

1. PURPOSE:

The Catholic Board School Board of Eastern Ontario is committed to working together to provide a healthy and safe environment that promotes the overall well-being of its students and staff. The Board recognizes concussions as a serious injury and is committed to promoting concussion awareness, prevention, identification, management, tracking, and training for board and school staff.

2. DEFINITIONS:

In this procedure,

2.1 **Board** means the Catholic District School Board of Eastern Ontario.

2.2 **Code of Conduct** is a form that outlines the expectations of an individual (e.g. student, parent/guardian, or coach/trainer) as outlined by Bill 193- Rowan's Law.

2.3 **Concussion:**

- is a brain injury that causes changes in how the brain functions, leading to symptoms that can be physical (e.g., headache, dizziness), cognitive (e.g., difficulty concentrating or remembering), emotional/behavioural (e.g., depression, irritability) and/or related to sleep (e.g., drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep);
- may be caused by an impact to the head, face, neck or body, with a force transmitted to the head, that causes the brain to move rapidly and hit the walls of 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 on X-rays, standard CT scans or MRIs; and
- is typically expected to result in symptoms lasting 1 - 4 weeks in children and youth (18 years or under), but in some cases symptoms may be prolonged.
- **Can only be diagnosed by a medical doctor or a nurse practitioner.**

2.4 **Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (OPHEA)** is an organization that is responsible for the development of safety guidelines and protocols for Ontario schools.

2.5 **Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPASSE)** is managed by OPHEA and represent the minimum standards for risk management practice for school boards in Ontario.

2.6 **Ontario School Board's Insurance Exchange (OSBIE)** is a school board owned, non-profit insurance program, representing 78 school boards/school authorities in Ontario. The primary goals of OSBIE are to insure member school

boards against losses and to promote safe school practices.

- 2.7 **Return to School Plan** is a protocol developed by OPHEA, in partnership with Parachute and it outlines the protocols for a student's **Return to Learn (RTL)** and **Return to Physical Activity (RTPA)** after suffering a concussion.
- 2.8 **The School Concussion Management Team** is made up of a small group of school staff members, which includes the principal or the vice-principal and other members of the school staff (ie. the Student Success Teacher, the Athletic Department Lead, the student's classroom teacher, the Student Support Worker, the Administrative Assistant).

3. RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The Board will:

- a) ensure that information on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management is made available to all students, staff, parents/guardians, and volunteers working within the Board. Ongoing communication will be maintained through a variety of communication strategies such as, the Board website and/or other appropriate channels;
- b) ensure that relevant school board staff participate in annual concussion training which includes information on concussion awareness, prevention, and management; and
- c) monitor the OPHEA Concussion Protocol, as part of OPASSE, and make recommendations for updates, as needed, to any Board documents related to concussions.

3.2 The principal/designate will:

- a) ensure that the concussion protocol and procedures, as outlined by OPHEA guidelines and protocols, will be adhered to when a student suffers a potential concussion and/or has concussion-like symptoms;
- b) provide to the parents/guardians of each student suspected of having a concussion or having concussion-like symptoms the appropriate forms and documentation;
- c) collaborate with the parents/guardians and medical personnel to implement a **Return to School (RTS) Plan**, when a student is diagnosed with a concussion;

- d) ensure that all concussion-related incidents are recorded, reported and filed as required by Board guidelines, and with an OSBIE online incident report form; and
- e) maintain a record of concussion-related information for each student diagnosed with a concussion. Where relevant, the principal/designate will ensure that appropriate information is made available to school staff and to parent/community volunteers.

3.3 The teacher will:

- a) annually review the Board's *Policy and Administrative Procedure on Concussions*, the Board's *Concussion Handbook*, *OPHEA Concussion Protocols* and participate in Board Concussion Training;
- b) implement any educational accommodations, as deemed appropriate by the medical doctor/nurse practitioner, for the student suffering from a diagnosed concussion;

In addition to the above, teachers acting in a coaching/training capacity will:

- c) discuss safe play, rules of play, and concussion prevention and management with students prior to engaging in physical activity; and
- d) complete a coach's *Code of Conduct Form* if he or she is coaching and supervising an interschool sport;
- e) verify that signed parental/guardian permission is on file prior to the student participating in an interschool sport, which acknowledges that they have reviewed the Board's student/athlete *Code of Conduct*.

3.4 The student will:

- a) become familiar, in an age appropriate manner, with the signs and symptoms of a concussion;
- b) notify teachers, coaches, parents/guardians, or the principal/designate of a suspected or diagnosed concussion which occurs at school or out of school;
- c) take an increasing and age appropriate responsibility for their safety and the safety of others; and
- d) complete a Student/Athlete *Code of Conduct Form* at the beginning of each school year. Students and their parents/guardians are expected to read and sign the form and submit it to the school at the beginning of the school year.

3.5 The parent/guardian or a student over 18 years of age will:

- a) review, sign, and submit the Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct, as well as the Board's student/athlete *Code of Conduct*;
- b) notify the school of any suspected or diagnosed concussions for their child, which occur at school or out of school;
- c) be encouraged to provide confirmation that the student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner to support the student's return to learning;
- d) provide confirmation that the student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner that the student has been medically cleared, before the student can return to full participation in physical activity;
- e) work in partnership with the school on their child's *Return to School Plan*

4.0 ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES:

Concussion Awareness and Prevention Strategies

- 4.1 All students, staff, and parents/guardians within the Board will receive information on concussion awareness and prevention and Codes of Conduct through an appropriate communication tool such as, the Board website and/or other appropriate channels;
- 4.2 All students will be taught about the risks of concussions (e.g. through the Ontario Curriculum expectations, Rowan's Law Day).
- 4.3 For extra-curricular sports and intramurals, the teacher/coach/trainer will meet with the students at the beginning of the season to discuss the following:
 - a) the rules of the game and the importance of practicing fair play and wearing properly fitted protective equipment;
 - b) the risks for concussion associated with the sport and how to minimize those risks; and
 - c) the student's responsibility to immediately inform the teacher and parent/guardian of any signs or symptoms of a concussion, and to remove him or herself from the activity.

Concussion Code of Conduct

- 4.4 All students/athletes, teachers/coaches/trainers, volunteers, and parents/guardians of students under the age of 18 will review, sign, and submit the appropriate *Code of*

Conduct Form which includes information on signs and symptoms and the prevention of concussions.

- 4.5 Students under the age of 18 and their parents, will submit their signed forms to the school at the beginning of the school year and prior to participation in Board-sponsored interschool sports. These forms will be kept on file for the school year.
- 4.6 Coaches will submit their signed form to their principal/designate at the beginning of the school year and prior to participation in Board-sponsored interschool sports. These forms will be kept on file for the school year.

Concussion Training

- 4.7 Annual training on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management will be provided to school staff, Board employees, and school volunteers.
- 4.8 School staff, Board employees, and school volunteers will review the Board's Concussion Policy and Administrative Procedures annually.
- 4.9 New school staff, who are hired throughout the school year, will have access to concussion training through the appropriate channel (ie. NTIP program or the Human Resources Department).

Concussion Identification

- 4.9.1 In cases where a stakeholder suspects a concussion or a concussion event has occurred due to the nature of the impact, but there are no observable signs present, nor are there any symptoms reported, the stakeholder must report the incident to school administration and parents/guardians for 24 hour monitoring (as outlined by OPHEA).
- 4.9.2 Stakeholders who have identified a student as having a concussion/suspected concussion will follow the concussion protocol as outlined by OPHEA.
- 4.9.3 School staff, Board staff, or volunteers cannot make a concussion diagnosis, but must advise students who are suspected of having sustained a concussion and their parents to seek medical assessment by a physician or a nurse practitioner.
- 4.9.4 Medical doctors or nurse practitioners are the only professionals who can diagnose a concussion and provide medical clearance for a student to **Return to Learn (RTL)** or **Return to Physical Activity (RTPA)**.
- 4.9.5 A student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion, or the student's parent, if the student is under 18 years of age:
 - a) are encouraged to provide confirmation that the student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner to support the student's return to learning; and

- b) provide confirmation that the student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion has undergone a medical assessment by a physician or nurse practitioner that the student has been medically cleared, before the student can return to full participation in physical activity.

Concussion Management

- 4.9.6 When a student has been diagnosed with a concussion by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, the principal/designate and school staff will follow the concussion protocol as outlined by OPHEA.
- 4.9.7 School staff will implement any recommended educational accommodations, as deemed appropriate by the medical doctor or nurse practitioner, for the student suffering from a diagnosed concussion;
- 4.9.8 The ***School Concussion Management Team*** will work with the student and his or her parents/guardians to follow and implement the ***Return to School Plan*** which includes the ***Return to Learn (RTL)*** and ***Return to Physical Activity (RTPA) Plan*** as outlined by OPHEA.

Concussion Tracking

- 4.9.9 School and Board staff will:
 - a) document and track the number of suspected and diagnosed concussion-related injuries using an appropriate recording system; and
 - b) track a student's progress, from removal from an activity due to a suspected concussion, to the return, through graduated steps, to learning and to physical activity.

Rowan's Law Day

- 4.9. The last Wednesday in September (or as declared by the provincial government) is established as Rowan's Law Day as indicated in Bill 193. This day will be used to promote concussion awareness and prevention.

5.0 REFERENCE DOCUMENTS

Policy/Program Memorandum No. 158: School Board Policies on Concussions

<http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/ppm/ppm-158-jan-2020.pdf>

Education Act, R.S.O. 1990, c.E.2 section 266

CDSBEO - School Operations Policy – B1:Health & Safety

https://www.cdsbeo.on.ca/policies/B1_Health_Safety.pdf

Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines Concussion Protocol (OPESGCP)

<http://safety.ophea.net/concussions>

Parachute Canada

<https://parachute.ca/en/professional-resource/concussion-collection/concussion-protocol-resources-for-health-professionals/>

Bill 193 – Rowan’s Law

<https://www.ontario.ca/laws/statute/S18001>

Government of Ontario website: Rowan’s Law: Concussion Safety

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/rowans-law-concussion-safety>

Ontario School Boards’ Insurance Exchange

<https://www.osbie.on.ca/default.aspx>

CDSBEO Concussion Handbook

<https://www.cdsbeo.on.ca/download/153980/>