

# RAINEY ENDOWED SCHOOL MANAGEMENT OF CONCUSSION AND OTHER HEAD INJURIES POLICY



**Implementation Date – November 2022**

## **PURPOSE**

Rainey Endowed School recognises that concussions and other head injuries are serious and could result in significant brain damage or even death if not recognised and managed properly. This policy aims to promote the safety of pupils participating in school activities including, but not limited to, extracurricular sports activities, and to provide academic support for pupils identified with concussive or other head injuries.

The school's approach to managing a concussion injury is based on DENI Circular 2024/15 in conjunction with "If in Doubt, Sit Them Out- UK Concussion Guidelines for Non-Elite (Grassroots) Sport" campaign. This policy also extends to pupils who have suffered a concussion in non-school related activities because a concussion sustained outside school will have a bearing on when a pupils may resume sports related activities and extra-curricular sports activities in school.

### **What is Concussion?**

Concussion is a traumatic brain injury resulting in a disturbance of brain function. It affects the way a person thinks, feels, and remembers things. Loss of consciousness (being "knocked out") occurs in less than 10% of concussions and it is not required to diagnose concussion. However, anyone who loses consciousness because of a head injury has had a concussion. Concussion can be caused by a direct blow to the head but can also occur when knocks to the other parts of the body result in rapid movement of the head (e.g. whiplash type injuries)

In 2014, the Concussion "Recognise and Remove" Campaign was initiated to raise awareness about concussion, and particularly Second Impact Syndrome (SIS). SIS was determined by the coroner for the death of a pupils, Benjamin Robinson, following a head injury sustained whilst playing a rugby match for his school in 2011.

### **What are the visible clues of a suspected concussion?**

Concussion should be suspected in ONE or more of the following visual clues, signs or symptoms are present.

- Loss of consciousness or responsiveness
- Lying motionless on the ground/slow to get up
- Unsteady on feet/balance problems or falling over/uncoordination.
- Grabbing/clutching of head
- Dazed, blank or vacant look.
- Slow to respond to questions.
- Confused/not aware of play or events.
- Grabbing/ clutching head
- Impact seizure/convulsion
- Tonic posturing-lying rigid/motionless due to muscle spasm (may appear to be unconscious)
- More emotional/irritable than normal for that person
- Vomiting

### **What are the signs and symptoms of a concussion after injury?**

The presence of any one or more of the following signs and symptoms may suggest a concussion. They may occur hours, days or even weeks after the initial incident (<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-injury-and-concussion>).

- Loss of consciousness
- Headache or pressure in the head
- Seizure or convulsion
- Dizziness or balance problems

- Difficulty concentrating or feeling like they are in a fog.
- Nausea or vomiting
- Drowsiness, feeling slowed down, fatigue or low energy.
- More emotional than normal, feelings of sadness
- Blurred vision or sensitivity to light or noise
- Nervous, anxious or irritable
- Difficulty remembering / amnesia overlapping.
- Neck pain
- Not feeling “quite right”

## **Responsibilities**

### **Concussion in a school related activity**

Staff members involved in school activities will act in accordance with this policy when there are concerns about a pupil and a suspected concussion (staff – see Appendix 3 for actions relating to accurate record keeping).

## **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**

### **Role of coaches, teachers, volunteers who witness a suspected concussion.**

- Safely remove the individual from the field of play and ensure that they do not return to play in that game even if they say their symptoms are resolved.
- Observe the player or assign an adult to monitor the individual once the player is removed.
- If the player is under 18 years old, contact parent/guardian to inform them of possible concussion.
- Arrange for the player to get home safely.
- Advise that a responsible adult must supervise the player over the next 24-48 hours.
- Ensure that the school accident report form is completed and stored by the organisation.
- Follow a graduated return to activity (education) with an emphasis on initial relative rest and returning to education before returning to training for sport.

## **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**

### **Role of parent/guardian**

- Obtain full details of the incident.
- Do not leave your child alone for the first 24 hours.
- Have your child assessed by an appropriate Healthcare Professional with 24 hours or access the NHS.
- Monitor your child for worsening symptoms of concussion for 24-48 hours.
- Encourage initial rest/sleep as needed and limit smartphone/computer and screen use for first 24-48 hours.
- Inform school/work/other sports clubs of the suspected concussion.
- Support your child to follow a graduated return to activity (school) and sport programme.

## **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**

### **Role of player**

- Stop playing/training immediately if you experience any symptoms of concussion.
- **BE HONEST WITH HOW YOU FEEL.** Report any symptoms immediately to your coach, medic and /or parent.
- Delays in reporting and under-reporting of symptoms have been associated with a longer recovery and delayed return to activity and could risk incomplete recovery of the brain.

- If you do have continuing symptoms, do not return to training or sports activities until evaluated by an appropriate Healthcare Professional.
- Inform your school/ sports club.
- Follow the graduated return to activity (education) and sport programme.
- During training and matches always watch out for teammates and encourage them to be honest and report any concussion symptoms.
- If you question whether another player may have symptoms of concussion, report this to the coach, match official or appropriate Healthcare Professional.

## **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**

### **Concussions outside school**

***It is the responsibility of a parent/guardian to inform the school office that their child has sustained a concussion in activities outside school.***

### **RETURN TO LEARNING (Appendix 1)**

Following a concussion, a pupil may have difficulties with short- and long-term memory, concentration and organisation. They will require rest while recovering from injury (e.g., avoid reading, texting, computer games, watching television) and may even need to stay home from school for a few days. As they return to school, they may need to start with a few classes or a half-day depending on how they feel. They may also benefit from limited attendance or homework expectations if recovery from a concussion is taking longer than expected. (see Appendix 1)

### **THE GRADUATED RETURN TO ACTIVITY PROGRAMME (Appendix 2)**

A record of pupils on the Return to Play/ Sports Programme will be kept in the School Information Management System (SIMS) and recorded in the school concussion register spreadsheet (located in 'My Computer', 'Staff', 'Concussion'). The progress of pupils through the programme will be monitored and recorded by the Director of Rugby/ Director of Hockey or Head of Year.

### **COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE**

#### **Staff**

Staff should follow the advice outlined in the **Concussion Protocol (Appendix 3)**. The teacher in charge of the activity will notify the pupil and their parents/guardians, and all school personnel involved in supporting the pupil in his/her school sport. A **Concussion Report (Appendix 4)** will be sent to the parent(s)/guardian(s) of the pupil.

The **Assistant Principal i/c Administration** will inform staff of pupils who have a suspected or confirmed concussion. An updated list will be issued to staff at the start of each school week through the Weekly Briefing (as applicable).

At the start of each academic year, all staff will be made aware of this policy and the standards of care relating to the management of concussive injuries. They will be provided with concussion awareness training that includes recognising the signs and symptoms that may suggest a concussive or other head injury. They will be provided with a copy of the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool.

#### **Pupils and Parents/Guardians**

Pupils and parents/guardians should report suspected or known concussion or other head injuries that occur outside of school related activities to the school office. This information will be shared with the Head

of Year and Assistant Principal – pastoral. **It is the responsibility of the parent/guardian to inform the school of signs and symptoms related to concussion or head injuries that are recognised while the pupil is not in school.**

At the start of each academic year all pupil and parents/guardians will be provided with information about:

- The risk of concussion and other head injuries and the dangers associated with continuing to participate when a concussion or other head injury is suspected.
- The signs and symptoms associated with concussion and other head injuries; and
- The school's protocols this policy, and links to further information will be published on the school internet site: [www.raineyendowed.com](http://www.raineyendowed.com) .

**Complementary Policies:**

Health and Safety Policy

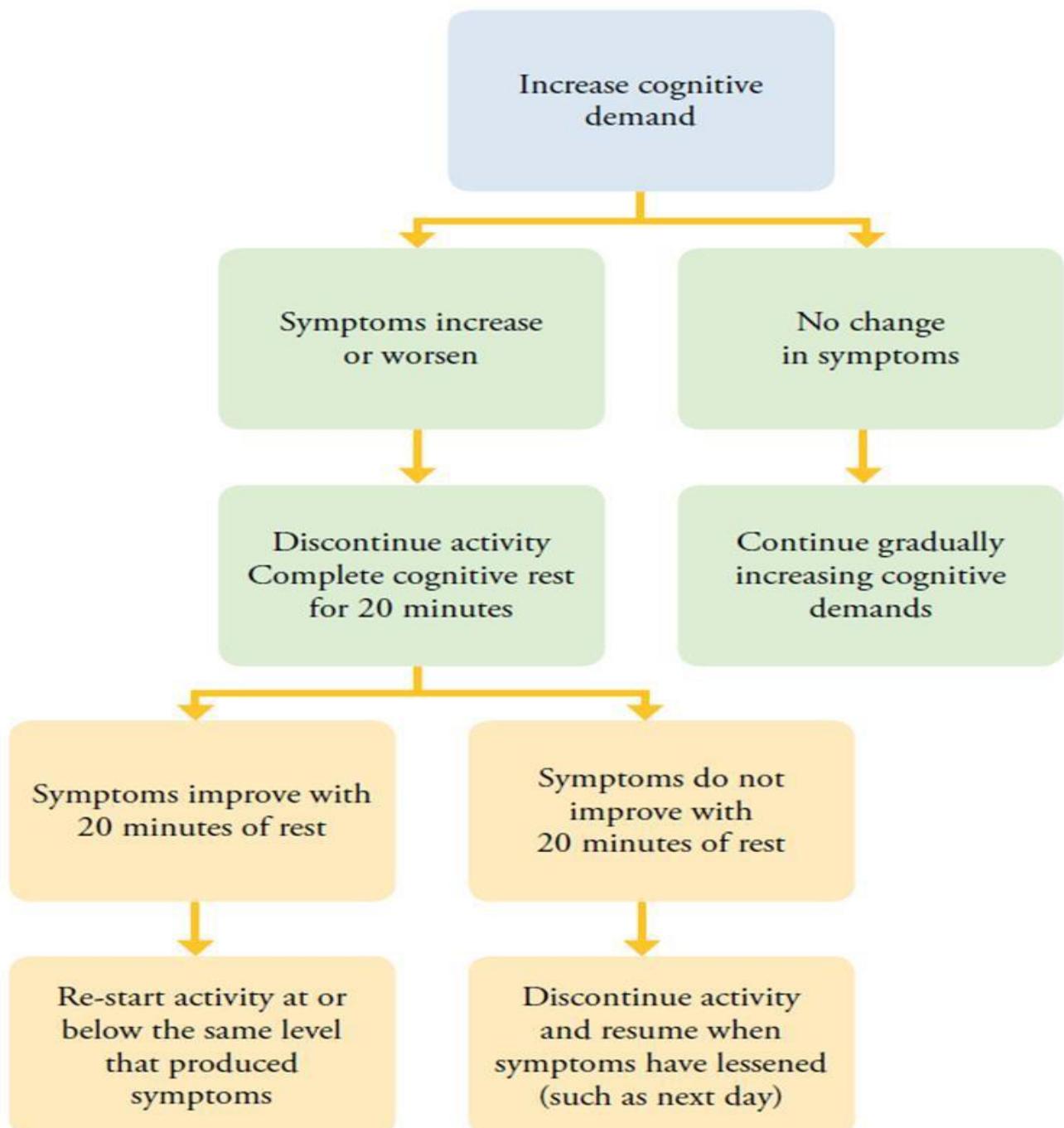
**Step 1**

Complete physical and cognitive rest. No exertion activity until asymptomatic. This may include staying home from school or limiting school hours (and studying) for several days. Activities requiring concentration and attention may worsen symptoms and delay recovery.

**Step 2**

Return to school full-time /normal cognitive daily activities (or normal cognitive functions).

Suggested approach to increasing cognitive demand.



**APPENDIX 2: Rainey Endowed Graduated Return to Play Record (GRTP)**

<b>Rainey Endowed Rugby Graduated Return to Play</b>			
<b>Name</b>			
<b>Team</b>			
<b>Date of Suspected Concussion</b>	<b>06/03/2025</b>	<b>Tick</b>	<b>Signed</b>
<b>GRTP Level 1-Day 1</b> No physical activity for a day. Walking and light jogging permitted if symptoms not provoked	<b>07/03/2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(player)
<b>GRTP Level 2-Day 2-6</b> If symptom free - light aerobic exercise e.g. walking, swimming, stationary cycling, jogging	<b>12/03/2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(player)
<b>GRTP Level 3-Day 7-9</b> Rugby/sport specific movement - non contact e.g. side stepping, faster running, body weight resistance training	<b>15/03/2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(player)
<b>GRTP Level 4-Day 10-15</b> Rugby Ball work / decision making - non-contact rugby. Progressive resistance training	<b>21/03/2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	(player)
<b>GRTP Level 5-Day 16-22</b> *Signed off by medical practitioner for contact (rugby only)	<b>22/03/2025</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	* (medical practitioner)
<b>GRTP level 6-Day 25</b> Earliest return to normal game play	<b>29/03/2025</b>		(Parent / Guardian)
* If a doctor would not sign off for return or if the pupil did not get a doctor's assessment, please sign here		<input type="checkbox"/>	(Parent / Guardian)
The above pupil has completed the GRTP under my guidance	<b>NO SIGN OFF MEANS NO RETURN TO PLAY</b>		(Coach)

## APPENDIX 3: CONCUSSION PROTOCOL (Staff)

### RES Concussion Protocol

#### **Sports Concussion – Off Site representing school**

Once a concussion is suspected

1. Contact the parent and give the pupil a copy of the concussion letter (Appendix 4).
2. All concussions must be reported to the Head of PE/ Director of Rugby/ Hockey, whichever is relevant.
3. Email Louise Stockman to fill in the concussion register spreadsheet (located in 'My Computer', 'Staff', 'Concussion')
4. Complete the RES accident report form for all suspected concussions. If it is a rugby concussion report to the Director of Rugby who will complete an IRFU injury report form at <http://www.irishrugby.ie/playingthegame/injury-reporting.php>  
If it is a hockey concussion, please follow Hockey Ireland Concussion guidance.  
<https://hockey.ie/concussion-policy/>  
If this a non-rugby or non-hockey concussion, the Head of Year should follow this procedure.
5. Print a GRTP/ GTRS form and give it to the pupil.
6. Assist the pupil to complete the protocol.
7. Collect the completed GRTP form after the 23 days.

#### **Sports Concussion - in School**

1. Stay with the pupil and contact a parent. Email Louise Stockman.
2. Complete a RES accident report form.
3. Print a GRTP/ GTRS form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter.
4. Head of Year will manage the GRTP if the pupil does not play for a school team.
5. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach, or the Director of Rugby/ Hockey.
6. The relevant person will collect the completed GRTP form after the 23 days.

#### **Non-Sports Concussion**

1. Stay with the pupil and contact a parent. Email Louise Stockman.
2. Complete a RES accident report form.
3. Print a GRTP/ GTRS form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter.
4. Head of Year will manage the GRTP if the pupil does not play for a school team.
5. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach, the Director of Rugby/ Director of Hockey.

#### **Concussion outside of school**

If you find out, or 'hear rumours' that a pupil has been concussed at home:

1. Email the details to the Head of Year.
2. HOY to contact a parent.
3. If a concussion is confirmed complete the register and print a GRTP form and give it to the pupil along with the concussion letter.
4. Head of Year will manage the GRTP/ GTRS if the pupil does not play for a school team.
5. GRTP for school team players should be managed by their coach, the Director of Rugby/Hockey

## **Completing the Concussion Register**

1. On receipt of an accident form or (if concussion has occurred outside school) an email from the Head of Year, Louise Stockman will update the concussion spreadsheet and will email details to the Assistant Principal i/c Administration.

### **Paper Trail**

All fully completed GRTP/ GTRS forms should be returned to the school office.

The RES accident report form and a copy of the IRFU form must be sent to Louise Stockman at the earliest opportunity-.

The IRFU form must also be emailed to [lesley.mcgaughey@ulsterrugby.com](mailto:lesley.mcgaughey@ulsterrugby.com)

Once the IRFU form has been completed online, you will receive an email with a link to enable it to be printed.

### **Communication to Staff**

Assistant Principal, Mr Francis, will email all staff the list of pupils who have a concussion GRTP/ GTRS and these will remain on staff briefing until the date has expired

## APPENDIX 4: CONCUSSION REPORT



### RES Concussion Report

Pupil: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Treatment given following incident:

Dear Parent/Guardian

Following an incident in school your son/daughter has a suspected concussion. They have been assessed and have displayed one or more of the following symptoms:

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Loss of consciousness</li><li>• Seizure or convulsion</li><li>• Balance problems</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Drowsiness</li><li>• Player is more emotional</li><li>• Irritability</li><li>• Sadness</li><li>• Fatigue or low energy</li><li>• More nervous/anxious</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Confusion</li><li>• “Don’t feel right”</li><li>• Headache</li><li>• Dizziness</li><li>• Feeling slowed down</li><li>• “Pressure in head”</li><li>• Blurred vision</li><li>• Sensitivity to light</li><li>• Amnesia</li><li>• Feeling like “in a fog”</li></ul>
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It is our recommendation that they be checked by a medical professional to assess the severity of the injury. Until symptoms have disappeared, they should not be allowed to drive, use tablets/phones/computers, or indeed attend school.

In line with school policy, we will apply the compulsory Graduated Return to Play.

This is summarised on the GRTP sheet accompanying this letter. The signed GRTP must be returned to school at the end of the 23 days. We would appreciate your co-operation with ensuring the protocol is followed to ensure the welfare of your son/daughter.

Further advice is available at:

<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/head-injury-and-concussion/>

[www.patient.co.uk/health/head-injury-instructions](http://www.patient.co.uk/health/head-injury-instructions)

If you have any queries, please contact the Head of PE or your son/daughter's HOY.