

# St. Joseph School Concussion Policy and Procedure

Dear Parents/Guardians of Students at St. Joseph School,

St. Joseph School has a commitment to safety by being proactive in assisting students who have been injured with a head injury or suspected head injury. Supporting a student recovering from such an injury requires a collaborative approach among coaches, school staff, health care professionals, parents, and students. Our goal is to assist the student as he/she transitions back to school/activities, making modifications and reassessing as needed.

Our Policy and Procedure supports the concussion policy which has been adopted by CYO (Catholic Youth Organization) and also follows the recommendations set forth by the CDC (Centers for Disease Control).

Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help aid recovery and prevent further injury or even death. Every child responds to a head injury differently. Some children develop symptoms right away and some may develop symptoms days after the injury. Concussions can be mild to severe. Seeking medical care to determine the extent of the child's head injury is crucial.

A concussion is a type of brain injury that changes the way the brain normally works. A concussion is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head. It can also occur from a fall or blow to the body that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. Even what seems to be a mild bump to the head can cause a concussion and most concussions occur without loss of consciousness.

Concussions can occur at home in your back yard, at school, or during organized sporting events. Wherever the injury occurs, it is important to seek medical attention if the following symptoms are present:

1. Dazed or stunned appearance
2. Confusion
3. Difficulty remembering or paying attention
4. Balance problems or dizziness
5. Sluggish, hazy, foggy, or groggy feeling
6. Irritable, more emotional, or "down" feelings
7. Nausea or vomiting
8. Light or noise sensitive
9. Double or blurry vision
10. Slowed reaction time
11. Sleep problems
12. Loss of consciousness

Unlike other injuries, returning to normal activities after a concussion too soon can be dangerous. The risk of further injury is the reason why no student should be allowed to participate in activity/school before they are cleared by a qualified physician.

A concussion can affect school and physical activities. During the recovery time after a concussion, physical and mental rest are required. A concussion upsets the way the brain normally works and causes it to work longer and harder to complete even simple tasks. Activities that require concentration and focus may make symptoms worse and cause the brain to heal slower.

Rest is key to helping a child recover from a concussion. Sports, watching TV, playing video games, using the computer, studying, etc. may cause concussion symptoms to reappear or get worse.

### **St. Joseph Policy for any Post-Concussion or Possible Concussion**

If a St. Joseph Student has sustained an injury where a concussion has occurred or is suspected:

1. The student must seek medical attention from a physician who is qualified and has training in assessment and care for children with head injuries. The child's Family Physician/Pediatrician is recommended, as they know the child and can continue to follow the child until normalcy has returned.
2. The qualified physician will determine how serious the concussion is and when it is safe for your child to
  - a. Return to school, able to participate in classwork/homework
  - b. Return to normal physical activity, including gym and recess
  - c. Return to organized sports
3. Parents are asked to provide written release from their physician for return to school in order to participate in schoolwork, gym and recess. Any modifications in activities should be noted on the medical release.

Please note: In support of the guidelines set forth by the CDC, St. Joseph School finds that it may be more harmful to send homework to students who are recovering from a head injury. Teachers will assist a student in making up work when he/she returns to school and has been cleared for academic activity. They will not send homework home until that time.

After a concussion, returning to normal activities is a gradual process and is based on the individual, his/her response to the injury that occurred. Returning to normal activities should be carefully managed and monitored by your child's physician. St. Joseph School would like to assist you and your child in their return to school after a head injury. Please discuss your child's individual needs when he/she returns to school with the school nurse and homeroom teacher.

Therese M. Hoehn R.N., B.S.N., C.P.N

School Nurse

St. Joseph School