

Academic Accommodations for Concussion Symptoms Lasting More Than 2 Weeks

_____ has suffered a concussion and is currently under the care of Children's Mercy Hospital. **The student should not participate in any sport/gym/PE/rough play activities until formally approved by a healthcare provider outside the emergent or urgent care setting.**

The goal during concussion recovery is to find the right level of mental (cognitive) activity that does not significantly increase symptoms or cause symptoms that had previously resolved to re-emerge. The level of cognitive activity that each person tolerates will vary based on the individual and will change during the course of recovery.

Students with concussions may have memory, attention, and processing speed challenges. They may not be able to learn as well or quickly as before. High-demanding cognitive activities can make symptoms (e.g., headache, fatigue) worse and then make cognitive tasks more difficult.

It can take a concussed student much longer to complete assignments due to increased memory challenges and decreased speed of learning. Recovery can be delayed when a student "pushes through" symptoms. That is why it is suggested that "thinking" or cognitive load be reduced, just like physical exertion should be. With increased symptoms, students need to rest and may need to turn assignments in late from time to time.

Plans work best when one person (e.g., counselor, principal, vice-principal, teacher) from the school acts as the contact person for the student and teachers to track symptoms, makes needed adjustments and communicates changes to the rest of the team.

The following academic accommodations may help to reduce the cognitive (thinking) load to minimize post-concussion symptoms and allow the student to better participate in the academic process during the recovery period. ***These accommodations must be considered part of medical care and treatment for this medical condition.*** Needed accommodations may vary by course. The student and parent are encouraged to discuss and establish accommodations with the school on a class-by-class basis.

**All recommended supports and accommodations are to be used on an *as needed* basis. They can be modified depending on the student's ability to manage the cognitive and physical demands of the school environment. Continued communication between the school, the student, and the student's family is encouraged to best meet the needs of the student, and to develop a plan for successful return to school-based activities.

If accommodations are not effective in meeting the student's needs and symptoms persist following treatment, the school and parent may wish to formalize accommodations through a 504 Plan.

Educational Accommodations to Consider for Concussion

Attendance (For ongoing concussion symptoms)

- Half-days as tolerated for no longer than one week, then attend full day schedule
- **Full or partial days missed due to post concussion symptoms should be medically excused.**

Testing (For memory and processing speed)

- **No standardized testing until the student tolerates a full week of full days**
- Additional accommodations for testing may include:
 - Provide extra time to complete tests or allow testing across multiple sessions
 - Reduce length of tests based upon student's individual needs
 - Eliminate tests when possible
 - Test in a quiet area with minimal distractions
 - Consider reformatting tests from free response, essays to multiple choice, or oral response
 - Allow use of a note card for helpful formulas, when possible
 - No more than 1 test a day

Workload or Time Use (For processing speed and concentration)

- Reduce amount of make-up work, class work, and homework (we recommend 25%, though may vary by class)
- Consider shortened assignments, reports, and projects
- Allow student to turn assignments in late

Note-taking (For multi-tasking and processing speed)

- Allow the student to obtain class notes or outlines ahead of time from the teacher
- If this is not possible, allow the student to have photocopied notes from another student

Reading (For visual focus and concentration)

- Allow for scheduled breaks every 20 minutes or as needed while reading
- Consider having the student listen to material rather than read material where possible
- Enlarge text font where possible (18 font)
- Exempt student from reading aloud in front of classmates because of slower processing speed and possible reading difficulties

Breaks (For fatigue and headaches)

- Take breaks as needed to control symptom levels
- Consider allowing student to put their head on the desk to rest
- Allow the student to go to the nurse's office to rest for as needed
- Consider scheduling breaks into the student's day to reduce or avoid symptoms

Loud Environments *(For sensitivity to sound)*

Many individuals may become symptomatic with noisy environments. **If the student develops an increase in symptoms, consider the following:**

- Refrain from loud classrooms such as music, choir, band, shop, etc.
- Allow the student to lunch in a quiet place. Consider allowing 1-2 friends to eat with the student.
- Allow them to pass between classes when hallways are quiet.
- Remove student from the building prior to fire drills.

Computer Use *(For visual focus and sensitivity to lights)*

- Limit computer use to no more than 20 minutes at a time.
- If after a short break the student is without symptoms, consider return to computer activity for 20-minute increments and advance as tolerated.
- Where possible, print out assignments that can be completed in paper form instead of on computer.
- Reduce brightness on computers.
- Allow for handwritten work rather than completed on the computer.

PE Class, Recess, and Home Activities

- After a concussion, it is recommended to allow a brief period of rest. Typically, 1-3 days of rest.
- Then low-level physical activity is safe and recommended if there are no increasing symptoms. Physical activity should be carefully planned out and monitored to not make symptoms worse. Start with walking 10-15 minutes. Then progress to jogging, running, ground level activities (*no slides, swings, monkey bars, or jungle gym*), or body weight exercises, if symptoms do not worsen.
- No sporting activities or contact activities until cleared by a healthcare provider.
- No driving until cleared by a healthcare provider.

Additional Supports

- Help the student create a list of tasks. Use a daily planner to minimize sense of being overwhelmed and to assist with organization.
- Provide daily check-in meetings with school contact person to monitor progress and determine the need for more or less supports and modifications.
- Preferential seating to minimize distractions and to be closer to the teacher
- Consider peer support, tutoring or private meetings with the teacher to help with schoolwork, organization, and test preparation.
- Have the student meet with school counselor or nurse if they have significant changes in behavior, mood, or social functioning.

Accommodations will be re-evaluated at Next Appointment.