**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 rest1-5 days | **Student Out of School**Nurse/School Counselor(SC)**:**  -Notify Dean, SC, Teachers-Notify Athletic Trainer as neededNurse**:** -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 workCommunicate 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 neededNurse: Monitor health status and recovery. -Evaluate participation in PE and music classesSC**:** 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 increaseRevisit 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 neededSC**:** 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 neededSC**:** -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