



College Operation Guidelines

Concussion

Rationale

Emmanuel Catholic College is committed to ensuring the safety of students while at school and when participating in any sport related events. The College recognises that educating key individuals, including students, parents, coaches and school personnel, about prevention and early recognition of concussions remains the most important component of improving the care of students with concussions.

Emmanuel Catholic College is aware that head injuries, including concussions, can happen to any student, not just those participating in sports. The College has developed procedures to address head injuries that occur during the school day and during out-of-school hours College events. Additionally, the College is committed to providing students who have experienced a concussion, a plan to ease back into school life.

Definition

Concussion: is defined by the 2017 Concussion in Sport Group consensus statement as, "a traumatic brain injury induced by biomechanical forces." Several common features may include:

1. It may be caused either by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or elsewhere on the body with an "impulsive" force transmitted to the head.
2. Typically results in the rapid onset of short-lived impairment of neurologic function that resolves spontaneously. However, in some cases, signs and symptoms evolve over a number of minutes to hours.
3. May result in neuropathological changes, acute clinical symptoms largely reflect a functional disturbance rather than a structural injury and, as such, no abnormality is seen on standard structural neuroimaging.
4. Results in a range of clinical signs and symptoms that may or may not involve loss of consciousness (LOC). Resolution of the clinical and cognitive symptoms typically follows a sequential course. In a small percentage of cases, symptoms may be prolonged.
5. The clinical signs and symptoms cannot be explained by other injuries or coexisting medical conditions.

Communication

A College staff member will notify parents or guardians, as soon as possible, when a student is removed from play or an activity because they are thought to have a concussion.

Emmanuel Catholic College request that parents inform the school (by the College App or emailing Student Services student.services@emmanuel.wa.edu.au) if their child sustains a concussion outside of school to ensure safety procedures can be implemented upon their return to school.

Signs and Symptoms of Concussion

Concussion signs are things you can observe about the student. These include:

- Behavior or personality changes
- Blank stare, dazed look
- Lethargy
- Changes to balance, coordination, reaction time
- Delayed or slowed spoken or physical responses
- Disorientation (confused about time, date, location, game)
- Loss of consciousness/blackout (occurs in less than 10 percent of cases)
- Memory loss of event before, during, or after injury occurred
- Slurred/unclear speech
- Trouble controlling emotions
- Vomiting

Concussion symptoms are things the student tells you are happening. These include:

- Blurry vision/double vision
- Confusion
- Dizziness
- Feeling hazy, foggy, or groggy
- Feeling very drowsy, having sleep problems
- Headache
- Inability to focus, concentrate
- Nausea (stomach upset)
- Not feeling right
- Numbness or tingling
- Sensitivity to light or sound

Education

1. Once each school year, any staff member responsible for coaching a team should complete a face to face training session with the College's accredited First Aid trainer, as well as complete the online learning component developed by Sports Medicine Australia and endorsed by the Australian Institute of Sport, the Australian Medical Association and the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians.
https://concussioninsport.gov.au/coaches_and_support_staff
 - A coach should not coach a sporting activity until they complete the required training.
2. At the beginning of each year the Head of Sport will distribute the **Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5)** and the **Concussion Management Flow Chart** to:
 - a. each staff member who will be coaching a sporting team
 - b. each student who wishes to participate in a sporting team
3. Once each school year, school staff shall be provided education on concussions including:
 - a. Information on how concussions can affect a student's ability to learn
 - b. Examples of common school-related concussion related symptom triggers such as reading, computer use for classwork, and prolonged concentration
 - c. Concussion related triggers are variable and will differ from student to student
 - d. Students who suffer a concussion may have difficulty attending school and focusing on schoolwork, taking tests, and trying to keep up with assignments, especially in maths, science, and foreign-language classes

- e. Information on the risk of depression in students who suffer concussions due to the injury along with prolonged time away from sports, difficulties in school, and sleep disturbances
4. School staff will also be educated on the signs and symptoms to be aware of:
 - Increased problems paying attention or concentrating
 - Increased problems remembering or learning new information
 - Longer time needed to complete tasks or assignments
 - Difficulty organising tasks
 - Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class
 - Greater irritability
 - Less ability to cope with stress or more emotional
 - Complaint of headaches, especially with screen time

Management of Head Injury Occurring During the School Day or School Event

1. A coach or staff member shall remove a person from the activity if they determine that the student exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviour consistent with a concussion or head injury OR if they suspect the person has sustained a concussion or head injury, in order to minimise the risk of further injury.
2. A coach or staff member will notify the parent or guardian, as soon as possible, when a student is removed from play or an activity because they are thought to have a concussion.
3. A coach or staff member shall observe student for signs and symptoms of concussion for a minimum of 60 minutes.
4. A coach or staff member shall review and follow the **Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5)** and monitor students consistently during the observation period. The coach or staff member will:
 - i. Never allow a concussed student to go to the changing rooms or Student Services alone
 - ii. Never allow the injured student to drive home
5. First aid shall be provided to any student who has been removed from any activity under these procedures as appropriate and necessary, in accordance with College emergency care
6. The coach or staff member will complete a **Catholic Church Insurance Accident Form** (available on SEQTA) regarding the incident in accordance with College procedures, including documenting first aid provided.
7. A coach or staff member shall monitor the student for worsening symptoms. The following are reasons to call for an ambulance, as any worsening signs or symptoms may represent a medical emergency:
 - i. Loss of consciousness, this may indicate more serious head injury
 - ii. Decreasing level of alertness
 - iii. Unusually drowsy
 - iv. Severe or worsening headache
 - v. Seizure
 - vi. Persistent vomiting
 - vii. Difficulty breathing

8. School staff will not permit a student to return to play (RTP) or practice on the same day of a concussion.
9. All appropriate College personnel, who have a legitimate educational interest in the information, should be notified of the event including:
 - i. Student Services' Officers
 - ii. Director of Wellbeing Services
 - iii. Head of Sport
 - iv. Head of Year
 - v. Deputy Principal
 - vi. Student's teachers

'Return to Play'

School staff will not permit the student to return to play, including weight training, cardiovascular training, or physical education classes, until the student has been assessed by an appropriate health care professional, trained in the evaluation and management of concussions.

The student must receive written clearance from an appropriate health care professional, trained in the evaluation and management of concussions that states the student is asymptomatic at rest and may begin a graduated return-to-play protocol.

Once the student is symptom free and is off any pain control medications and has received written clearance by an appropriate medical professional, the student may begin a graduated individualised return-to-play protocol, as per the Return to Sport Protocol Form.

A return of symptoms indicates inadequate recovery from the concussion:

- If symptoms return while on the protocol, once the student is asymptomatic again for 24 hours, the previous step may be attempted again
- Any student who continues to have a return of symptoms with exertion should be re-evaluated by his or her health care provider

The Head of Sport will maintain records of all students removed from play for suspected and/or confirmed concussions and corresponding written clearances provided by health care providers to return to physical activity. These records will be provided to the Student Services' Officers and must be stored on SEQTA.

Classroom Accommodations: 'Return to Learn'

1. Emmanuel Catholic College will work with individual students who require temporary learning support accommodations due to concussions or other head injuries. The College recognises that removal from the significant demands of school until symptoms improve is an important component of cognitive rest. These accommodations may include:
 - I. A temporary leave of absence from school
 - II. Shortening of the student's school day
 - III. Reduction of workloads in school
 - IV. Allowance of more time for the student to complete assignments or take tests
 - V. Modification or exclusion from physical education classes and other classes that require physical exertion and classes that could place the student in an unsafe learning environment (these subjects could include woodwork, hospitality, bush rangers as examples.)

- VI. Identifying an alternative to participating during recess
 - VII. Allowing the student to take cognitive breaks (rest period) in between classes in a supervised quiet location as needed, usually every two periods or so for traditional fifty minute classes
 - VIII. Preprinted class notes
 - IX. Limited or no screen time
 - X. Treatment with prescribed or parent authorised medications
 - XI. Allowing the student to each lunch in a quiet location
2. For students who have symptoms that are persistent (i.e., greater than 4 weeks) or that substantially interfere with learning and/or the student's ability to fully participate in the general curriculum, the College will develop a formal accommodation plan/health care plan based on input from the student's family and health care professionals to provide the cognitive rest and support needed during recovery
 3. The Directors of Learning Support and Wellbeing will function as case managers:
 - i. They will have the role of advocating for the student's needs and serve as the primary point of contact with the student, family, healthcare provider, and all members of the team
 - ii. The student's case managers will monitor the student's symptoms periodically to determine the need for modifications in the type and intensity of academic supports Student's teachers will monitor for increased problems paying attention/concentrating, memory problems, difficulty learning new information, increased headaches/fatigue, greater irritability and provide progress reports to the student's case managers
 4. If the student is in physical education class and other classes that require physical exertion and classes that could place the student in a unsafe learning environment (these subjects could include woodwork, hospitality, bush rangers as examples) he/she must be cleared by a health care professional before participating in class:
 - i. until the student is cleared to participate, the College will make other arrangements for the student
 - ii. once cleared to participate, the College will provide any necessary accommodations for the student during physical education class
 5. If the student participates in recess, he/she must be cleared by a health care professional before he/she is allowed to participate in physical activity during recess:
 - i. until the student is cleared to participate, the College will make other arrangements for the student.

References

1. Online learning component developed by Sports Medicine Australia and endorsed by the Australian Institute of Sport, the Australian Medical Association and the Australasian College of Sport and Exercise Physicians
https://concussioninsport.gov.au/coaches_and_support_staff
2. Concussion Recognition Tool 5 (CRT5)
3. Concussion Management Flow Chart
4. Catholic Church Insurance Accident Form
5. Return to Sport Protocol Form