

Return-to-Learn After Concussion Policy

Purpose and Background

Riverside Leadership Academy (RLA) recognizes that concussions are a form of mild traumatic brain injury (mTBI) that can significantly affect a scholar's learning, behavior, and overall well-being. This policy establishes guidelines for recognizing, reporting, and supporting scholars who sustain concussions, and outlines safe procedures for their return to academic and physical activity in accordance with state and federal guidelines.

Scope

This policy applies to all RLA scholars in grades K-12 who sustain a concussion, regardless of whether the injury occurred during school-sponsored activities, athletics, or outside events.

Guidelines

A. Removal from Physical and Mental Activity

Any RLA employee, including teachers, coaches, administrators, counselors, nurses, or other staff, who suspects and/or has knowledge that a scholar has sustained a concussion or head injury shall:

1. Immediately remove the scholar from all physical activity, including recess, PE or sports.
2. Limit cognitive activity (e.g., reading, screen use, testing) if symptoms indicate cognitive distress.
3. Contact emergency medical services if the scholar is unconscious, disoriented, vomiting, or exhibits worsening symptoms.
4. Notify the school nurse, Executive Director, or administrative designee to initiate the concussion notification protocol.
5. Prevent same-day return to activity unless the scholar is evaluated and cleared by a licensed healthcare provider trained in concussion management.

B. Notification Procedure

Upon removal or diagnosis:

1. The designated school personnel ("Concussion Contact") must be notified immediately.
2. The Concussion Contact shall:
 - a. Notify the scholar's parent or guardian of the suspected concussion and provide educational materials on next steps.
 - b. Notify the scholar's teachers, executive director, school counselor, and coaches of necessary restrictions and supports.
 - c. Record all communication and any medical documentation received from a healthcare provider regarding the scholar's concussion in the scholar's file.
3. The notification shall include:
 - a. Date and circumstances of the injury.
 - b. Symptoms observed.

- c. Medical provider documentation (if applicable).
- d. Recommended academic and activity restrictions.
- 4. The concussion contact may be appointed to coordinate ongoing communication and monitor recovery.

C. Annual Medical Information and Care Plans

- 1. Annual Health Update
 - a. Each year, parents/guardians shall complete a Scholar Health History and Emergency Medical Information Form that includes the question:
 - i. “Has your scholar experienced a head injury or concussion in the past year?”Information provided will be used to support the scholar’s health and safety.
- 2. Return-to-Learn and Care Plans
 - a. If a concussion is diagnosed:
 - i. The school shall convene a Return-to-Learn Team to create a Medical Care Plan (informed by a nurse or healthcare professional) and an Educational Care Plan (led by the counselor or case manager).
 - ii. Plans shall include specific accommodations such as reduced workload, rest breaks, modified screen use, and testing flexibility.
 - iii. Both plans shall be reviewed weekly (or as needed) and adjusted as the scholar recovers.

D. Requirements for Safe Return-to-Learn and Return-to-Play

A scholar may not return to full academic or athletic participation until:

- 1. A licensed healthcare provider provides written clearance confirming the scholar is
 - A. symptom-free; and
 - B. if applicable, is able to participate in physical activities.
- 2. The Return-to-Learn Team reviews progress and approves return based on observed recovery; and
- 3. The scholar has demonstrated the ability to complete a full school day symptom-free prior to return to physical activity.

Recovery Progression

- **Step 1:** Initial cognitive and physical rest (24-48 hours).
- **Step 2:** Gradual reintroduction of cognitive tasks with accommodations.
- **Step 3:** Incremental removal of accommodations as tolerated.
- **Step 4:** Full academic participation symptom-free for two weeks.
- **Step 5:** Gradual return to physical activity per medical guidance.

If symptoms persist or worsen, the scholar will be referred back the the Return-to-Learn Team for further intervention and possible 504 or IEP consideration.

E. Return-to-Learn Team

RLA shall appoint a Return-to-Learn Team responsible for identifying and addressing return-to-learn or play needs:

1. Team members may include:
 - a. Scholar and parent/guardian
 - b. Executive Director or designee
 - c. School nurse or support staff
 - d. School counselor
 - e. Classroom teachers
 - f. Athletic director or coach (if applicable)
2. The team shall:
 - a. Review all concussion-related documentation.
 - b. Develop and monitor care plans.
 - c. Communicate regularly with parents and staff until the scholar is fully recovered.

F. Annual Staff Training

RLA shall provide annual training for all faculty and staff on:

1. Recognizing the signs and symptoms of concussion.
2. Procedures for removal, referral, and notification.
3. Academic and behavioral supports for recovering scholars.
4. School-specific implementation procedures.

Training may occur during professional development session or through approved online modules.

G. Recordkeeping and Confidentiality

All concussion-related documentation, including injury reports, parental notifications, physician notes, and care plans, shall be maintained in a scholar's cumulative health record.

Access is limited to school officials with a legitimate educational interest, consistent with FERPA and HIPAA regulations.