

# Peninsula Grammar School Concussion Management Policy

## 1. Introduction

Peninsula Grammar School (the **School** or **PGS**) prioritises the health and safety of students by enforcing a cautious and comprehensive approach to managing concussions.

Concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury that alters the way the brain functions. It does not always cause loss of consciousness and can happen from an impact that is not directly to the head.

For young people, the effects of a concussion can extend beyond the immediate physical symptoms. Untreated or inappropriate management of concussions can impair their ability to fully engage in learning activities. Complications including prolonged symptoms, delayed recovery and increased risk of further concussions can occur if they engage in physical activities before they have fully recovered.

Given the potential for long-lasting consequences, the School will prioritise return to learning over the return to physical activities including sports training and competition.

## 2. Purpose

This policy outlines a structured approach to the management of concussions to ensure students' safety, wellbeing and recovery, and to protect them from the long-term effects of a concussion. It outlines the requirements for assessing head trauma, obtaining medical clearance, and safely reintegrating students into both learning and physical activities.

## 3. Scope

This policy applies to all students enrolled at the School and covers any head trauma or concussion injury sustained during school-based activities and across its boarding premises. This includes:

- (a) Academic activities (classroom incidents, school-related events, excursions, field trips)
- (b) Physical education classes
- (c) Recreational activities on school grounds (playgrounds, ovals)
- (d) Sports training, matches, competitions and events (onsite and offsite)
- (e) Extra-curricular events (outdoor activities, performances)
- (f) Off-campus school-sanctioned activities (sports tournaments, camps, or school outings)

Staff, contractors and volunteers employed or engaged by the School are required to understand and adhere to the requirements set out by this policy.

The concussion management process does not apply to non-student participants including staff, coaches, contractors, visitors (guests, visiting students and athletes). Individuals who experience head trauma or a concussion are encouraged to seek appropriate medical attention and advice.

## 4. Concussion symptoms

As symptoms may develop over the hours or days following a head trauma injury, it may be difficult for staff, parents or medical practitioners to determine whether a person is concussed.

School staff are not authorised to diagnose a concussion injury and will respond to head trauma incidents from a first-aid standpoint. School Health, including medical personnel engaged by the School for this purpose, are authorised to conduct an assessment to determine if there is a 'suspected concussion' and provide instructions for appropriate medical attention and care.

Concussion symptoms are usually temporary and can include headaches, nausea, dizziness, fatigue, visual problems, poor balance, sensitivity to noise, changes in emotions (e.g. anxiety, irritability, sadness), changes in thinking (e.g. fogginess, confusion, difficulty remember, slower thinking) and sleep disturbances.

## **5. Competitive sports training, activities and events**

Peninsula Grammar is a member of the Associated Grammar Schools of Victoria (AGSV). Our Years 4 -12 students participate in sports training and competition with other member schools.

Sports training and matches often involve students engaging in physical contact with teammates or opponents as a fundamental aspect of gameplay. Collision and contact sports often involve tackling, blocking, or other forms of bodily contact and may involve incidental to full-body collisions.

Sports played under the banner of the AGSV or the AGSV/APS are governed by AGSV policies and guidelines, to which the School and this policy aligns and adheres to, at a minimum.

## **6. Concussion management**

A Concussion Officer is appointed by the School to oversee this policy and ensure staff and student compliance. All suspected concussions arising at School or from a school-based activity must be reported to the Concussion Officer to ensure appropriate support and management.

The Concussion Officer is contactable at [risk@pgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:risk@pgs.vic.edu.au)

## **7. Immediate response following a head trauma**

A student who sustains head trauma at School, whether during physical activities, academic classes, or sports activity, must be immediately removed from the activity and be assessed by a member of the School Health team, to identify symptoms of a suspected concussion and action appropriate support for the student.

School Health will conduct a preliminary concussion assessment based on observable signs and symptoms. If it is determined that the student has sustained a suspected concussion, the student must not return to any physical activity and will be directed to seek medical advice and treatment.

If a student is assessed by external medical personnel during a school-based activity offsite (e.g. Saturday sport or competition venue), the supervising staff member must contact School Health to engage them to determine a preliminary assessment outcome.

Where School Health or medical personnel are not immediately accessible to students and staff (e.g. outside of school hours at the boarding premises, before and after school activities, camps, excursions, production rehearsals), staff will exercise First-Aid treatment and engage support and direction from 'Nurse on-call' or call for an Ambulance on '000'.

At any time, staff can call '666' (Critical Incident) for direction from a member of the Senior Executive.

Where a student is involved in a head trauma incident at School, a member of staff will contact the student's parent/guardian to inform of them of incident and any required medical attention.

## **8. Medical assessment and treatment**

In the event of a suspected concussion, the student and parent will be directed to seek medical advice and diagnosis from a medical practitioner. In line with the School's conservative management for concussions, a suspected concussion will be treated as a concussion, until a medical practitioner determines otherwise with a medical clearance. Parents are encouraged to use concussion resources provided by the School to support policy compliance purposes.

If a medical practitioner determines a student has sustained a concussion, the student must not participate in any physical activities until they have completed the recovery periods (see *Section 9*).

## 9. Recovery periods

To ensure adequate recovery following a concussion, recovery periods must be adhered to before a student can resume physical activities. The following timeframes apply to minimise the risk of further injury and ensure full recovery before resuming physical exertion.

### (a) 14-day symptom-free period

Following a concussion diagnosis, the student should refrain from any strenuous physical or cognitive activities that may exacerbate symptoms.

The student must remain symptom-free for a minimum of 14 consecutive days, from the date of the first observable symptom-free day, before they are eligible to seek medical clearance to return to light physical activities and sports training. The re-surfacing of symptoms consistent with a concussion, will reset the 14-day symptom-free period.

The School will only accept a medical clearance obtained from Day 15, from the date of the first observable symptom-free day.

### (b) 21-day recovery period

The student must be excluded from competitive sport for a minimum period of 21 days, from the date of the incident. The parent and Concussion Officer may agree for the student to resume competitive sport from Day 22, if they have remained symptom-free for a minimum period of 14 days.

At all times, activity restrictions and instructions by their medical practitioner should be adhered to.

## 10. Return to learning

Students' return to learning is paramount and takes precedence over the return to sports or other physical activities. After a concussion, it may be difficult for a student to concentrate, process information, or complete schoolwork at their usual pace. The school will provide appropriate modifications to support the student's academic recovery.

Modifications to learning:

- (a) Temporary adjustments to the student's learning environment or academic workload may include shortened school days, extended deadlines, or reduced assignments, as recommended by the medical practitioner.
- (b) Teachers, the School Health team, and parents will collaborate to develop a gradual return-to-learn plan that accommodates the student's needs during their recovery.
- (c) Regular assessments will be conducted to ensure the student is progressing academically and recovering fully before returning to full academic or physical activities.

The return to physical activities, including sports, must not occur until the student has successfully reintegrated into their learning environment and is symptom-free for the required periods.

## 11. Medical clearance

Before a student can return to any physical activity, including training or competitive sports, they must obtain medical clearance from a medical practitioner. The clearance process will confirm that the student is symptom-free and safe to resume activities including physical education activities, sports training and competition.

Medical clearance must be documented and provided to School Health and the School's Concussion Officer for review and approval to resume physical activities and sports training.

Clearance requirements:

- (a) From Day 15 of the incident, if the student has been symptom-free for 14 days, the parent can seek medical advice to obtain clearance to return to physical activities and sports training.
- (b) From Day 22 of the incident, if the student has been medically cleared from Day 15, and continues to be symptom-free, the parent and School's Concussion Officer shall determine a suitable return to competitive sports.

Where there is uncertainty about a student's recovery, School staff, including the Concussion Officer will maintain a conservative approach, being "if in doubt, sit them out". In such instances, the student will be removed from the activity and directed to seek medical advice for management.

## 12. Re-assessment and monitoring

The School Health team will periodically check-in with students who have returned from a concussion to monitor their wellbeing and ensure there are no recurrence of symptoms during their reintegration into physical or academic activities. If concussion symptoms reappear, the student will be removed from physical activities and be directed to seek medical advice.

## 13. Communication with parents and guardians

Parents/guardians play a critical role with a student's recovery process. The School will communicate with parents throughout the concussion management process in the following ways:

- (a) The School will inform parents about the incident, concussion symptoms, and necessary medical assessments.
- (b) The School will make parents aware of the symptom-free period and the requirement for medical clearance before returning to physical activities.
- (c) The School will work with parents on necessary academic modifications to support the student's return to learning.

## 14. Disclosure of concussions from non-school activities

Parents/guardians are encouraged to report any concussion sustained outside of school activities, such as community sport, recreational activities or other incidents. Full disclosure is vital to ensure the proper management, support and monitoring of the student's recovery.

## 15. Multiple concussions

A student who sustains a concussion more than once will require a conservative return to physical activities including sport training and competition.

### (a) Second concussion within a 3-month period

The student must be symptom-free for 28 days from the most recent concussion incident, before seeking medical clearance to return to physical activities or sports training. Return to competitive contact sport should not occur for at least six weeks from the time of the most recent concussion.

### (b) Third concussion within a 12-month period

Medical advice is required from a medical practitioner to determine the student's safe return to physical activities including sports training and competition. A medical practitioner may prescribe a longer recovery period (i.e. more than 28-day symptom-free) for physical activities and training, and a longer exclusion period from competitive sports (i.e. more than six weeks from the last concussion).



## 16. Training and awareness

School staff including teaching staff, coaches, and relevant personnel will receive information and training on concussion recognition, management protocols, and the importance of adhering to the requirements in this policy. Annual training sessions will be conducted for staff members involved in supervising students during physical and academic activities.

## 17. Policy non-compliance

Non-compliance, including direct breaches of this policy by staff, students or parents will be treated seriously in line with the appropriate School policies and procedures.

## 18. Appeals process

Where a person disagrees with the School's management of a student's concussion, an appeal can be submitted in writing to the Executive Deputy Principal. The appeal should include detailed explanation of the disagreement and any supporting medical documentation. The Executive Deputy Principal will review the decision and consult with key personnel and relevant parties to determine an outcome.

## 19. Review

This policy will be reviewed biennially or as required to ensure it remains aligned with the medical guidelines on concussion management, AGSV policies and best practices in student safety.

## 20. Further information

Any questions about this policy should be directed to the Concussion Officer at [risk@pgs.vic.edu.au](mailto:risk@pgs.vic.edu.au)

## 21. Relevant standards and references

[Associated Grammar Schools of Victoria \(AGSV\) – Concussion in Sport Policy and Procedures](#)  
[Australian Institute of Sport - Concussion in Australian Sport](#)  
[Sports Medicine Australia – Concussion Management](#)  
[Royal Children's Hospital – Head Injury \(General Advice\)](#)  
[Royal Children's Hospital – Head Injury \(Return to School and Sport\)](#)

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