



## CONCUSSION AWARENESS AND PREVENTION POLICY

Approval:

Effective Date: August 7, 2019

### GENERAL INFORMATION

One of the goals of the *Education Act* is to encourage the physical development and personal health and fitness of students. To this end, the Department of Education supports school-related activities that promote health and fitness through physical activities. Student safety and effective risk management are of paramount importance during all such activities.

A concussion can have a significant impact on a student. It is important that schools have and use:

- appropriate strategies to help prevent and minimize the risk of concussions;
- procedures to follow in cases where it is suspected that a student may have a concussion; and
- procedures to follow when a student who has suffered a concussion returns to activities at school.

### PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure the health and safety of students during school-related activities, and to promote concussion awareness and prevention guidelines and procedures in Yukon schools.

### POLICY STATEMENT

#### General Information - Concussions

A concussion is a brain injury that causes changes in the way in which the brain functions that can lead to symptoms that are:

- physical (e.g. headache, dizziness);
- cognitive (e.g. difficulty concentrating or remembering);
- emotional/behavioural (e.g. depression, irritability); and/or
- sleep-related (e.g. drowsiness, difficulty falling asleep).

A concussion may be caused by a direct blow to the head, face, or neck or by an impact to the body that transmits force to the head that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull.

A concussion can occur even if there has been no loss of consciousness, and many concussions do occur without a loss of consciousness.

A concussion is a clinical diagnosis that can only be made by a medical doctor, nurse practitioner or nurse.

There are five key components of any concussion strategy: awareness, prevention, detection, management, and surveillance.

### Awareness and Prevention of Concussions

Educating people about concussions can lead to a reduction in the incidence of concussions and the outcomes from concussions that do occur.

Any time a student is involved in school-related physical activities, there is a chance that they may sustain a concussion. It is important to encourage a culture of safety and prevention during these activities.

Appropriate strategies for helping to prevent concussion injuries include the following:

- Primary Prevention – information and strategies that prevent concussions from occurring, such as rules and regulations, safe learning environments, and the use of proper protective gear.
- Secondary Prevention – proper management of concussions when they do occur that are designed to ensure appropriate treatment and protocols for returning to school-related activities.
- Tertiary Prevention – strategies to help prevent long-term complications from concussions, such as the avoidance of future school-related physical activities.

### *Mandatory Use of Helmets*

Schools must ensure that students wear appropriate helmets while participating in school-related activities in which there is a risk of head injury. Such activities include but are not limited to:

- a. alpine skiing;
- b. snowboarding;
- c. ice skating;
- d. ice hockey;
- e. skateboarding;
- f. in-line skating;
- g. speed skating;
- h. roller blading;
- i. mountain biking;

- j. road biking;
- k. snowmobiling.

Helmets used during school-related activities must be approved for the activity by the Canadian Standards Association or other appropriate body.

Any agreement with a commercial service provider must include a requirement to provide students with helmets during such activities.

School administrators may require that helmets be worn by students for any type of school-related activity where the school administrator deems it appropriate.

### Detection and Management of Concussions

When a staff member responsible for a student reasonably suspects that the student may have suffered a concussion, the staff member must take immediate action to deal with the injury, including the following:

- The student must immediately stop participating in the physical activity.
- The student's parent(s) must be contacted as soon as possible.
- The student must not be left alone, and must be referred to a medical practitioner as soon as possible.
- Once assessed by a medical practitioner, the student is only allowed to return to any school-related physical activity in accordance with the instructions of the medical practitioner and any approved guidelines and procedures.

### Guidelines and Procedures

Schools will follow guidelines and procedures relating to the prevention, identification and treatment of concussions as outlined in the *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*.

### **ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

It is the responsibility of school administrators, school staff, and students to ensure that the requirements of this policy are followed at all times during school-related activities.

The Department of Education is responsible for issuing guidelines and procedures relating to the awareness and prevention of concussions to be followed in the schools.

Parents are responsible for notifying the school when a student has suffered a concussion away from school.

## **APPLICATION**

This policy applies to all staff and students of the Department Education.

## **EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES**

In situations where the individual circumstances of a case are such that the provisions of this policy cannot be applied or to do so would result in an unfair or an unintended result, the decision may be based on the individual merits and justice of the situation. Such a decision will be considered for that specific case only and will not be precedent setting.

## **EFFECTIVE DATE**

This policy is effective August 7, 2019.

## **LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REFERENCES**

Education Act, ss. 4 (a) (vi)

## **HISTORY**

Mandatory Use of Helmets for School Sponsored Activities Policy, effective January 6, 2005; replaced by Mandatory Use of Helmets During School-Related Activities Policy, effective July 1, 2015; replaced by Concussion Awareness and Prevention Policy, effective August 7, 2019.

## **APPENDIX**

Parachute 2017, *Canadian Guideline on Concussion in Sport*