

CCSD#180 Concussion Handbook 2025-2026

Burr Ridge Community Consolidated
School District #180

www.ccsd180.org

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Return to Learn/Play Protocol

CCSD180

Purpose

Concussions are often referred to as an “invisible injury” because symptoms are not outwardly visible. The effects of a concussion on a student’s cognitive ability may require educators to provide classroom and school accommodations for a student until he/she is fully recovered. The Return to Learn (RTL) Protocol is for all students who may require academic accommodations while recovering from a concussion.

What is a concussion?

A concussion is a type of brain injury resulting from a bump, blow, or jolt to the head that causes the head and brain to move rapidly back and forth. This type of injury causes the brain to stroke the inside of the skull. A direct hit to the head is not required for a concussion to occur. A concussion can also occur from a hit to the body that transmits force to the head. This unexpected, vigorous movement can cause the brain to jounce around or twist in the skull. Students suffering from concussions may experience symptoms for a few days, weeks, or in severe cases even months.

Concussion Symptoms

A concussion can affect a student in a variety of different ways: cognitively, physically, emotionally, and their sleeping patterns. Each student’s symptoms are different in both occurrence and severity. Symptoms for a student should be compared to how he/she felt, acted, slept, and performed prior to the concussion. One student’s symptoms and recovery should never be compared to another student’s.

Physical	Cognitive	Emotional	Sleep
Headache Dizziness Balance difficulties Nausea/vomiting Fatigue Sensitivity to light Sensitivity to sound Change in vision Feeling sluggish Speech problems	Slow processing Mental fog Trouble focusing Memory Problems Concentration problems Feeling confused Shortened attention span Difficulty planning Slower reading Easily distracted	Irritability Sadness Nervousness Embarrassment Anger More or less emotional than normal Anxiety Paranoia	Trouble falling asleep Trouble waking Sleeping more than usual Sleeping less than usual Drowsy Altered sleep schedule

Who can diagnose a concussion?

Only a licensed health care professional who has experience managing concussions, including Certified Athletic Trainers, can officially diagnose a student with a concussion.

How can a concussion affect school performance?

A student's best opportunity for a full recovery from a concussion depends on immediate implementation of cognitive and physical rest and then a gradual return of cognitive exertion. Because of the cognitive symptoms identified above, students may experience difficulty in the classroom and with physical activities. In addition to the symptoms listed above a student might.

- Get tired easily in class and over the course of the day
- Be bothered by bright lights or loud noises in the classroom, hall, or cafeteria.
- Have trouble multitasking, such as listening to the teacher while attempting to take notes.
- Lose track of time.
- Take longer to complete assignments.
- Have coordination problems.
- Get lost or have trouble finding their way around a previously familiar area.
- Feel unmotivated.
- Feel withdrawn and want to avoid social situations.

Concussion Management Team (CMT)

A team approach to support a concussed student is necessary in providing information, monitoring, and making adjustments. Members of the team should include, but not be limited to

- Athletic Director, CMT leader
- Health Services Director, CMT co-leader
- Building Principal
- Student
- Parent/family
- Teachers
- School Social Worker
- Student's Health Care Team

Return to School vs Return to Learn/Play

It is recommended that a student be on complete physical and cognitive rest for 24-48 hours after a diagnosed concussion, this means **not** attending school. But as soon as a student feels well enough to attend, he/she should return to school with accommodations and a gradual increase in workload/physical activity as symptoms will allow. The immersion into a normal routine with social interaction will help the student not feel isolated and aid in recovery. It is important to ease a student back to a full academic workload while the brain is still healing. Return to learning does not happen immediately and is not considered accomplished until a student has returned to a full academic and physical load without any accommodations (that were not needed prior to the concussion).

Guiding principles in the Return to Learn Protocol include the student attending school, working below symptom threshold, gradually increasing workload, and making adjustments at home as well as at school. The most important part of Return to Learn is that it is individualized, as each student will recover differently.

Gradual Return to Learn Protocol (RTL)

To initiate the RTL Protocol the student must provide written documentation of the diagnosed concussion from a Health Care Professional to the school. Each student's journey through the RTL protocol is individualized. Each student's symptoms should only be compared to his/her own prior to the concussion and not to other students. Not all diagnosed concussions require academic accommodations. The RTL Protocol is an option for those students who need the gradual return to a full academic load.

Accommodation examples

Not all students experience the same symptoms, so not all students require the same accommodations. This is a list of some that are commonly used:

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Wearing sunglasses 2. Wearing hats/visors 3. Passing between classes alone 4. Quiet room provided to do work in 5. Audio or video record classes 6. Break assignments into smaller chunks 7. Audiobooks or someone to read to student 8. Detailed step-by-step instructions and directions 9. Allow frequent breaks 10. Remove students from the building prior to a fire alarm drill 11. Allow usage of headphones for soft music 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 12. Shorter assignments and assessments 13. Extended time 14. Excused from making up all assignments 15. Notes, PowerPoints, presentations provided 16. Alternate location for lunch 17. Limit or eliminate screen time 18. Alternate methods of assessments 19. Eliminate multiple assessments in the same day
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Return to Play and Return to Learn

No student should return to full contact play before returning to a full academic load. Students may be at various stages of the two protocols simultaneously. In return to play students may be increasing activity as they progress through the protocol. Once the return to play protocol is complete, students return to full play without modifications. Likewise, in return to learn, students should be in their classrooms gradually increasing their workload. Full Return to Learn is not reached until the student is back to a full academic load without modifications.

Additional Documents to go along with the Return to Learn Protocol

Return to learn Better or Worse Form: Teacher

Return to learn Better or Worse Form: CMT Leader and Co-Leader

Return to learn chart

Concussion Awareness for Parents, Students, and School Staff

Return to Learn/Play Protocol Guide

1. Written documentation from a Health Care Professional indicating a diagnosed concussion is provided to the school nurse. If the documentation is provided to someone else in the building (teacher, admin, counselor, coach, etc), he/she should notify the school nurse immediately.
2. The School Nurse, as the CMT co-leader, will notify the rest of the team, including student and parents, that the student is entering the RTL Protocol and when the student is expected to return to class. A copy of the RTL Protocol will be sent home to parents.
3. Every day while the student is in the RTL protocol:
 - The School Nurse or CMT leader will notify teachers and other members of the CMT, including the student and parents, each morning of the student's current stage.
 - All teachers will complete the Better or Worse Checklist and return to the school nurse.
 - The CMT leader will also complete the Better or Worse Checklist and return to the school nurse (if other than school nurse).
 - The student will check in with the school nurse at the end of the school day and a symptom checklist will be completed.
4. School Nurse, or co-CMT leader, will gather evidence and make determination on next steps for the student.
5. Parents will communicate with the school nurse as needed on their observations of their child at home and out of school.
6. Once the student has progressed through the protocol and returned to a full academic load, the school nurse will communicate this information to all team members.

Protocol revised: June 2025

Committee Members: David Kasper, Stephanie Lambert, Victor Hernandez

Date: **CCSD#180 Post Concussion Consent Form**

Date:

Student Name:

Grade:

By signing below, I acknowledge the following:

I understand the rules about my child returning to sports and school after a concussion, as required by Illinois State law. I know there are risks, and I agree to follow all return-to-play and return-to-learn steps.

I also agree that the school can share the doctor's or athletic trainer's written plan for my child's return to play or learn with the appropriate people, following privacy laws.

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian's Name: _____

Parent/Guardian's Signature: _____

For School Use Only

_____ Written statement is included with this consent from a treating physician or athletic trainer working under the supervision of a physician that indicates, in the individual's professional judgment, it is safe for the student to return to play and return to learn.

Cleared for Return to Learn: _____ Date _____

2025-2026 CONCUSSION HANDBOOK

I have received/reviewed the Burr Ridge District #180 Concussion Handbook and have reviewed the information it contains. I understand that I am fully responsible for the information, rules, and guidelines contained in the handbook.

_____ Student Name Date

Parents, please sign to acknowledge that your child has shared the handbook information with you. Students are expected to return a signed sheet.

_____ Parent/Guardian Signature Date

Thank you for taking the time to be a partner in your child's education.

Not signing the yearly Student Concussion Handbook doesn't excuse a student or parent from knowing and following the rules in the Student Behavior Policy and Conduct Code.

BURR RIDGE SCHOOL DISTRICT #180

ANNE M JEANS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

BURR RIDGE MIDDLE SCHOOL