HOLLAND HALL

Revised
04/29/24

Post-Concussion Return-to-Learn Protocol

POST-CONCUSSION RETURN-TO-LEARN PROTOCOL:
Holland Hall recognizes the need to develop researched based practices to support students who have experienced concussive events and are managing a return to full activity. As new research surfaces, we continue to better understand the diagnosis and treatment of concussions.

CONCUSSION FACTS:

- The young brain is in a formative stage. Therefore, though it may seem counterintuitive: it takes young brains longer to heal from a concussion than an older brain.
- Every brain is different. Thus, every concussion is different.
- With each successive concussion, recovery time tends to be longer.
- ADHD, dyslexia, and other learning differences may complicate recovery from a concussion.
- The Sway test, Symptoms Scores, and other neurological tests help us to gather data about the concussion; they do not help us treat it. (The Sway mobile app technology provides the first and only FDA-cleared mobile balance test. Using the built-in motion sensors of any iPhone, or Android device, health professionals can administer a medical grade objective balance test in virtually any setting. Sway's proprietary algorithms measure 5 objective measures in response to a user's movement of a mobile device. The built-in motion sensors of the mobile device assist in identifying the earliest intentional movement as a response to a stimulus. Learn more at www.swaymedical.com.)
- Upon the recommendation of Holland Hall's medical consultants, we suggest athletes take fish oil during their season, with an increased dose if a concussion is sustained.
- Cognitive demands can worsen the symptoms of a concussion and delay recovery; therefore, our protocol is formulated to emphasize post-concussion rest.

Recognizing that student health and safety is our utmost priority, Jim Mansfield (Athletic Trainer: 539-476-8207), Kathleen Alabbasi (Director of Health Services), Kimberly Seabolt (Primary School Nurse), and the Branch Heads will work with families to assist students in returning to the classroom and athletic activities.

We ask that families inform Jim Mansfield if their child sustains or they believe he or she may have sustained a concussion outside of school to enable immediate implementation of the Return-to-Learn protocol. We also encourage families to consult a primary care sports medicine physician, as necessary.

Our goal is to balance the need for rest with ongoing academic demands. Holland Hall teachers are apprised of the stages of this protocol and will communicate with their Branch Head to remain informed of the student's condition as Symptoms Scores and Sway results are available. In our commitment to applying research-supported best practice policies and procedures, the following Return-to-Learn protocol will be updated annually by our concussion team. In addition, Holland Hall is committed to providing yearly education to our community about concussions.

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POST-CONCUSSION RETURN-TO-LEARN STAGE 1 of 3:

Stage 1: *Cognitive and Physical Rest*	**Student Perspective and Actions**	**Teacher Perspective and Actions**
During the first 24 - 48 hours after injury. Students are to stay home and engage in relative rest: Engage in activities of daily living provided there is minimal increase in symptoms. Typically, Sway testing will be done periodically during this period. This is a way for us to gather more data to measure the severity of the concussion. These are not tests you can “pass” or “fail.” They simply allow us to compare the function of the brain before concussion and frequently after that until the resolution of the concussion. Symptoms Scores begin at the time of injury and continue until the student is symptom free.	Relative Rest. This is the most critical part of your recovery. Do not “push through” symptoms for any reason. Limited cognitive effort. Limited screens (computer, iPad, cell phone, tv, video games). Limited social activities. No loud noises/music. Avoid use of headphones Limited exposure to light. Make sure to hydrate! No reading cognitively demanding material. Light physical activity. Take your fish oil. You may NOT attend practice or games as a spectator or participant during this period.	You will receive an email from the Branch Head in the Upper School or the Nurse in the Middle School or Primary School notifying you of the concussion. We will send this as soon as possible after we learn of the concussion. During this phase of recovery, the student will not be in class and will not be able to do anything for class while at home. It is important to keep a running list of the information, assignments, and assessments that the student misses during this period. You might want to start a folder for the student and put important information in it for the student. When the student returns to your class, he or she will not be able to take any quizzes or tests initially. Even if he or she is symptom-free, please await the “go ahead” for testing since it demands a great deal of concentration. Progression through the protocol is symptom limited.

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POST-CONCUSSION RETURN-TO-LEARN STAGE 2 of 3:

Stage 2: Partial Days ***Symptom Limited Activities***	**Student Perspective and Actions**	**Teacher Perspective and Actions**
The added stimulation of the school environment (lights, noise, etc.) may cause a symptom flare-up. This is why we generally start with partial days. We will study the student's schedule on any given day and determine which part of the day he or she will attend. We plan the partial day NOT to include sports practice (physical activity is a likely trigger of symptoms at this stage) or band/orchestra/chorus (noise sensitivity is still high at this time). We cannot give you an exact amount of time that a student will stay in stage 2. It depends on the severity of the concussion.	The goal during this phase is to sit in class and listen. We want to test your cognitive endurance during this phase. We do not want you to take any quizzes or tests, nor do we want you to work at length on any major projects. This is about seeing how you transition back to the school environment. We also hope that by listening in class, you won't get as behind on class content. Please continue to limit screens. Bring sunglasses, as light sensitivity is common. 7th-12th Grade students should check in with Mr. Mansfield, 4th - 6th Grade students should check in with Nurse Alabbasi, and Primary School students should check in with Nurse Seabolt on a daily basis during this phase. If symptoms return during the school day, you should go to the nurse immediately and either lie down in the infirmary or return home. You are not permitted to participate in athletic, theater, orchestra, or band practice during this phase. You may begin to do homework in small increments. For instance, 20 minutes of homework, followed by 30 minutes of rest. You may continue this cycle unless symptoms return, at which point you should stop.	The student should not work on a laptop or iPad during class. Note taking may need to be limited. The main purpose is for students to simply be in class and listen. He or she may participate in discussions. If you are showing a movie in class, consider excusing the student if he or she is sensitive to light. Just remember: the goal of this phase is to allow the student to test out physical stamina and cognitive endurance needed for school. If the student complains of a headache, needs to close his/her eyes for extended periods, or needs to put his/her head on the desk, please send the student to the nurse to be evaluated. Depending on how long stage 2 lasts, the student could be falling significantly behind in class. Please continue to track missed assignments and content. Think about whether it will be better for the student to focus on missed content or new content when he or she returns. You may want to consider smaller assignments you could "excuse" in order to focus on material mastery for larger assessments.

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POST-CONCUSSION RETURN-TO-LEARN STAGE 3 of 3:

Stage 3: Full Days ***Beginning Work***	**Student Perspective and Actions**	**Teacher Perspective and Actions**
The student is feeling better at this point. While cognitive stamina may still be somewhat limited, the student may be symptom free, even after a full day of schoolwork. Tests and quizzes will begin during this stage, with no more than one per day. Some students may need extended time accommodations at this point in order to have more processing time during an assessment. Light aerobic activity will begin during this phase as the student prepares to return to play in his or her sport. Some students experience anxiety and depression as side effects of the concussion. It is important that we help students manage the stress that can compound those symptoms during this phase.	You need to be a good communicator with your teachers at this point. Let teachers know what still bothers you, what is easy to do, etc. This would be a good time to meet with individual teachers and come up with a "plan" for each class, with no more than one assessment in a day. Continue to stop the moment symptoms flare up and take breaks when studying. Continue to check in with Mr. Mansfield (7th - 12th), Ms. Alabbasi (4th - 6th), or Ms. Seabolt (Primary School) daily. Make sure you continue to get adequate sleep during this phase: 8 hours, if possible. If screens or reading bother you, consider using an audio book to get caught up. You may have to make some hard choices at this point in terms of prioritizing your make-up work (e.g. Making choices not to do all of your extracurricular activities or social events until your work is caught up). Everyone wants to help you make-up your work in a reasonable manner. If you are feeling stressed, talk to your teachers and Mr. Parks or Ms. White so we can make changes to lessen the stress.	At this point, the student will begin taking quizzes and tests. You may want to consider using some alternative testing methods: ● Only give a few pages of a test at a time. Let the student take it in 30 minute blocks ● Give an oral rather than a written assessment (students often can express verbally much more easily than they can write as they are recovering). ● Consider giving quizzes as an "open book" homework assignments so that students can use them to prepare for a bigger assessment. It will be essential to determine which assignments are crucial to mastering the material and which assignments function as reinforcement, especially if final exams are forthcoming.