

# Individualized Learning Accommodations Following a Concussion

Cognitive activities can cause a student's concussion symptoms to reappear or worsen. Knowing the signs and symptoms and how to properly manage a diagnosed concussion is critical in a student's recovery.

Once a student is ready and able to return to school, the school principal/designate will serve as the main point of contact for the student and the parents/guardians.

The **principal/designate**, in consultation with other members of the collaborative team (student, parents/guardian, healthcare provider and teachers), will identify learning accommodations that will support the student as they move through the stages of the Return-to-School Strategy.

We encourage parents/guardians and students to use the **Learning Accommodations for Students Following a Concussion Table** to help identify which learning accommodations will support the student's Return-to-School Strategy.

## It is important to note:

- Cognitive or physical activities can cause a student's symptoms to reappear.
- Most students who sustain a concussion will make a complete recovery and be able to return to school and sport/physical activity within 1-4 weeks.
- Approximately 15-30% of individuals will experience symptoms that persist beyond this time frame.
- If a student's symptoms are persistent (i.e., last longer than 4 weeks for youth under 18), they may benefit from a referral to a medically supervised multidisciplinary concussion clinic.

# Learning Accommodations for Students Following a Concussion Table

Post-Concussion Symptoms	Impact on Student's Learning	Potential Strategies and/or Approaches
Headache and Fatigue	Difficulty concentrating, paying attention or multitasking	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure instructions are clear (e.g., simplify directions, have the student repeat directions back to the teacher)</li> <li>• Allow the student to have frequent breaks, or return to school gradually (e.g., 1-2 hours, half-days, late starts)</li> <li>• Keep distractions to a minimum (e.g., move the student away from bright lights or noisy areas)</li> <li>• Limit materials on the student's desk or in their work area to avoid distractions</li> <li>• Provide alternative assessment opportunities (e.g., give tests orally, allow the student to dictate responses to tests or assignments, provide access to technology)</li> </ul>
Difficulty remembering or processing speed	Difficulty retaining new information, remembering instructions and accessing learned information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide a daily organizer and prioritize tasks</li> <li>• Provide visual aids/cues and/or advance organizers (e.g., visual cueing, non-verbal signs)</li> <li>• Divide larger assignments/assessments into smaller tasks</li> <li>• Provide the student with a copy of class notes</li> <li>• Provide access to technology</li> <li>• Repeat instructions</li> <li>• Provide alternative methods for the student to demonstrate mastery</li> </ul>
Difficulty paying attention and/or concentrating	<p>Limited/short-term focus on schoolwork</p> <p>Difficulty maintaining a regular academic workload or keeping pace with schoolwork demands</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate assignments and projects among all teachers</li> <li>• Use a planner/organizer to manage and record daily/weekly homework and assignments</li> <li>• Reduce and/or prioritize homework, assignments and projects</li> <li>• Extend deadlines or break down tasks</li> <li>• Facilitate the use of a peer note taker</li> <li>• Provide alternate assignments and/or tests</li> <li>• Check frequently for comprehension</li> <li>• Consider limiting tests to one per day and student may need extra time or a quiet environment</li> </ul>
Anxiety	<p>Decreased attention/concentration</p> <p>Overexertion leading to learning delays</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Inform the student of any changes in the daily timetable/schedule</li> <li>• Adjust the student's timetable/schedule as needed to avoid fatigue (e.g., 1-2 hours/periods, half-days, full-days)</li> <li>• Build in more frequent breaks during the school day</li> <li>• Provide the student with preparation time to respond to questions</li> </ul>
Irritable or Frustrated	Inappropriate or impulsive behaviour during class	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encourage teachers to use consistent strategies and approaches</li> <li>• Acknowledge and empathize with the student's frustration, anger or emotional outburst if and as they occur</li> <li>• Reinforce positive behaviour</li> <li>• Provide structure and consistency on a daily basis</li> <li>• Prepare the student for change and transitions</li> <li>• Set reasonable expectations</li> <li>• Anticipate and remove the student from a problem situation (without characterizing it as punishment)</li> </ul>
Light/Noise Sensitivity	Difficulties working in classroom environment (e.g., lights, noise, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Arrange strategic seating (e.g., move the student away from window or talkative peers, proximity to the teacher or peer support, quiet setting)</li> <li>• Where possible provide access to special lighting (e.g., task lighting, darker room)</li> <li>• Minimize background noise</li> <li>• Provide alternative settings (e.g., alternative work space, study carrel)</li> <li>• Avoid noisy crowded environments such as assemblies and hallways during high traffic times</li> <li>• Allow the student to eat lunch in a quiet area with a few friends</li> <li>• Where possible provide ear-plugs/headphones, sunglasses</li> </ul>
Depression/Withdrawal	Withdrawal from participation in school activities or friends	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build time into class/school day for socialization with peers</li> <li>• Partner student with a "buddy" for assignments or activities</li> </ul>