

# TIPS FOR TEACHERS

## Concussion Symptoms, Possible School Problems & Adjustments/Accommodations

<b>Concussion Symptoms</b>	<b>Implications at school</b>	<b>Potential Adjustments in School Setting</b>
<b>PHYSICAL SYMPTOMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Headache (most common symptom reported in concussions)</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Poor concentration - may vary throughout day;</li> <li>• Can be triggered by fluorescent lighting, loud noises and focusing on tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frequent breaks</li> <li>• Reduce exposure to aggravators, i.e., turn off fluorescent lights</li> <li>• Rest as needed in nurse's office or quiet area</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Dizziness/ Lightheadedness</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Standing quickly or walking in crowded environment may present a challenge</li> <li>• Often provoked by visual stimulus (rapid movements, videos, etc.)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow student to put head down if symptoms worsen</li> <li>• Early dismissal from class and extra time to get from class to class to avoid crowded hallways</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Visual Symptoms</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ <b>Light sensitivity</b></li> <li>○ <b>Double vision</b></li> <li>○ <b>Blurry vision</b></li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trouble seeing slide presentations, movies, smart boards, computers, handheld computers (tablets)</li> <li>• Difficulty reading &amp; copying</li> <li>• Difficulty paying attention to visual tasks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce brightness on the screens</li> <li>• Student may wear hat or sunglasses in school</li> <li>• Audiotapes instead of books</li> <li>• Seat student close to center of classroom activities (preferential seating if blurry vision)</li> <li>• Turn off fluorescent lights</li> <li>• Cover one eye with patch/ tape or one lens if glasses are worn (double vision)</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Noise Sensitivity</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Troubles with various noises in several school settings: Lunchroom, shop classes, music classes (band, choir), physical education classes, hallways</li> <li>• Organized sports practice</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow student to eat lunch in quiet area with classmate</li> <li>• Limit or avoid band, choir or shop classes</li> <li>• Avoid noisy gyms and organized sports practices and games</li> <li>• Consider use of earplugs</li> <li>• Early dismissal from class to avoid crowded, noisy hallways</li> </ul>
<b>THINKING/COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Difficulty concentrating or remembering</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Challenges learning new tasks and comprehending new material (slowed processing speed)</li> <li>• Difficulty recalling and applying previously learned material</li> <li>• Lack of focus in the classroom</li> <li>• Difficulties with test taking, including standardized tests</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid testing or completion of major projects during recovery time when possible</li> <li>• Provide extra time to complete non-standardized tests in a quiet environment</li> <li>• Postpone standardized testing when possible</li> <li>• Consider one test per day during exam periods</li> </ul>

Concussion Symptoms	Implications at school	Potential Adjustments in School Setting
<b>THINKING/COGNITIVE SYMPTOMS (cont'd)</b>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Assess knowledge using multiple-choice instead of open-ended questions</li> <li>• Consider use of preprinted notes, note taker, scribe or reader for oral testing</li> <li>• Consider tape recorder for note taking</li> <li>• Reduce the cognitive load &amp; focus on the most important concepts for student to know – quality vs. quantity</li> <li>• Consider decreasing homework and reducing make-up work</li> <li>• Provide both oral and written instructions; clarify instructions</li> </ul>
<b>SLEEP ISSUES</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Excessive fatigue can hamper memory for new or past learning or ability to attend and focus</li> <li>• Insufficient sleep can lead to tardiness or excessive absences</li> <li>• Difficulty getting to sleep or frequent waking at night may lead to sleeping in class</li> <li>• Excessive napping due to fatigue may lead to further disruptions of the sleep cycle</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Allow for late start or shortened school day to catch up on sleep</li> <li>• Allow rest breaks during day if needed</li> </ul>
<b>EMOTIONAL/MOOD SYMPTOMS</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sadness, Irritability, changes in mood, nervousness, anxiety may affect social relationships with adults and peers</li> <li>• Student may feel scared, angry or depressed as a result of the concussion.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop an emotional support plan for the student. This may include an adult with whom the student can talk if feeling overwhelmed</li> <li>• Mental fatigue may result in emotional meltdowns</li> <li>• Allow “signal” for student to remove himself/herself from classroom to de-escalate</li> <li>• Provide reassurance that what they are feeling is typical in the course of recovery – i.e., concern about getting behind in school work and/or grades</li> <li>• Share difficulties and progress with parents, CMT contact person, medical personnel, athletic coaches/ trainers as appropriate</li> </ul>

Sources: Halstead, M., McAvoy, K., *et al. Returning to Learning Following a Concussion.*

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<http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/early/2013/10/23/peds.2013-2867>

Oregon Concussion Awareness and Management Program (OCAMP)

[http://media.cbirt.org/uploads/files/sports\\_concussion\\_management\\_guide.pdf](http://media.cbirt.org/uploads/files/sports_concussion_management_guide.pdf)