



Head injury, concussion and return to play policy

Ermysted's Grammar School

The Governing Body of Ermysted's Grammar School (the 'School') ratified this policy on **11 June 2026**.

Introduction

Ermysted's Grammar School seeks to provide a safe return to all activities for pupils after injury, particularly concussion. As such, Ermysted's Grammar School has established this policy to outline procedures for staff, parents and pupils to follow in the management of head injuries and suspected concussion.

This policy reflects current UK guidance and good practice for schools, including the principle that any suspected concussion must be taken seriously and managed appropriately.

Definitions

- **Head injury** is a trauma to the head that may or may not include injury to the brain.
- **Concussion** is a brain injury caused by a direct or indirect blow to the head, face, neck or body which results in rapid movement of the brain within the skull. Symptoms may appear immediately or may develop over minutes or hours. Loss of consciousness does not occur in every case.

Please note that there is no such thing as mild concussion.

Recognition of Concussion

Common signs and symptoms of head injury resulting in concussion:

Signs (observed by others)	Symptoms (reported by pupil)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil appears dazed or stunned• Confusion• Unsure about game, score or opponent• Moves clumsily (altered coordination)• Balance problems• Personality or behaviour change• Responds slowly to questions• Forgets events prior to injury• Forgets events after the injury• Loss of consciousness• Appears unsteady on feet	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Headache• Fatigue• Nausea or vomiting• Double vision, blurry vision• Sensitive to light or noise• Feels sluggish• Feels 'foggy'• Problems concentrating• Problems remembering• Dizziness• "Pressure in head"• Feeling generally unwell
<p>If any of the following signs or symptoms are noted, then the injured pupil should seek immediate medical care at an A&E department.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Severe neck pain• Double vision• Weakness or tingling / burning in arms or legs• Severe or increasing headache• Seizure (fit)• Loss of or deteriorating consciousness (increasingly drowsy)• Repeated vomiting	

Management

At the time of the incident/injury the pupil is to be removed from the lesson/activity/game **immediately**. The School Office should be contacted so that an appropriate first aider can attend. If the injury is serious, or if there are any concerns regarding the pupil's condition, an ambulance should be called immediately by the staff member with the pupil. Parents or carers will be contacted by school as soon as possible after the event.

Any pupil with a suspected concussion **must not** return to play, PE, sport or physical activity on the same day.

If there are signs or symptoms of concussion, parents/carers should seek medical advice from an appropriate healthcare professional such as a GP, NHS 111, minor injuries unit or A&E department where necessary.

Initial management should involve a period of relative physical and cognitive rest for the first 24–48 hours, followed by a gradual return to normal daily activities as symptoms allow.

Return to Sport

Ermysted's Grammar School follows current UK guidance regarding the graduated return to sport following concussion. A pupil recovering from concussion should only begin a return to physical activity once they are managing normal learning activities successfully and symptoms are improving or resolved. Each stage should normally take a minimum of 24 hours, and progression should only occur if the pupil remains symptom free.

- **Stage 1** – Relative rest and daily activities
Normal daily activities and short walks as tolerated.
- **Stage 2** – Light aerobic exercise
Walking, light jogging or stationary cycling.
No resistance training or contact activity.

Medical Assessment for clearance to return to training (circa day 14)

- **Stage 3** – Sport-specific exercise
Individual running drills or sport-specific practice without contact.
- **Stage 4** – Non-contact training drills
More complex training activities and increased exercise intensity.
- **Stage 5** – Full training
Return to normal training activities following successful completion of earlier stages.

Medical Assessment for clearance to return to competition

- **Stage 6** – Return to competition
Full return to match play and competitive sport.

If symptoms return at any stage, the pupil should stop the activity, rest, and return to the previous symptom-free stage once symptoms have settled. For contact and collision sports, the school may require written medical clearance before a pupil returns to full participation. Return to activity should be communicated to the school by parents/carers.

Returning to learning

The school may make temporary adjustments to support recovery, including:

- Reduced timetable
- Rest breaks during the school day
- Reduced screen time
- Reduced homework load
- Delayed assessments where appropriate
- Temporary withdrawal from PE and sporting activities

Symptoms usually improve within a few days or weeks, although recovery times vary between individuals. Some pupils may require a longer recovery period and additional medical support.

Bibliography

- NHS > Concussion.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/concussion/>
- NHS > Minor head injury and concussion.
<https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/minor-head-injury/>
- UK Concussion Guidelines for Non-Elite (Grassroots) Sport.
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/concussion-guidelines-for-grassroots-sport>
- RFU > Headcase Concussion Guidance.
<https://www.englandrugby.com/participation/playing/headcase>
- Return2play – Concussion protocols
[Concussion - Return2Play](#)