



Policy Number:	STUDENT 15
Policy Name:	Concussion Policy & Management Guidelines
Contact Officer:	Deputy Principal Students
Date Approved by Executive:	October 21, 2020
Date of Next Review:	October 2023
Related Policies:	First Aid Policy

PREAMBLE

God is at the centre of our College...Mercy is the heartbeat of the Gospel. We encourage every student to grow in the fullness of life and realise their potential through the bread we break at school, the bread of relationships and the bread of conversation. Let us engage the heart and bring faith to life and life to faith (Thomas Groome).

LEGISLATION

This policy takes into account relevant legislative requirements within the state of Victoria, including the specific requirements of the Victorian Child Safe Standards as set out in *Ministerial Order No. 1359*. This policy applies to St Joseph's College staff, including employees, volunteers, contractors and clergy.

Further information relating to the Ministerial Order can be found at <https://www.safeguardingservices.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/Ministerial-Order-1359.pdf>

1. PURPOSE

1.1 As staff working within a school environment, we have a duty of care to the members of the college to provide appropriate medical assistance to a sick or injured student or staff member. It is therefore important for all staff to be aware of what a concussion is - the signs, symptoms and the management of concussion in the school environment.

2. WHAT IS CONCUSSION?

2.1 As defined by The Concussion in Sport Group (CISG), concussion; 'is a traumatic brain injury, induced by biomechanical forces'. It generally results from a knock to the head, face or neck, but may be anywhere on the body which transmits force to the head, causing the brain to move rapidly back and forth.

2.2 Most concussions occur without loss of consciousness and involve short-lived impairment of neurological function. Concussion is an evolving injury that may change over the first few hours or over a few days. Recognition and proper response to concussions when they first occur can help aid recovery and prevent further injury, or even death. All concussions are serious.

3. AIMS

3.1 To help staff, students and parents:

- Understand what concussion is and the health impacts it has on learning and sport;
- Recognise concussion;

- Manage a suspected concussion;
- Manage return to learn after concussion;
- Manage return to play after concussion;
- Know where to find more information about concussion.

3.2 To ensure that all individuals who have sustained a head injury are identified and screened for concussion and receive appropriate advice and care in a timely manner. This will allow individuals to safely return to everyday activities, learning and sport.

4. RECOGNISING CONCUSSION

4.1 Recognising concussion can be very difficult due to the varied nature of the signs and symptoms, with most of them being subtle and non-specific.

4.2 SIGNS OF CONCUSSION

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on the ground/slow response to getting up
- A dazed, blank or vacant facial expression
- Seems confused, repeats questions, cannot remember events before or after the injury
- Has behaviour or personality changes
- Balance problems, appearing unsteady on feet and/or falling over
- Clutching at head
- Impact seizure or convulsion

4.3 SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

Thinking/Remembering:

- Trouble thinking clearly
- Trouble concentrating
- Problems with short or long-term memory
- Feeling “slowed down”
- Feeling foggy or groggy

Emotional:

- Irritable
- Sad/teary
- More emotional than usual
- Nervous or anxious

Sleep:

- Feels fatigued and drowsy
- Sleeps more or less than usual
- Trouble falling asleep

Physical:

- Headache
- Nausea or vomiting
- Dizziness or balance problems
- Feeling tired
- Vision problems – blurred or double vision
- Sensitive to light or noise
- Numbness or tingling
- Does not “feel right”

4.3.1 Please refer to [Concussion Recognition Tool](#) for further information. Signs and symptoms can be delayed in onset following an injury. Ongoing observation is very important.

5. MANAGEMENT

5.1 Immediate care if a concussion is sustained at the college will involve the following steps:

- If the student is concussed or a concussion is suspected during a sporting game or event, the student must immediately be removed from further participation.
- If the student is unconscious: first aid management of the unconscious student (DRSABCD) is the priority, remembering that there may be an associated neck injury.
 - The injured student must not be moved;
 - Any sporting game or event must be stopped; and
 - An Ambulance needs to be phoned and College Nurse contacted.
- If the student is conscious:
 - Immediate assessment by the College Nurse or First Aid Officer on duty is necessary. (Detailed documentation, preferably within the SIMON sick pass for the student is of utmost importance). When safe to do so, the student should be transferred to the First Aid Office.
 - Ongoing observation of the student for signs and symptoms of concussion for a minimum of 30 minutes. All assessment findings must be documented at immediate assessment time, 15 minutes' post injury, 30 minutes' post injury and then just prior to leaving the First Aid Office.
 - Gain as much detail about the injury as possible from witnesses and bystanders; people involved, how the injury occurred, and any concussion signs they observed. The supervising teacher and/or College Nurse must complete a student incident/injury form.
 - Notify the student's parents/guardian that their child sustained a head injury as soon as reasonable to do so.

5.2 If the student has concussion signs or symptoms:

- Advise parent/guardian that the student must be collected from the college. Advise parent/guardian to see a healthcare provider as soon as possible, be that their own General Practitioner or Medical Officer in the Emergency Department.
- Give the parent/guardian a printed copy of the completed SIMON sick pass and a concussion information sheet. ([Concussion Information Sheet 1](#) [Concussion Information Sheet 2](#))

5.3 If the student does not have concussion signs or symptoms:

- Have the student return to class, but do not allow him or her to return to sports or recreational activities on the same day of the injury.
- Notify the parent/guardian that their child has sustained a head injury.
- Email or send a Concussion Information Sheet ([Concussion Information Sheet 1](#) [Concussion Information Sheet 2](#)) and a copy of the completed SIMON sick pass home with the student for his or her parent/guardian to review. Ask the parent/guardian to continue to observe the student for any changes.
- Tell the parent/guardian that if concussion signs or symptoms appear, a healthcare provider should see the student immediately.
- Teenagers with a concussion should NEVER return to sports or recreation activities on the same day they were injured. Be sure to remind teachers and others that the student should not return to PE class, recess/lunch or school-based sports activities until the healthcare provider who is managing his or her concussion gives permission to do so.

5.4 During immediate recovery (48 hours for under 18 years), individuals should rest as much as possible and avoid any activity that exacerbates symptoms. Activities such as reading, listening to music, playing

electronic devices, watching TV, computer, phone and other device screens and physical activity should be avoided completely. These can increase symptoms and should be avoided during the rest period. After this time, individuals should be safe to start to increase activity levels slowly.

5.5 Slow progression with activity level is more beneficial, even with a mild brain injury. To facilitate this process in a more structured way while still addressing the needs of the individual, the use of '[Return to Learn](#)' and '[Return to Sport](#)' strategies have been developed by medical professionals specialising in concussion and head injury.

5.6 School professionals should watch for students who have problems with:

- Paying attention.
- Remembering or learning new information.
- Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class.
- Irritability.
- Handling stress.
- Organising tasks.

5.7 Students who return to school after a concussion may need to:

- Take rest breaks.
- Spend fewer hours at school.
- Be given more time to take tests or complete assignments.
- Receive help with schoolwork.
- Reduce time spent on the computer, reading, or writing.

5.8 As the student's symptoms decrease, you can gradually remove these changes. If ever in doubt or concerned for students medical, mental and emotional wellbeing please always refer back to the College Nurse for assessment and management or contact the parent/guardian.

6. RESOURCES AND TOOLS

- Concussion in Sports Group Australia
<https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/>
- The Royal Children's Hospital Melbourne
https://www.rch.org.au/kidsinfo/fact_sheets/Head_injury/
- Centres for Disease Control and Prevention – HEADS UP Initiative
<https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/index.html>
- [Concussion Signs & Symptoms Checklist 1](#) [Concussion Signs & Symptoms Checklist 2](#)