**Post-Concussion Protocol: Gradual Return to Academics**

**Lexington Public Schools, Lexington, MA**

REST IS NECESSARY for the brain to heal. Symptoms may flare with increases of physical and cognitive activity. Most students have difficulty for only a short period if they get the rest they need and are not reinjured. Others may take longer especially if they have had multiple concussions.

**Be patient with the healing process. Moving too quickly through stages of recovery can slow healing and increase long-term symptoms.**

**If the student experiences significant worsening of symptoms stop the activity and then reassess for symptoms the next day.**

Signs and symptoms to monitor include: A) *Physical*: headache, nausea, vomiting, dizziness, balance problems, visual problems, fatigue, sensitivity to light or noise B) *Cognitive:* slow thinking/speech, difficulty concentrating, trouble with memory, slowed responses, feels “foggy” C) *Emotional:* irritability, sadness, anxiety, depression D) *Sleep:* drowsy, sleeping more or less than usual, difficulty falling asleep

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| **Stage** | **Priorities** | **Nurse/Counselor Actions** | | **Teacher Actions** | **Student Actions** | **Parent/Guardian Actions** |
| **Acute**  **Post Injury** | Physical and Cognitive rest  1-5 days | **Student Out of School**  Nurse/School Counselor(SC)**:**  -Notify Dean, SC, Teachers  -Notify Athletic Trainer as needed  Nurse**:**  -Contact Parent/Guardian & Student and request medical documentation  -Schedule Re-entry Meeting | | **Student Out of School**  **Student may not be able to advocate for self**  Will not assign homework, tests or computer work  Communicate with student to reinforce rest and no academic expectations | **Out of School**  -Rest and sleep  - Stay well-nourished and hydrated, avoid caffeine  -No homework  -No screens, texting, driving, reading, loud music  -No physical/sports/social activities  -Contact SC | Take student to health provider for evaluation and to ER if symptoms worsen  -Contact Nurse/SC with update & anticipated return to school  -Attend Re-entry meeting  -Submit medical documentation to Nurse  -Enforce limits & rest, monitor Student actions & ensure hydration  -Advocate on student’s behalf when necessary |
| ***Must have minimal symptoms at rest*** | | | | | | |
| **Recovery**  **Phase I** | Gradual recovery of Health  . | **Modified School Day**  Nurse/SC**:** Hold re-entry meeting and update Teachers  -Update SST as needed  Nurse: Monitor health status and recovery.  -Evaluate participation in PE and music classes  SC**:** Monitor academic status and communicate with Teachers  Consider ALPHA referral with prolonged recovery | | **Modified School Day**  **Student may not be able to advocate for self**  **NO TESTING**  -Expect listening only  -Prioritize/modify assignments; excuse assignments based on essential goals/objectives  -Students may not be able to make up all missing work  -Contact SC, Nurse, Dean with concerns  -Send Student to Nurse as needed | **Modified School Day**  -Attend re-entry meeting  -In school part time, observing not participating  -Communicate with Teachers/SC about academic progress and concerns  -Complete homework assignments in 15-min intervals  -Check in regularly with Nurse/SC  -Be patient with slow recovery  -Rest if have symptoms  -Light, noncontact physical activity with health provider/athletic trainer permission  -Quiet social activities | -Support Gradual Return Plan  -Confirm Student’s understanding of Teachers’ expectations of academic work  -Communicate with Nurse/SC/Teachers regarding progress and problems  -Monitor symptoms  -Remind student to rest if symptoms significantly increase  Revisit primary care provider and/or concussion specialist if symptoms continue >3 weeks |
| ***Must have minimal symptoms with part-time school days to move to next stage*** | | | | | | |
| **Stage** | **Priorities** | | **Nurse/Counselor**  **Actions** | **Teachers Actions** | **Student Actions** | **Parent/Guardian Actions** |
| **Recovery Phase II** | Gradual increase of time and effort as student resumes normal workload | | **Full School Day**  Nurse/SC: Continue to meet with student  -Update SST as needed  -Evaluate participation in PE and music classes  -Discuss possible ALPHA referral for prolonged recovery.  Nurse**:** Continue Student health assessments  -Continue contact with Parent/Guardian as needed  SC**:** Continue contact with Student and Teachers  -Contact Parent/Guardian as needed | **Full School Day**  **-No Standardized testing (MCAS,SAT)**  **-STUDENT MAY NOT TAKE MORE THAN 1 TEST/DAY**  **-Modify tests**  **-Provide extra time for tests and consider reducing length or eliminating when possible**  **-Test in quiet environment**  -Provide class notes  -Allow extended time to turn in assignments  -Set dates for work completion keeping in mind the need to balance make up of work over time  -Reduce overall workload  -Allow breaks as needed  -Contact SC, Nurse, Dean with concerns | **Full School Day**  -Self-advocate  -Maintain clear communication with Teachers on priorities and due dates  -Rest as needed  -Reading/writing 15-30 minute blocks, increase as tolerated  -Computer 15 minute blocks, increase as tolerated  -Continue to update Nurse and SC on progress  -Report when symptom free  -Light to moderate, non-contact activities with health provider/athletic trainer permission | -Confirm Student’s understanding of Teachers’ expectations, priorities, and due dates  -Continue to communicate with Nurse/SC regarding progress and problems.  -Encourage Student to complete as much homework as symptoms allow  Revisit primary care and/or concussion specialist if symptoms > 3 weeks |
| ***Must have no symptoms with full cognitive activity and have returned to cognitive baseline function before moving to next stage*** | | | | | | |
| **Full Academic Recovery** | Complete resumption of normal academic activities | | **Full School Day**  Nurse/SC**:** Check in with Student as needed  -Continue contact with Parent/Guardian as needed  SC**:**  -Continue contact with Teachers as student completes assignments | **Full School Day**  -Expect regular academic capabilities  -Monitor and allow time for completion of makeup work  -Contact SC, Dean , Nurse with concerns | **Full School Day**  -Self-advocate  -Maintain clear communication with Teachers on priorities and due dates  -Update SC/Nurse weekly as needed  -Clearance to contact sport with health provider/athletic trainer permission | -Monitor Student’s return to activities  -Confirm with Teachers that Student has completed work and is back to normal pace in class when needed  -Communicate with Nurse/SC as needed |

Consider referral to a concussion specialist if the student 1) has had two concussions in the previous 12 months, or three or more concussions in his/her lifetime, 2) has a prior neurological condition such as attention deficit disorder, attention deficit hyperactivity, other learning disorders, depression, anxiety disorders, panic attacks and migraine headaches, 3) having substantial symptoms at three-four weeks post injury that interfere with functional abilities. 2/24/16