

*If a student has suffered a concussion, whether sport-related or non-sport related, he / she should receive **appropriate** medical evaluation and treatment*

### Students Returning to the Classroom following a concussion

Students should **NOT** return to the classroom until symptoms of a concussion have resolved and appropriate medical evaluation has been completed (this is to be handled by parents).

Once symptoms at rest have resolved, the brain is often not yet fully recovered. If stressed, the symptoms of concussion can reappear. Prolonged delay of school attendance does not improve outcome. This may be because anxiety (about missed assignments, etc) can delay recovery. The goal for “return to school” is to allow students to participate in class work as much as possible during recovery.

Students returning to the classroom following a concussion may need to have some accommodations.

Teachers will make necessary accommodation for **up to 2 weeks** after the injury that caused the student’s concussion. Since it is anticipated that the majority of uncomplicated concussions resolve in < 14 days, any need for accommodations longer than 2 weeks must be **requested by a physician**.

Parents need to communicate directly with Seton’s **guidance department** and **individual teachers** about their student’s return to the classroom. Please convey the nature of symptoms and what triggers them.

#### **COMMUNICATION MUST BE BETWEEN PARENTS AND TEACHERS ABOUT THE STUDENT’S NEEDS.**

Students must **not** be relied on to inform the teacher about the concussion or an action plan for recovery. Students must be included in discussions, but all involved must avoid putting added stress on a student recovering from a concussion by making them a “go-between” with teachers.

Because each student’s recovery will be different, Teachers need to understand where the student is in their recovery. Parents should tell teachers what primary concerns are for their child. Teachers need to let parents know about any recurrence of symptoms they have noticed or increased need for accommodations in the classroom.

Parents need to update teachers about recovery progress (at least weekly) and alert teachers when concussion protocol is ended (allows make up work to begin)

Initial classroom accommodations for concussion recovery will be limited to 2 weeks from injury. If symptoms of concussion persist or recur after this time, formal medical evaluation and recommendations must be supplied to the school before student continues attendance.

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#### Communication Requirements for Parents:

- Parents must call the Absent/ Tardy Line (703) 368-6604 to explain student’s absence. Please clearly identify the **concussion** as the reason for absence.
- When it is determined that the student is ready to return to school, contact with each of the student’s teachers must be made by the parents(s) prior to (or at least on the day of) return to school.
- **STUDENT MUST NOT SELF-REPORT A CONCUSSION.**
- A request for **accommodations** in the classroom may be discussed
- Clarification of **duration of accommodations** (If accommodations are needed more than 2 weeks, written instructions from the student’s doctor must be provided )
- Alert teachers when student has recovered and no longer needs accommodations in the classroom.

### Information to be shared with the teachers must include:

- Nature of Symptoms experienced by student.
- How long the student has been symptom-free at rest.
- Key triggers noted by parents that tend to bring on symptoms in the student.
- Any information re: injury that may be relevant to student's recovery.
- Results of most recent medical evaluation that apply to classroom activities (Privacy must be maintained re: medical evaluations)

## Accommodations

Recommended Classroom Supports for a Student Returning to School Post Concussion [www.cdc.gov/concussions](http://www.cdc.gov/concussions)

- The decision to return to school is now recommended when concussion symptoms are no longer present at rest. (they may still be inducible). The stress of missing school can lead to delay of recovery.
- Even while returning to school, if symptoms recur, it is important to allow a period of "cognitive rest" to allow recovery even while at school.
- Concussions impair **memory, concentration**, causes **headaches**, difficulty in **focusing** – all things that affect schoolwork. The student may have a tolerance for reading of 10 – 30 minutes (for example) before symptoms return. If allowed to rest from cognitive exertion when this happens, tolerance usually increases gradually.

### Accommodations may include

- **Permission to rest** from academic exertion during the school day if necessary, due to return of symptoms. (customize to individual student's need)
  - Time off from school / shortened school day
  - Rest breaks during the day
  - "Rest Periods" during class if symptoms recur (head on desk, Consider moving seat to back of class)
- **Extended time** to complete course work / make up work
- **Reduced workload** (minimize busy work and limit homework to key items only)
  - "buddy system" for class notes – photocopy notes for student
- **Written reminders** of homework assignments (student may not remember what was spoken in class) Expect that parents may have to help / supervise homework at home
- **Avoid Symptom "triggers"**
  - Avoid reading from books / papers
  - Avoid viewing computer screens
  - Avoid viewing power-point or video projections
- **Adjustment of testing** schedule for classes
  - Untimed tests or split tests with 5-10 minute break
  - No significant classroom testing during concussion recovery
- **Plan for testing** after recovery

## **Return of Symptoms at School**

Teachers can keep an eye out for recurrence of Symptoms and alert parents of this situation.

- Symptoms Post Concussion may include:
  - Somatic (headache, nausea, dizziness, tiredness, sensitivity to light)
  - Cognitive (poor concentration, attention deficit, poor retention of new material, poor recall of new or old material, feeling “foggy” or “it hurts to think”)
  - Affective (anxiety, irritability, exaggerated emotions)
  - Zzzzz.... (Sleep issues)

### When student returns to school, Watch out for:

- Increased problems concentrating
- Problems remembering new information
- Longer time required to complete tasks
- Increased symptoms (headache or fatigue) when working

### Activities that aggravate Symptoms:

- Working on a computer
- Reading
- Memorizing
- Viewing slide shows (e.g. power point classroom lessons)
- Physical exertion (running, throwing, shooting hoops, etc)
- Watching television
- Using a cell phone / text messaging
- Playing video games