flexibility in helping your student return to school safely.

The concussion policy is made up of two parts or protocols that happen sequentially, the Return to Academics (RTA) and the Return to Participation (RTP) protocols. In the first, the **Return to Academics** protocol, the concussed student completes a progression from rest at home to brief periods of mental exertion to sustained mental exertion when he or she tolerates the increased level of activity **without a return of symptoms**. Once back at school, the gradual return to academics progresses to a full day of school with regular class and homework assignments and then testing as the student can tolerate without a return of symptoms. The **Return to Academics** protocol may start at any level and progress at a rate individualized to the student's needs. Steps might be added or skipped depending on the presence or absence of symptoms, though the ultimate decision on academic adjustments rests with the Concussion Management Team (CMT). If symptoms return, the student will go back to the previous step until the symptoms subside. A **sample** RTA protocol might look like this:

Step 0: student is at home until symptoms begin to subside for at least 24 hours and cleared to return to school by a qualified health care provider.

Step 1: half day of school with no homework or tests.

Step 2: full day of school with no homework or tests.

Step 3: full day of school with homework.

Step 4: full day of school with regular homework and tests.

Step 5: full day of school and start RTP protocol.

The second protocol starts when the RTA process is complete. The student begins the **Return to Participation** protocol at the baseline of no physical activity as long as the student experiences symptoms. The student could remain at this baseline for days or weeks. When the student is able to participate in academic activities without modification, is symptom free for 24 hours and cleared by a qualified health care provider, the student may progress to Step 1 of the Return to Participation protocol. A **sample** RTP protocol might look like this:

Step 1: Light aerobic activity increasing heart rate for 10-15 minutes.

Step 2: Light to moderate aerobic activity for 30 minutes with limited body and head movement.

Step 3: Moderate to heavy aerobic activity for 30 minutes but no contact.

Step 4: Heavy aerobic activity for 30 minutes which may be intense but no contact.

Step 5: Return to Practice/PE but non-contact and limited participation to routine, sport-specific drills.

Step 6: Return to Full Contact Practice/PE.

Step 7: When student completes the RTP protocol by returning to full contact practice without experiencing symptoms and is cleared by an athletic trainer, if available, or other qualified health care professional, student is medically eligible for competition and full participation in PE class.

Additional Points

* When ready to return to school and start the RTA protocol, your student will check in with the school nurse upon arriving at school each day. The nurse will assess which step in the protocol your child meets. Once your student has completed the RTA protocol, the RTP protocol will begin.

* An email will be sent by the Concussion Management Team (CMT) every day to teachers, relevant staff and parents (if email is available) explaining what stage of recovery your student has met.

* Once the school nurse has received a doctor's order to return to full activity and your student has completed Return to Academics and Return to Participation portions they will be released from the Concussion Protocol.

If you have further questions about this policy or wish to see the references this policy is based on you can read it in its entirety at this website: http://www.k12northstar.org/cms/lib010/AK01901510/Centricity/Domain/1139/AR_1062.4_Concussions.pdf