



BOARD ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

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705 – Concussion Protocol, Awareness and Training

DIRECTIONAL POLICY

700 - Healthy Schools and Workplaces

Title of Administrative Procedure:

Concussion Protocol, Awareness and Training

Date Approved:

May 2025

Projected Review Date:

May 2029

Directional Policy Alignment:

The Administrative Procedure aligns with the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Directional Policy 700. The Board recognizes that the health and well-being of our students and staff are foundational to their success. A healthy environment involves being respectful of one another's social, emotional, spiritual, and physical well-being. The Board, school, family members, students, health care providers, and community partners share the responsibility of creating healthy work environments to ensure the safety of students and staff.

Alignment with Multi-Year Strategic Plan:

The Concussion Protocol, Awareness and Training Administrative Procedure supports the Board's Multi-Year Strategic Plan through its commitment to creating a safe, supportive, and healthy learning environment for all students. The Board is committed to the safety and well-being of all students and will ensure that all employees are aware of the directives outlined in this Administrative Procedure.

[CDSBEO Multi-Year Strategic Plan 2025-2030](#)

Purpose

The Ontario government enacted Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018 and amended the Education Act to enhance concussion safety for amateur athletes, including students, both on the field and at school. These amendments, effective July 1, 2019, authorize the Minister of Education to mandate school boards to adhere to concussion policies and guidelines in accordance with Rowan's Law.

With the authority under the Education Act, the Minister requires all school boards in Ontario to have a policy on concussion safety for students. The updates to Policy/Program Memorandum 158 - School Board Policies on Concussion, now requires all school boards to protect amateur athletes, including students, by improving concussion safety on the field and at school by ensuring that students, parents, coaches and officials are aware, trained and review concussion protocols annually.

The CDSBEO is dedicated to fostering student success and promoting safe, healthy, and active lifestyles. As part of this commitment, the CDSBEO supports concussion awareness, prevention, identification, management, tracking, and training in schools through legislation, policy, and resources.

Action Required

- 1) The Board will ensure that information on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management is made available to all students, staff, parent(s)/guardian(s), 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.
- 2) The Board will ensure that relevant school board staff participate in annual concussion training which includes information on concussion awareness, prevention, and management.
- 3) All staff are required to implement the protocols and strategies for preventing concussions.
- 4) The Board will monitor the OPHEA Concussion Protocol, as part of OPASSE, and make recommendations for updates, as needed, to any Board documents related to concussions.

In addition, the updated PPM 158 (2019) requires all school board policies to include the following:

- The receipt of confirmation of an annual review of an approved Concussion Awareness Resource by individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
- The establishment of Concussion Codes of Conduct for individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports, and the receipt of confirmation of annual review of the relevant Code of Conduct by those individuals;
- Annual concussion training for school staff;
- The establishment of a process for the removal of students with a suspected concussion

from physical activity and, for those diagnosed with a concussion, a Return to School Plan, which includes their return to learning and to physical activity;

- The establishment of a process to document and 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.

Concussion Awareness and Prevention Strategies

All students, staff, and parent(s)/guardian(s) 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.

- 1) All students will be taught about the risks of concussions (e.g., through the Ontario Curriculum expectations, Rowan's Law Day).
- 2) For extracurricular sports and intramurals, the teacher/coach/trainer will meet with the students at the beginning of the season to discuss the following:
 - The rules of the game and the importance of practicing fair play and wearing properly fitted protective equipment;
 - The risks for concussion associated with sport and how to minimize those risks; and
 - The student's responsibility is to immediately inform the teacher and parent(s)/guardian(s) of any signs or symptoms of a concussion and to remove him or herself from the activity.
- 3) With respect to interschool sports, all students/athletes, teachers/coaches/trainers, volunteers, and parent(s)/guardian(s) of students under the age of 18 will review, sign, and submit the appropriate Code of Conduct Form, found in the CDSBEO Concussion Handbook, which includes information on signs and symptoms and the prevention of concussions.
- 4) Students under the age of 18 and their parent(s)/guardian(s), 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.
- 5) Coaches will submit their signed Code of Conduct 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

- 1) Annual training on concussion awareness, prevention, identification, and management will be provided to school staff, Board employees, and school volunteers.
- 2) School staff, Board employees, and school volunteers will review the Board's Concussion Administrative Procedure and Concussion Handbook annually.
- 3) New school staff, who are hired throughout the school year, will have access to concussion training through the Human Resources Department.

Concussion Identification

- 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) for 24-hour monitoring (as outlined in the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook**).
- 2) School staff, Board employees and/or school volunteers who have identified a student as having a concussion/suspected concussion will follow the concussion protocol (as outlined in the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook**).
- 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 parent(s)/guardian(s) to seek medical assessment by a physician or a nurse practitioner.
- 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).
- 5) A student who is suspected of having sustained a concussion, or the student's parent(s)/guardian(s), if the student is under 18 years of age:
 - 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
 - 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

- 1) 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 in the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook**).
- 2) School staff will implement any recommended educational accommodation, as deemed appropriate by the medical doctor or nurse practitioner, for the student suffering from a diagnosed concussion.
- 3) The School Concussion Management Team will work with the student and their parent(s)/guardian(s) 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 in the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook**).

Concussion Tracking

Principal, designate or school 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

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 with all students.

Responsibilities**The Board of Trustees is responsible for:**

- Ensuring alignment with the Healthy Schools and Workplaces Directional Policy;
- Reviewing the Concussion Administrative Procedure as part of its regular policy and procedures review cycle.

The Director of Education is responsible for:

- Designating resources for ensuring the implementation of, and compliance with this Administrative Procedure.

Superintendents of Schools and System Portfolios are responsible for:

- Supporting the implementation of this Administrative Procedure.

Superintendent responsible for Health and Physical Education is responsible for:

- Developing strategies for the prevention and identification of concussions and procedures for diagnosed concussions;
- Providing awareness training for all staff and ensuring that they align with current best practices, and at a minimum, with the OPHEA Concussion guidelines and OSBIE requirements; and
- Ensuring that concussion awareness and education strategies are made available to students and parents (i.e., posters, websites, handouts, newsletters, team meetings, curriculum Memos, etc.).

Principals and Vice-Principals are responsible for:

- Ensuring all staff and volunteers understand their responsibilities, are aware of and follow this procedure as appropriate to their roles;
- Leading the school community in communicating, understanding, and implementing the Concussion Administrative Procedure;
- Ensuring that the concussion protocol and procedures as outlined in the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook** will be adhered to when a student suffers a potential concussion and/or has concussion-like symptoms;
- Ensuring that forms are available to all staff (**CDSBEO Concussion Handbook**);
- Ensuring that all staff and volunteers have completed mandatory online training annually;
- Informing the appropriate school staff and leading the school team to develop a Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan, which meets the individual needs of the student;
- Documenting and tracking the number of suspected and diagnosed concussion related injuries;
- Supporting parent(s)/guardian(s) in understanding and following the CDSBEO concussion protocols;
- Ensuring forms and training are provided to those staff/volunteers that are coaching or officiating sports events/activities or offsite activities, as required;
- Ensuring forms and training are available to students and parent(s)/guardian(s) involved in interschool sports, as required;
- Communicating the importance of reporting any non-school related concussions; and
- Ensuring that the school staff work closely with parent(s)/guardian(s) to support students with a concussion with their recovery and academic success.

School staff are responsible for:

- Accessing the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook** when a student exhibits symptoms of a suspected concussion or has been diagnosed by a physician or nurse practitioner with a concussion;
- Completing required Board Concussion training;
- Providing age-appropriate concussion education prior to participating in activities that could result in a concussion;
- Recognizing signs and symptoms of a suspected concussion and respond appropriately in the event of a concussion;
- Following current OPHEA Safety Guidelines and implementing risk management and injury prevention strategies;
- Informing the Principal and parent(s)/guardian(s) of a suspected student concussion;

- Providing parent(s)/guardian(s) with appropriate documentation as per the **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook** when a student is suspected of having a concussion; and
- Following the students' Return to Learn and Return to Physical Activity Plan.

Parent(s)/Guardian(s) are responsible for:

- Learning the signs/symptoms of a concussion;
- Having the student assessed by a medical doctor or nurse practitioner, as soon as possible, in the event that a concussion is suspected;
- Collaborating with the school and medical doctor or nurse practitioner to manage possible or diagnosed concussions appropriately;
- Supporting concussed student with their recovery;
- Cooperating with school staff and supporting a student on the Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan;
- Reporting any non-school related concussion to the school principal so that the Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan can be implemented;
- Providing confirmation of review of a board-approved concussion awareness resource annually (beginning of school year); and
- Reviewing and providing confirmation of review of the Concussion Code of Conduct annually (beginning of school year).

Students are responsible for:

- Participating in all safety training to learn to recognize the signs/symptoms of concussions;
- Wearing any required equipment in the correct manner;
- Following all rules and regulations of an activity;
- Immediately reporting any concussion symptoms to staff/coaches;
- Informing staff/coaches if they notice/observe concussion signs in any of their peers;
- Following concussion management strategies of their medical practitioner;
- Understanding and following the Return to Learn/Return to Physical Activity Plan as directed by school staff;
- Reviewing a Board-approved concussion awareness resource annually (beginning of school year);
- Providing confirmation of review of a Board-approved concussion awareness resource annually (beginning of school year); and
- Reviewing the Concussion Code of Conduct and providing confirmation of review annually (beginning of school year).

Progress Indicators

- Evidence that staff have implemented protocols and strategies for preventing concussions.
- Evidence that all staff have participated in concussion training (based on OPHEA suggested protocols and strategies for preventing concussions).
- Successful implementation of communication strategies to promote concussion awareness and training.
- Evidence that students, coaches, trainers, officials, and parent(s)/guardian(s) have participated in concussion awareness training and have signed a Concussion Code of Conduct.

Definitions

Concussion: The term for a clinical diagnosis that is communicated by a physician or a nurse practitioner. 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 a medical assessment by a physician or a nurse practitioner. The definition of concussion given below is adapted from the definition provided in the concussion protocol in the Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education.

A concussion:

- a) 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);
- b) may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or by a blow to the body that transmits a force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull;
- c) can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness (in fact, most concussions occur without a loss of consciousness);
- d) 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 Code of Conduct: Sets out rules of behaviour to minimize concussions while playing a sport.

Concussion Awareness Resources: Information for amateur athletes, parents, coaches, team trainers and officials to improve concussion safety in amateur competitive sport. These resources

are to be reviewed annually. Annually, confirmation must be provided by athletes, parents, coaches, team trainers and officials that have reviewed the resources.

Interschool Sports: Competition or cooperation between schools. Carried on outside the bounds of an institution or community.

OPHEA: A not-for-profit organization that champions healthy, active living in schools and communities through quality programs and services, partnerships, and advocacy, and is led by the vision that all children and youth value and enjoy the lifelong benefits of healthy, active living.

References

- [Concussions | Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education](#)
- [Policy/Program Memorandum 158 | Education in Ontario: Policy and Program Direction](#)
- [Rowan's Law - Concussion Awareness](#)
- **CDSBEO Concussion Handbook 2020**