

Concussion Management Guidelines at Great Valley High School

Introduction

If your student is diagnosed with a concussion, it is our desire that he/she recover from the concussion as quickly as possible. In the medical profession, there is universal agreement that cognitive and physical rest is critical to healing from a concussion injury. Current statistics show that, with proper rest, 96% of concussed high school students recover in less than five weeks.

Your students may try to “tough it out” by ignoring concussion symptoms, following his/her normal routines at school and home. What students don’t realize is that healing can halt and concussion symptoms even worsen during routine activities, such as working on a computer, driving, watching television, studying for or taking an exam, using a cell phone, reading, playing video games, and text messaging.

In our experience, the worst concussion outcomes occur with students who return too soon to physical activities such as sports or other physically demanding extracurricular activities. With decreased cognitive response times of an incompletely healed concussion, the possibility of students being reinjured (even standing on the sidelines) is greatly increased.

The following GVHS guidelines were designed to promote healing and minimize the likelihood of re-injury at school activities while minimizing the loss of academic learning time.

Section 1 - Guidelines for concussed students

1. The school nurse will strongly encourage parents to delay a concussed student’s return to school until his/her student is symptom-free in normal daily activities for 48 hours. Students have the option to receive a medical pass for missed assignments during their absence (see #5 below).
 - a. Since it is important that concussed students receive proper treatment, teachers who are made aware by students of a possible concussion will immediately inform the school nurse.
2. Once a student has returned to school, it is assumed that, with appropriate medical accommodations, he/she is capable of working in class, completing class assignments, HW and assessments. After returning to school, the student is granted a one-week adjustment period during which they will not be formally assessed. This allows the student to gradually return to an academic routine while symptoms are monitored by the student and their teachers.

- a. No changes or accommodations to a student’s schedule or activities will be made without a medical diagnosis of a concussion.
 - b. On receipt of concussion diagnosis note, the school nurse will provide parents with a GVHS Concussion Form. This form should be completed by a health care provider for all subsequent examinations. School nurse must receive the original physician form (not a photocopy) from parent or a direct FAX from the medical office.
 - c. For academic accommodations to continue, monthly medical updates from a health care provider using the GVHS Concussion Form. See *Section 2 - GVHS Concussion Recovery Timeline* below for more details.
3. As part of the overall concussion treatment timeline (described in a separate document), four weeks after a student returns to school, the school nurse will contact parents to review the student’s progress, adjust accommodations to maximize academic load, and explain the impact of prolonged accommodations on academics including the possibility that a marking period grade will not count towards the course grade.
 4. There is a limit on the number of assignments a student can miss before a course must be repeated. This “60% of” rule, applied to all classes except math (which has an “80% of” rule, is described below in *Section 3 -Concussed Students and Repeating Classes*. At the teacher’s discretion, students may complete some or all of assignments missed during their absence to avoid this consequence.
 5. A student cannot participate in any extracurricular activities* or field trips until a student is cleared by the doctor for full academic participation. Clearance for sports participation requires evidence that a student has a documented plan with individual teachers to complete work not included in their medical pass.
 6. These guidelines will be followed until the student is released to full academic participation or if a 504 has been approved.
 7. Because a concussion is primarily a physical injury, all decisions about concussed students must include input from the school nurse.

* Since field trips are part of the academic coursework, medical clearance may be obtained for individual field trips. The nature of the field trip and possible hazards for the student must be noted.

Section 2 - Concussion Recovery Timeline

Below is a timeline that will be followed with your concussed student until he/she is cleared for full academic participation.

Week 1 – return to school after asymptomatic for 48 hours

- Student/Parent bring doctor note to nurse to start doctor-designated accommodation process.
- Nurse checks with trainer to make sure there is no physical activity.

- Nurse informs teachers, counselors, grade-level administrator, coaches and club advisors of student concussion and accommodations.
 - Grade-level administrator approves accommodations
- Nurse sends letter to parent informing of extracurricular restrictions, academic accommodations, and consequences of prolonged accommodations
- Nurse sends form to parent for doctor to complete in all subsequent medical examinations
 - Form contains checklist with 4 week intervals to see trends in accommodations
- Nurse gets info from parents on student activities in school.
- Student may be pulled from PE class and assigned to study hall/rest in nurse's office

Week 3

- Teacher feedback to nurse and guidance counselor on student level of activity in class

Week 4

- Meeting (or phone call) with nurse and guidance counselor and parent to discuss progress
 - Include short feedback (checklist) from teachers
- Adjust accommodations to maximize academic load
- Explain impact of prolonged accommodations on academics including impact on marking period grade
- Agree on update schedule (once/month) until back to full academic load

Week 8 – if needed

- Update from doctor using school form
- With grade-level administrator approval, adjust accommodations to maximize academic load
- Review impact of prolonged accommodations on academics including impact on marking period grade. Discuss possible need to repeat classes in summer or following year.
- Teacher feedback to nurse on student level of activity in class

Week 12 – if needed

- Update from doctor using school form
- Teacher feedback to nurse on student level of activity in class
- Adjust accommodations to maximize academic load.
- Discuss possible need to repeat classes in summer or following year.
- Discuss possible CARE referral for additional supports

Week 16 – if needed

- Update from doctor using school form
- Teacher feedback to nurse on student level of activity in class
- Adjust accommodations to maximize academic load
- Decide if student will need to repeat classes.

Section 3 – Grading for concussed students

For those students whose recovery is prolonged, it is important for parents to realize the academic consequences of missing too much class time including possibly repeating a course. Most departments at Great Valley High School have adopted a “60% of” rule to determine if it will be necessary for a student to repeat a course.

in a marking period, if a student does not complete 60% of the summative assessments, he/she is assigned a medical pass for that marking period. Individual subject area teachers are responsible for determining the “60% of” rule for their course. Any existing grades in that marking period are recorded as “no count.”

To receive course credit, students must:

- Complete and pass at least 60% of the course summative assessments for the year (or semester for ½ year course).
- Complete and pass any essential course projects such as senior social studies research paper, senior English autobiography, 11th grade comparative literature analysis paper, and 11th grade physics project.
- Receive a passing grade on no less than 60% of the material on both the course midterm and final exams.

This is the minimum completed work required in subject areas other than mathematics. Due to the sequential and cumulative nature of mathematics, the requirements to receive credit for current course and placement in next sequential mathematics course are:

- Freshman, sophomore, and junior students must complete and pass 80% of course summative assessments for the year. A student’s math teacher would be responsible for determining the “80% of” rule for their course.
- Freshman, sophomore, and junior students must complete and pass any essential course projects such as AB and BC Calculus projects.
- Seniors must show mastery by completing one of the following:
 - pass 80% of missed summative assessments (same as underclass students)
 - pass a final assessment
 - complete a department-assigned project.