LCPS Concussion Guidelines for Teachers

What is a concussion?
A concussion is an injury to the brain. It occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. The resulting injury to the brain changes how the brain functions in a normal manner adversely affecting the child’s educational performance. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up immediately after the injury or may not appear for hours or days after the injury.

What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion?
Signs and symptoms of a concussion are typically noticed right after the injury, but some might not be recognized until days, weeks, or longer after the injury. Symptoms of concussion may or may not include, but are not limited to:

<table>
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<th>Cognitive</th>
<th>Physical</th>
<th>Emotional</th>
<th>Sleep</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Difficulty remembering</td>
<td>• Headache</td>
<td>• Irritability</td>
<td>• Sleeping more</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>• Blurry vision</td>
<td>• Sadness</td>
<td>• Sleeping less</td>
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<td>• Confusion</td>
<td>• Nausea/vomiting</td>
<td>• Moodiness</td>
<td>• Drowsiness</td>
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<td>• Feeling foggy</td>
<td>• Dizziness</td>
<td>• Crying more</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Sensitivity to light/sound</td>
<td>• Anxiety/worry</td>
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<td>• Balance/coordination problems</td>
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How can a concussion adversely affect a student-athlete’s educational performance?
Possible impairments in cognition; language; memory; attention; reasoning; abstract thinking; judgement; problem-solving; sensory, perceptual, and motor abilities; psychosocial behavior; physical functions; information processing; vision and speech.

How should a student-athlete with a concussion be managed in your class?

• Management should be supervised by the entire LCPS Concussion Management Team which includes: school administrators, counselors, TEACHERS, school nurse and athletic trainer.
• Communication with that student-athlete needs to be Slow, Simple, Calm, Clear, Consistent (SSCCC).
• Written instructions may be needed.
• Minimize environmental distractions.
• Be aware of your body language and tone of voice as the student-athlete may have a decreased ability to perceive and interpret social situations.

Physical Functioning recommendations:

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<th>Vision</th>
<th>Hearing</th>
<th>Speech</th>
<th>Fatigue</th>
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<td>Preferential seating; enlarged, bold, and typed up classroom material; sunglasses, blue light reduction glasses, and/or hat for light sensitivity.</td>
<td>Preferential seating; teacher’s notes/outlines in advance.</td>
<td>Present directions one step at a time; limit the amount of information presented; teach the student to look for cues from listeners and teacher.</td>
<td>Part-time attendance/excused absence; frequent breaks.</td>
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Cognitive Functioning recommendations:

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<th>Attention or Concentration: Sitting away from distractions; shortened assignments; sunglasses/earplugs; teach in small groups; highlight key directions and vocabulary that’s relevant; provide breaks.</th>
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<td>Memory: Peer helper or tutor to aid student; fact cards/cue sheets/visual imagery to supplement instruction; use an assignment sheet/planner and check regularly; provide additional test and review time.</td>
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<td>Information Processing/Following Directions: Allow adequate time for the student to answer questions and complete assignments; reinforce key points; slow pace of instruction; use visual and auditory directions; model tasks; implement written backup for oral instructions; reduce homework as needed.</td>
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<td>Fatigue: Part-time attendance and/or frequent breaks; provide extra time for transitions; shorten assignments.</td>
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LCPS Return to Learn Stages

A student-athlete recovering from a concussion shall gradually increase cognitive activities progressing through some or all of the following phases based on evaluation and input by the LCPS Concussion Management Team:

**Red: Home/Brain Rest**
- No school, rest quietly, nap as needed, but stick to a regular sleep schedule.
- Limit homework, reading, computer use, texting, video games, etc., as tolerated.
- Drink plenty of fluids and eat light protein snacks every 2-3 hours.
- Light physical activity, like going outside for a short distance walk is ok. No strenuous activity.

**Yellow: School full time as tolerated with academic accommodations and rest breaks as needed**
- School full-time as tolerated with academic accommodations and rest breaks as needed.
- Reduced workload, modify or prioritize assignments and homework as tolerated with built-in breaks.
- Modified or limited classroom testing (may need to avoid music, gym, shop class, PE, and the cafeteria).
- Consider alternative testing methods (oral/open book/take home). Exclusion from standardized testing.

**Green: School full-time with no academic accommodations**
- Attends all classes; maintains full academic load/homework; requires no instructional accommodations.

**How the Return to Learn protocol works:**

- AT finds out about injury → AT communicates status of evaluation with school nurse → If student-athlete does have a concussion and they require academic accommodations proceed with stage advancement.
- School nurse will forward email to teachers, counselor, and administrators if necessary.
- The Return to Learn and Return to Play stages may overlap. Therefore, there may be times when the student-athlete has returned to physical activity while academic accommodations are still in place.

**Summary**

- Concussions don’t just affect athletics and academics, but life in general.
- Concussions are treatable and can be rehabbed just like other sports-related injuries.
- Proper Communication is the cornerstone of concussion management.
- Student-athletes need help from the entire Concussion Management Team, especially **TEACHERS!**

If you have any additional questions or concerns, please contact your school’s Athletic Trainer.