

## Head injury, concussion and return to play policy

### Introduction

Dollar Academy seeks to provide a safe return to all activities for pupils after injury, including concussions. As such, Dollar Academy has established this policy to outline procedures for staff, parents and pupils to follow in the management of head injuries.

### Definitions

**Head injury** is a trauma to the head that may or may not include injury to the brain.

**Concussion** is the sudden but short-lived loss of mental function that occurs after a blow or other injury to the head (a blow to the head, face or neck, or a blow to the body which causes a sudden jarring of the head may cause a concussion).

**Please note that there is never a mild concussion.**

### Recognition of Concussion

Common signs and symptoms of head injury resulting in concussion:

Signs (observed by others)	Symptoms (reported by pupil)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Pupil appears dazed or stunned</li><li>• Confusion</li><li>• Unsure about game, score, opponent</li><li>• Moves clumsily (altered co-ordination)</li><li>• Balance problems</li><li>• Personality change</li><li>• Responds slowly to questions</li><li>• Forgets events prior to injury</li><li>• Forgets events after the injury</li><li>• Loss of consciousness</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Headache</li><li>• Fatigue</li><li>• Nausea or vomiting</li><li>• Double vision, blurry vision</li><li>• Sensitive to light or noise</li><li>• Feels sluggish</li><li>• Feels 'foggy'</li><li>• Problems concentrating</li><li>• Problems remembering</li></ul>

### Management

At the time of the head injury, the pupil is to be removed from the activity/game and not to return to play that day. If this occurs on a school day the pupil should be escorted to the Nursing Centre, or the School Nurse should be called to assess the pupil at the site of the incident (ext. 299 /07917 434754 (Karen)/ 07881 811669 (Krissy). If the injury is serious an ambulance should also be called immediately by the staff with the pupil. At weekend fixtures, a volunteer doctor, School Nurse, First Aider or Physiotherapist (for the 1stXV) will be at the pitch side and will attend to the injured player. Parents or Houseparents (if the pupil is a boarder) will be contacted by the school nurse as soon as possible after the event.

If there are signs or symptoms of concussion, the pupil must be seen by a health professional, or first aider and they may advise that they are taken to their GP or A&E. Treatment involves physical and cognitive rest until symptoms resolve. The symptoms usually go away entirely within three weeks, but in some cases a longer time frame for recovery may be necessary. Some pupils play for a club as well as school. Players and parents must ensure that both the school and club are kept informed.

Players returning to training and then to matches, must follow Graduated Return to Play Protocols.

Following of these protocols is mandatory. Returning to rugby activity requires a staged approach.

Dollar Academy and Scottish Rugby advises all players to follow the Department of Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) Graduated Return to Play protocols below (detailed in the 2023 UK Concussion Guidelines for Grassroots Sport):

- The earliest a player can return to contact training is **after 14 symptom free days** at rest. This is regardless of age or gender.
- The earliest a player can return to a full-contact match is **after 21 symptom free days** at rest.

The speed at which physical activity and then rugby/sporting activity will vary greatly between individuals.

It is possible to start returning to some sporting activity while still experiencing symptoms, however, these should be mild, and the activity should not cause new or worsening symptoms.

Pushing too quickly through a staged return, if symptoms are worsened by activity, will prolong recovery.

Every concussion is unique and should be managed accordingly. Click to read the full DCMS guidance document: <https://bit.ly/3XU7Hfs>

Dollar Academy strongly encourages all players, volunteers and parents to undertake Scottish Rugby's Concussion e-module, launched in July 2023. <https://bit.ly/4dlbvus>

### **Further reading**

Your 'one-stop-shop' for everything you need to know about concussion.

[Concussion Hub - Scottish Rugby](#)

[Head injury and concussion - NHS \(www.nhs.uk\)](http://www.nhs.uk)