



Carrickfergus Grammar School policy on:	Concussion
Date implemented:	May 2017
Review month/led by:	October 2025/Principal
Consulted:	Board of Governors PE Department
Allied School Policies: Child Protection, Pastoral Care and Staff Development.	

Mission statement

In accordance with DE Circulars 2014/12, 2015/7 and 2024/15 Carrickfergus Grammar School recognises its statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils as set out in Article 17 of the Education and Libraries (Northern Ireland) Order 2003. The school recognises in particular the importance of its role with regard to concussion recognition and management and the attendant need to ensure that staff, pupils and parents are aware of the associated risks and responses as per advice dispensed by the Minister for Education in his issues of 12 November 2013, 30 April 2014, 8 September 2014, 12 October 2015 and 30 August 2024 (revised 6 November 2024).

Aims

- To safeguard and promote the welfare of pupils;
- To educate staff, pupils and parents as to the potential for concussive injury in daily life;
- To make staff, pupils and parents aware of concussion recognition and management;
- To make staff, pupils and parents aware of the risk of *Second Impact Syndrome* (SIS);
- To act on advice issued by DE and to embrace guidance made available by other relevant external agencies (e.g. IRB/IRFU).

Roles and Responsibilities

- It is the responsibility of the Board of Governors to establish, issue and review annually the school's policy on Concussion;
- It is the responsibility of the Principal to disseminate the policy as appropriate to staff, pupils and parents;
- It is the responsibility of all staff members to be cognisant of the policy and to follow it.

Practice and Protocol

- Pupils will be briefed annually on recognising signs of possible concussion in themselves and others and on what action to then take;
- Parents will be advised annually about monitoring and responding to instances of suspected concussion in their children;
- Staff will be trained annually in the use of the most recent *Concussion Recognition Tool*, currently CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 6 © (CRT6).
- The *Concussion Recognition Tool* will be available in school and used as an initial non-professional assessment tool in all cases where concussion is suspected;
- All school kit-bags and First Aid kits will contain a copy of the most recent *Concussion Recognition Tool* for ready reference.
- All members of staff should be aware of and, where necessary, employ the most recent *Concussion Recognition Tool*.
- All staff will be informed at the earliest opportunity, and before the pupil returns to school, that said pupil has sustained a concussion;

- The following symptoms are identified as ‘RED FLAGS’ in the most recent *Concussion Recognition Tool*:
 - Neck pain or tenderness;
 - Seizure, ‘fits’ or convulsion;
 - Loss of vision or double vision.
 - Loss of consciousness;
 - Increased confusion or deteriorating conscious state (becoming less conscious, drowsy);
 - Weakness or numbness / tingling in more than one arm or leg;
 - Repeated vomiting;
 - Severe or increasing headache;
 - Increasingly restless, agitated or combative;
 - Visible deformity of the skull.
- In the event of a ‘RED FLAG’ being observed or reported:
 - an ambulance will be called immediately;
 - staff will follow the guidance of the emergency call handler;
 - a parent/carer will be informed that their son/daughter has required medical attention;
 - the parent/carer will be advised if the child is being taken to hospital and transport arrangements will be confirmed.
- In the event of the *CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL* indicating a possible concussion, without a ‘RED FLAG’ being identified, the following will pertain:
 - Where appropriate, the pupil will be removed to a safe environment;
 - A parent/carer will be informed and asked to collect their son/daughter from school. The pupil will remain under staff supervision until in parental care;
 - The parent/carer will be informed that their son/daughter should be assessed by a health care professional for diagnosis and guidance, even if the symptoms resolve, as soon as is reasonably practicable. It is recommended that children are assessed as soon as possible the same day;
 - The parent/carer should advise school as soon as possible whether or not a concussion was diagnosed;
 - The parent/carer will be given/mailed a *Concussion Recognition Tool*, a Return to Learn permission form and a personalised GRAS schedule. The Return to Learn permission form must be completed for the child to return to school. If the pupil plays rugby, they will also be given a Pocket Concussion Guide.
- In the event of a diagnosed concussion, or when a pupil with suspected concussion does not receive medical clearance, the following will pertain:
 - The parent will be advised that their child can return to school when they can concentrate for 30 minutes or more without the concussion symptoms getting worse. This may be within 24 hours of the concussive incident;
 - The pupil will follow a graduated return to activity (education/work) and sport programme (GRAS) with an emphasis on initial relative rest and returning to education before returning to training for sport.
 - The Head of Year, Registration teacher, Heads of Department and subject teachers shall be made aware that a Graduated Return to Learning may be appropriate for the injured pupil and that this must be borne in mind with regard to the cognitive activity required for normal functioning in a learning environment.
 - A relevant injury report form is completed by the supervising member of staff and stored by a member of the clerical team.
- In the event of a head injury where a concussion is NOT suspected, staff will contact the parent to provide a summary of the incident and advise on further monitoring.
- Any future advice from DE on this matter shall be blended into this policy.

Staff Email Wording

Name and Registration Group of Pupil (picture also below) was diagnosed with concussion / suffered a suspected concussion on date and we have consequently advised that s/he should follow appropriate 'Return to Learn' and 'Return to Activity and Sport' protocols. Concussion can impair cognitive function for an unspecified period and this must be borne in mind as Name returns to learning.

Insert picture here.

If Name suffers a recurrence of any symptoms of concussion (see below) as a result of increased cognitive load, please allow him/her to take a rest break during the lesson.

Physical Symptoms	Changes in Emotions
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache or 'pressure in head'• Dizziness or Balance problems• Nausea or vomiting• Drowsiness• Blurred vision• More sensitive to light• More sensitive to noise• Fatigue or low energy• 'Don't feel right'• Neck pain	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• More emotional• More irritable• Sadness• Nervous or anxious
Changes in Thinking	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Difficulty concentrating• Difficulty remembering• Feeling slowed down• Feeling like 'in a fog'

If necessary, send Name to the medical room, ACCCOMPANIED BY ANOTHER PUPIL AND INFORM RECEPTION THAT THEY ARE COMING. Clerical staff will follow this up with Mr Martin, Head of Year, a member of PE staff or a member of the school's Leadership Team as appropriate.

Name has been placed on the [Concussion Database](#). Please refer to this document in relation to participation in physical activity, completion of tests, attendance on school trips, etc.

*Appropriate adjustments should be made for Name in the form of:
Providing/ Photocopying notes the pupil missed when absent;
Reduced workload in the classroom;
Reduced/no homework given;
Deadline extensions for coursework;
Etc*

If necessary, Name should be allowed out a few minutes early from class to navigate corridors before they become congested. We also attach the school's concussion policy.

Parental Permission Slip Wording

PARENTAL PERMISSION SLIP: RETURN TO LEARN FOLLOWING A CONCUSSION

Pupil Name: _____ Registration class: _____

Please read the following points carefully. By signing below, you are confirming your agreement to each statement:

- I give permission for my child to return to school following a concussive incident. I am satisfied that my child can concentrate for 30 minutes or more without their symptoms getting worse. (Refer to CRT6 for a list of signs and symptoms by clicking [here](#) or by opening the email attachment)
- I will alert school immediately if any of these symptoms should reoccur.
- I was advised to have my child assessed by an appropriate Healthcare Professional within 24 hours of the injury.
- I am aware that the school's Concussion Policy is available on the school website at www.carrickfergusgrammar.com/policies, and that I can read the government guidelines on concussion [here](#). I am also aware of the Concussion Recognition Tool linked [here](#).
- I am aware of the arrangements for a graduated return to activity and sport (GRAS) and will contact school should further clarification be necessary.
- I am aware that the GRAS schedule applies to activities, clubs and organisations outside of school and I agree to inform all relevant coaches, instructors or supervisors of my child's concussion to ensure the protocol is managed consistently across all settings.

Parent/Carer Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Concussions From Participation in Rugby

- In the event of use of the most recent *Concussion Recognition Tool* indicating a possible concussion whilst taking part during school rugby the following will pertain in addition to the above:
 - An IRFU *Serious Injury Form* will be completed online by the coach and a record forwarded to Mr Martin and Mr Kennedy (Teacher in Charge of Rugby);
 - The pupil shall be given an individualised copy of the IRFU *Graduated Return to Play* protocol;
 - The pupil shall be given a copy of the IRFU Concussion Wallet Card.
 - The pupil shall only be permitted to return to a full range of activities after the graduated time-line has been followed **and** on receipt of the written consent of parent/carer or doctor.

Literature and Documents

- DENI Circulars 2014/, /07 and 2024/15;
- CONCUSSION RECOGNITION TOOL 6 ©;
- *Recognise and Remove* brochure (DENI/DCAL 2014);
- Associated *Recognise and Remove* poster information.
- UK Concussion Guidelines for Non-Elite (Grassroots) Sport (November 2024)