

Graduated School Reentry Plans

A graduated school reentry plan is developed by the school staff, such as the concussed student's teachers, guidance counselor, school nurse, athletic trainer, neuropsychologist (if available), parent(s)/caregivers and medical provider. This plan supports the student's return to academic activities and eases the stress of making up past work while engaged in their present work. The plan must include:

- Step-by-step instructions and details for students, parents and school personnel
- Time frames for physical and cognitive rest within first few days post-injury and throughout the recovery as needed
- Guidance on graduated return to extracurricular activities following the full return to classroom studies, including classroom accommodations or modifications
- Frequency of assessments by the school nurse, school physician, neuropsychologist or athletic trainer until full return to the classroom and extracurricular activities are authorized
- A plan for communication and coordination among school personnel and with the parents/caregivers and the student's medical provider

An individualized, flexible and graduated reentry plan is strongly recommended because symptoms vary from individual to individual and often change in type and severity throughout their recovery.

A concussion can interfere with a student's ability to function in school, particularly during the early recovery phase. It is sometimes referred to as an "invisible injury" as it can be challenging to recognize all the symptoms a student is experiencing. Monitoring a student's physical and academic recovery and providing necessary accommodations can help the student recover more quickly and return to full academic engagement more successfully. Many students will recover from a concussion within the first 10 to 14 days, with the majority recovering fully within 4 weeks following the injury. For most students, only temporary, informal, academic adjustments and symptom-specific supports are needed.

Considerations for a Returning Student

When a student is returning to the classroom after a concussion, keep in mind:

- They may still experience symptoms that make it difficult to fully engage in class the way they did before the injury.
- Concussion symptoms can often change during the first 24-48 hours following the injury.
- As students recover, they will likely require some temporary accommodations and supports.
- School reentry will likely require frequent communication and collaboration among school personnel, the student, their parent(s)/caregivers, and their health care providers regarding the student's functioning, challenges, and needs.
- Each individual student may be affected differently.
- If student experiences symptoms for more than 4 weeks, they may need a comprehensive, multidisciplinary assessment to develop a treatment plan, as well as more formal

accommodations such as Section 504 Accommodations or an individualized education plan.

Key Points About Establishing and Coordinating a Graduated Reentry Plan

- Designate a Point Person to lead the school team and coordinate and facilitate communication among teachers, students, medical providers, guidance counselors, and parents until a student is recovered and able to return fully to their pre-injury academic programming.
- Establish and clearly communicate what temporary accommodations and supports the student will use.
- Gradually increase the amount of time spent in the classroom.
- Allow returning students to complete work in small increments at first until they can work for longer periods of time.
- Establish and clearly communicate a plan for making up missed work to reduce stress and reassure the student.
- Consider only grading students on the work they are able to complete.
- Allow the student access to the school nurse as needed to manage symptoms.