



ACADEMIC MANAGEMENT

GUIDELINES FOR ACCOMMODATING CONCUSSED
ATHLETES IN THE CLASSROOM



MAKING ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR CONCUSSED ATHLETES



TEMPORARY ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES WITH SPORTS-RELATED HEAD INJURIES

Concussion/mild traumatic brain injury (TBI) is not just an athletic issue—it's an educational issue. A concussion can interfere with school, work, and social interactions. Many players with a concussion will have difficulty in school with short- and long-term memory, concentration, and organization. These problems typically last no longer than a few weeks, but for some these difficulties may last for months. Recent studies have shown that when young athletes recovering from concussion return to the full-time demands of school too soon, their symptoms worsen.

In many cases it is best to reduce the athlete's class load immediately after the injury. This may include staying home from school for a few days, followed by a lightened schedule for a few days or a longer period of time, if needed. When the student athlete can study for 1–2 hours without symptoms developing, he or she may return to school for short periods, gradually increasing until a full day of school is tolerated without return of symptoms. Learning accommodations can help ease the student into full-time academics (see sample list of accommodations in this section).

Although most student athletes recover from concussion within three weeks, a small percentage may have significant injuries, will not return to athletics, and will need on-going support at school. In these cases, school staff with expertise in working with students with TBI can be very helpful. Educators should be encouraged to help by:

- Recognize that academic performance may decline while the healing process takes place;
- Provide written instructions for assignments, tape record lectures and provide written lecture notes, when possible;
- Allow the concussed athlete extra time to complete assignments and tasks;
- Avoid having the concussed athlete take any significant or standardized tests;
- Allow the athlete to take frequent breaks from studying/class activity (i.e., every 20 minutes);
- Encourage the concussed athlete to avoid loud and busy environments; Provide quiet areas for the concussed athlete to study/work;
- Restrict the amount of time the athlete spends on a computer;
- Consider an IEP/504 if athlete continues to struggle.

RECOGNIZE

REMOVE FROM PLAY

REDUCE THE RISK

RECOVER

RETURN TO PLAY GRADUALLY

SAMPLE MILD TBI/CONCUSSION LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS PLAN

Student's Name: _____

Date: _____

The student named above has recently suffered a concussion and is under a physician's care. He/She may have the following symptoms from the injury: headaches, nausea, fatigue, visual problems, balance problems, sensitivity to light or noise, dizziness, feeling mentally foggy, problems concentrating or remembering, irritability, sadness, nervousness, drowsiness and feeling easily overwhelmed. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can persist for days to weeks and can greatly affect learning. Sometimes symptoms may persist for months or longer. We ask you to please make the following accommodations to aid in the recovery process:

GENERAL RECOMMENDATIONS

- No school until specified, to be reviewed on _____
- Abbreviated daily class schedule (every other day, shortened day)
- No physical education classes (Including weight training, aerobics, yoga)
- Consider reducing make-up work
- No Tests (e.g., midterms, finals, standardized exams) during recovery period, until physician provides written medical clearance.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR COGNITIVE ISSUES

- Provide extended time to complete assignments and/or shortened assignments
- Provide extended time to take tests in a quiet environment
- Provide a quiet environment to take tests
- Provide written instructions for homework
- Provide class notes by teacher or peer
- Allow utilization of notes for test taking due to memory issues
- Consider using tape recorder for note taking

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FATIGUE/PHYSICAL ISSUES

- Allow time to visit school nurse for treatment of headaches or other symptoms, if needed
- Allow rest breaks during the day, if needed
- Allow "hall passing time" before or after the crowds have cleared
- Allow student to wear sunglasses indoors to control for light sensitivity
- Allow student to take lunch in quiet space to allow for rest and control for noise sensitivity

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR EMOTIONAL ISSUES

- Share progress and difficulties with parents, school nurse, counselor, physician, and athletic trainer
- Develop an emotional support plan for the student. This may include an adult with whom he/she can talk if feeling overwhelmed.

Thank you for your assistance and cooperation!

Signed: _____ Date: _____

Principal/Athletic Director/School Counselor/School Nurse/Physician/Certified Athletic Trainer