



## **ACCESSIBILITY:**

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## **RETURN TO SCHOOL PLAN**

The Concussion Return to School Plan was developed in partnership with Parachute and is based on the most recent research and recommendations of the expert scientific community on concussion, that is, The Canadian Guidelines on Concussion in Sport, July 2017 and the Berlin Consensus Statement on Concussion in Sport, October 2016.

Should a student be diagnosed with a concussion, the student will be required to follow a Return to School Plan which includes a Return to Learning (RTL) plan and Return to Physical Activity (RTPA) plan. There are two parts to a student's RTL plan. The first part, Initial Rest to Stage 2, occurs at home and the second part, Stage 3a to 4b, occurs at school.

The RTL and RTPA plans are inter-related, however, they are not interdependent. A student's progress through the stages of RTL is independent from their progression through the RTPA stages.

Each stage must last a minimum of 24 hours.

## **RETURN TO LEARN**

### **Initial Rest**

- 24 – 48 hours of relative cognitive rest:
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Short board/card games
  2. Short phone calls
  3. Photography (with camera)
  4. Crafts
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  1. TV
  2. Technology use (for example, computer, laptop, tablet, iPad)/cell phone (for example, texting/games/photography)
  3. Video games
  4. Reading
  5. Attendance at school or school-type work
  6. The student moves to Stage 1 when symptoms start to improve or after resting 2 days maximum (whichever occurs first).



## **STAGE 1**

- Light cognitive (thinking/memory/ knowledge) activities.
- Gradually increase cognitive activity up to 30 minutes. Take frequent breaks.
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Activities from previous stage
  2. Easy reading (for example, books, magazines, newspaper)
  3. Limited TV
  4. Limited cellphone conversations
  5. Drawing/building blocks/puzzles
  6. Some contact with friends
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  1. Technology use (for example, computer, laptop, tablet, cell phone (for example, texting/games/photography))
  2. Attendance at school or school-type work  
The student moves to Stage 2 when:
    - a. The student tolerates 30 minutes of light cognitive activity (for example a student should be able to complete 3-4 of the permitted activities in Stage 1) and has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
    - b. The student has completed a minimum of 24 hours at Stage 1. However:
      - The student must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours when they have exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms.
      - The student must return to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner when they have exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms.

## **STAGE 2**

- Gradually add cognitive activity (as per activities permitted). When light cognitive activity is tolerated, introduce school work (at home and facilitated by the school).
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Activities from previous stage
  2. School-type work in 30-minute increments
  3. Crosswords, word puzzles, Sudoku, word search
  4. Limited technology use (for example, computer, laptop, tablet, cell phone (for example, texting/games/photography)) starting with shorter periods and building up as tolerated.
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  1. School attendance
  2. The student moves to Stage 3a when:
    - a. The student tolerates the additional cognitive activity (for example a student should be able to complete 3-4 of the activities permitted in Stage 2) and has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
    - b. The student has completed a minimum of 24 hours at Stage 2. However:
      - The student must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours when they have exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms.
      - The student must return to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner when they have exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms.



### **STAGE 3A**

- The student begins with an initial time at school of 2 hours.
- The individual RTL plan is developed by the Collaborative Team following the student conference and assessment of the student's individual needs determining possible strategies and/or approaches for student learning.
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Activities from previous stage
    2. School work for up to 2 hours per day in smaller chunks (completed at school) working up to a 1/2 day of cognitive activity
    3. Adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
  - **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
    1. Tests/exams
    2. Homework
    3. Music class
    4. Assemblies
    5. Field trips

#### School Responsibility:

- The student has demonstrated they can tolerate up to a half day of cognitive activity.
- A **School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan)** is sent home to parent/guardian.

#### Home Responsibility:

- The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
- The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.

### **STAGE 3B**

- The student continues attending school half time with gradual increase in school attendance time, increased school work and a decrease in the adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches.
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Activities from previous stage
    2. School work for 4-5 hours per day, in smaller chunks (for example, 2-4 days of school/week)
    3. Homework – up to 30 minutes per day
    4. Decrease adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches\
    5. Classroom testing with accommodations.
  - **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
    - Standardized tests/exams



School Responsibility:

- The student has demonstrated they can tolerate up to 4-5 hours of the cognitive activities listed in Stage 3b.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.

Home Responsibility:

- The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
- The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.

**STAGE 4A**

- Full day school, minimal adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
- Nearly normal workload.
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Activities from previous stage
  2. Nearly normal cognitive activities
  3. Routine school work as tolerated
  4. Minimal adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
  5. Start to eliminate adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
  6. Increase homework to 60 minutes per day
  7. Limit routine testing to one test per day with accommodations (for example, supports - such as more time)
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  - Standardized tests/exams

School Responsibility:

- The student has demonstrated they can tolerate a full day of school and a nearly normal workload with minimal adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.

Home Responsibility:

- The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
- The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.

**STAGE 4B**

- At school: full day, without adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by Student:**
  1. Normal cognitive activities
  2. Routine school work
  3. Full curriculum load (attend all classes, all homework, tests)
  4. Standardized tests/exams
  5. Full extracurricular involvement (non-sport/non-physical activity, for example, debating club, drama club, chess club)



School Responsibility:

- The student has demonstrated they can tolerate a full day of school without adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.

Home Responsibility:

- The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
- The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

## **RETURN TO PHYSICAL ACTIVITY**

### **Initial Rest**

- 24 – 48 hours of relative physical rest
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Limited movement that does not increase heart rate or break a sweat
    2. Moving to various locations in the home
    3. Daily hygiene activities
    4. Activities that are not permitted at this stage:
    5. Physical exertion (increases breathing and heart rate and sweating)
    6. Stair climbing other than to move locations throughout the home
    7. Sports/sporting activity
- The student moves to Stage 1 when symptoms start to improve or after resting 2 days maximum (whichever occurs first).

### **STAGE 1**

- Light physical activities (as per activities permitted) that do not provoke symptoms.
- Movements that can be done with little effort (do not increase breathing and/or heart rate or break a sweat)
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Daily household tasks (for example, bed-making, dishes, feeding pets, meal preparation)
    2. Slow walking for short time
  - **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
    1. Physical exertion (increases breathing and heart rate and sweating)
    2. Sports/sporting activity
    3. Stair climbing, other than to move locations throughout the home
    4. The student moves to Stage 2a when:
      - a. The student tolerates light physical activities (completes both activities from Stage 1) and has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
      - b. The student has completed a minimum of 24 hours at Stage 1. However:
        - The student must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours when they have exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms.



- The student must return to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner when they have exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms.

## **STAGE 2A**

- Daily activities that do not provoke symptoms.
- Add additional movements that do not increase breathing and/or heart rate or break a sweat.
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Activities from previous stage
  2. Light physical activity (for example, use of stairs)
  3. 10-15 minutes slow walking 1-2x per day inside and outside (weather permitting)
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  1. Physical exertion (increases breathing and/or heart rate and sweating)
  2. Sports
  3. The student moves to Stage 2b when:
    - a. The student tolerates daily physical activities (completes activities permitted in Stage 2a) and has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
    - b. The student has completed a minimum of 24 hours at Stage 2a. However:
      - The student must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours when they have exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms.
      - The student must return to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner when they have exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms.

## **STAGE 2B**

- Light aerobic activity
- **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
  1. Activities from previous stage
  2. 20-30 minutes walking/stationary cycling/recreational (that is, at a pace that causes some increase in breathing/heart rate but not enough to prevent a student from carrying on a conversation comfortably)
- **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
  1. Resistance or weight training
  2. Physical activities with others
  3. Physical activities using equipment
  4. The student moves to Stage 3 when:
    - a. The student tolerates light aerobic activities (completes activities permitted from Stage 2b) and has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
    - b. The student has completed a minimum of 24 hours at Stage 2b. However:
      - The student must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours when they have exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms.
      - The student must return to a medical doctor or nurse practitioner when they have exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms.



### STAGE 3

- Simple locomotor activities/sport-specific exercise to add movement.
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Activities from previous stage (20-30 minutes walking/stationary cycling/elliptical/recreational dancing at a moderate pace)
    2. Simple individual drills (for example, running/throwing drills, skating drills in hockey, shooting drills in basketball) in predictable and controlled environments with no risk of re-injury
    3. Restricted recess activities (for example, walking)
  - **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
    1. Full participation in physical education or Daily Physical Activity
    2. Participation in intramurals
    3. Full participation in interschool practices
    4. Interschool competitions
    5. Resistance or weight training
    6. Body contact or head impact activities (for example, heading a soccer ball)
    7. Jarring motions (for example, high speed stops, hitting a baseball with a bat)

#### School Responsibility:

- The student has demonstrated they can tolerate simple individual drills/sport-specific drills as listed in permitted activities.
- A **School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan)** is sent home to parent/guardian.

#### Home Responsibility:

- The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
- The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
- The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.

### STAGE 4

- Progressively increase physical activity. Non-contact training drills to add coordination and increased thinking.
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    1. Activities from previous stage
    2. More complex training drills (for example, passing drills in soccer and hockey)
    3. Physical activity with no body contact (for example, dance, badminton)
    4. Participation in practices for non-contact interschool sports (no contact)
    5. Progressive resistance training may be started
    6. Recess – physical activity running/games with no body contact
    7. Daily Physical Activity
  - **Activities that are NOT permitted at this stage:**
    1. Full participation in physical education
    2. Participation in intramurals
    3. Body contact or head impact activities (for example, heading a soccer ball)
    4. Participation in interschool contact sport practices, or interschool games/competitions (non-contact and contact).
    - 5.



School Responsibility:

- The student has completed the activities in Stage 4 as applicable.
- The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.
- A **Concussion - Medical Clearance Form** (APH027-16F) is sent home to parent/guardian.

Home Responsibility:

1. The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, new symptoms, or worsening symptoms.
2. The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms, or new symptoms, and must return to the previous stage for a minimum of 24 hours.
3. The student has exhibited or reported a worsening of symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner.
4. The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.
5. Before progressing to Stage 5, the student must:
6. Have completed Stage 4a and 4b of the RTL Plan (full day at school without adaptation of learning strategies and/or approaches);
7. Have completed Stage 4 and be symptom-free; and
8. Obtain a signed medical clearance from a medical doctor or nurse practitioner.

PLEASE NOTE: Premature return to contact sports (full practice and game play) may cause a significant setback in recovery.

## STAGE 5

- Following medical clearance, full participation in all non-contact physical activities (that is, non-intentional body contact) and full contact training/practice in contact sports.
  - **Activities permitted if tolerated by student:**
    - Physical Education
    - Intramural programs
    - Full contact training/practice in contact interschool sports
  - **Activities that are not permitted at this stage:**
    - Competition (for example, games, meets, events) that involves body contact

School Responsibility:

1. The student has successfully completed the applicable physical activities in Stage 5.
2. The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.

Home Responsibility:

1. The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms or new symptoms.
2. The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms or new symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner for Medical Clearance reassessment.
3. The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school.



## **STAGE 6**

- Unrestricted return to contact sports. Full participation in contact sports games/competitions
- School Responsibility:
  1. The student has successfully completed full participation in contact sports.
  2. The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent home to parent/guardian.
- Home Responsibility:
  1. The student has not exhibited or reported a return of symptoms or new symptoms.
  2. The student has exhibited or reported a return of symptoms or new symptoms and must return to medical doctor or nurse practitioner for Medical Clearance reassessment.
  3. The School Concussion Management Form (Return to School Plan) is sent back to school for documentation purposes.

## **NOTE**

- For students experiencing long-term difficulties while recovering from a concussion significantly impacting learning, or struggling to progress through the Return to School Plan, the school administrator can be consulted on the appropriateness of a “Plan-of-Care”.