



## Concussions and Head Injuries

A concussion is a traumatic brain injury caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. They can vary from mild to severe and may disrupt brain function. In compliance with H.B. No. 2038, PCS has partnered with Memorial Hermann Sports Medicine to create the following Concussion Management Protocol.

**Education:** Coaches, faculty, and staff are trained to recognize the signs and symptoms of a concussion. Common symptoms include headaches, dizziness, confusion, nausea, sensitivity to light and sound, balance problems, and difficulty concentrating or remembering.

**Communication:** This protocol applies to injuries that occur:

- During school hours (classroom, playground, physical education, athletics)
- During school-sponsored events or before and after-school programs (sports, games, practice, clubs, field trips, academic boot camps, summer camps, retreats, PEP aftercare program)
- Outside of school (non-school activities)

Any faculty or staff member (teacher, coach, or administrator) who observes, suspects, or has been notified that a student has sustained a head injury must immediately notify the school nurse or designated health personnel. If the nurse is unavailable, the administrator on duty will be contacted. If the injury occurs outside of school, the parent of the injured child should contact the school nurse.

**Assessment:** The school nurse or a trained designee will complete an initial evaluation using concussion assessment tools if the injury occurs during school hours or at a school-sponsored event. If emergency symptoms are present, 911 will be called first, and parents or guardians will be notified. The school nurse is the main contact responsible for informing the parent or guardian. The nurse will explain the injury and observed symptoms, recommend medical evaluation by a licensed healthcare provider, and direct the parent to the concussion protocol listed on the school's website. If the nurse is unavailable, the administrator will notify the parent or guardian.

**Removal From Play:** A student who receives a blow to the head is immediately removed from play for assessment and possible referral. According to H.B. No. 2038, a coach, licensed healthcare professional, or the student's parent or guardian may remove a student from practice or a game if a concussion is suspected.

**Accident/Incident Report:** This form must be completed by a PCS employee as soon as possible after the incident occurs. Only factual and observable information should be included in this document. The coach is responsible for ensuring that the report is submitted to the school nurse no later than the following day.

**Follow-Up:** The nurse ensures that all injuries are promptly followed up on, that the proper personnel are notified, and that all necessary documentation is completed and on file before a student can return to school or take part in school-related activities.

### **Sideline Evaluation:**

If an athletic trainer is present, they should conduct a Sideline Concussion Evaluation Form and provide documentation to the school nurse as soon as possible, but no later than the following morning. The coach is responsible for notifying the Athletic Director as soon as the Sideline Concussion Evaluation Form is completed. The Athletic Director is responsible for notifying the school nurse. If an athletic trainer is not available, the administrator on duty, the school nurse, or a PCS coach should complete a Sideline Concussion Evaluation Form and provide documentation to the school nurse as soon as possible, but no later than the following morning. The coach is responsible for notifying the Athletic Director as soon as the Sideline Evaluation has been completed. The Athletic Director is responsible for informing the school nurse.

## Medical Referral Determination

- Immediate Emergency Referral Symptoms (the student requires transportation to the nearest emergency room or urgent care). A doctor's release is required for the student to return to school. If diagnosed with a concussion, a CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PHYSICIAN CLEARANCE FORM is required.
  - Unequal, unreactive, or unusually dilated pupils; changes in pupil shape or size compared bilaterally
  - In and out of consciousness or total loss of consciousness
  - A headache that worsens and persists
  - Repeated nausea or vomiting
  - Convulsions or seizures
  - Difficulty in recognizing people or places; confusion, restlessness, or agitation that is progressively worsening.
  - Unusual behavior or slurred speech, including repetitive or atypical patterns.
  - Notable changes in blood pressure, irregular or decreased respiration, or pulse.
  - Abnormal posturing at the time of injury
  - Deterioration of neurological function (loss of sensation, difficulty moving limbs, numbness, decreased coordination)
  - Any signs or symptoms associated with neck or spine injuries, skull fractures, or severe bleeding
- Day-of-Injury Referral Symptoms: If these symptoms are observed on the same day as the head injury, seek medical attention. A doctor's release is required for the student to return to school. If the student is diagnosed with a concussion, a CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PHYSICIAN CLEARANCE FORM is required.
  - Worsening symptoms
  - Experiencing more symptoms than initially reported at the time of injury
  - Becoming symptomatic during the immediate or sideline evaluation of an injury or within one hour of the initial assessment.
- Delayed Referral Symptoms: If these symptoms are observed the day after the injury, seek medical attention. A doctor's release is required for the student to return to school. If the student is diagnosed with a concussion, a CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT PHYSICIAN CLEARANCE FORM is required.
  - Worsening symptoms
  - Experiencing more symptoms than initially reported at the time of injury or during the immediate sideline evaluation
  - Becoming symptomatic within 24 hours after initial injury
  - Symptoms have started to impact daily activities.

## Documentation and Return to School/Play

- Documentation: A student is not fully cleared until the nurse has verified that all required documentation is on file.
  - Accident/Injury Report
  - Sideline Evaluation
  - Doctor's Note (if referred for a medical evaluation, but concussion was not diagnosed)
  - Concussion Management Clearance Form (if a concussion was diagnosed)
  - Return-to-Play Stepwise Check Sheet (athletics only- sport specific)
- Rest and Recovery - This may include staying home from school or reducing academic activities, screen time, and physical activity.
- Return-to-Learn Plan – Students recovering from a concussion may require temporary academic adjustments to support a safe return to learning. The school nurse, in collaboration with the principal and Dean of Academics, will communicate these accommodations to teachers. Adjustments will be based on each student's symptoms and the

recommendations of their treating physician. Accommodations recommended by the treating physician may include rest breaks, a temporary modification of homework load, extended time on assignments and tests, and more.

- Return-to-Play Protocol – Students must collaborate with their coach and Athletic Director to follow a gradual and supervised return to play protocol, which includes a RETURN-TO-PLAY CHECK SHEET. The student may only return to their sport after receiving written full clearance from their treating physician. If symptoms recur at any stage, the student must go back to the previous step after 24 hours of rest. The student is not permitted to return to unrestricted play until written clearance is provided to the Athletic Director. All required forms must be completed and on file with the nurse before the student is cleared. According to H.B. No. 2038, a coach cannot authorize the student to return to play after a concussion.
- Student Accident Insurance - If applicable, the Operations Director will provide information about student accident insurance within 45 days of the injury. Student Accident Insurance serves as secondary coverage to the family's medical insurance plan.