



# SHORE

## Concussion Policy

### Introduction

At Shore, the health, safety, and well-being of all students is a priority. Shore has in place a series of policies which detail the School's approach to these matters and this policy is focused on Concussion.

### Policy Scope

Within a school environment, concussion can be the result of many potential incidents including, but not limited to, an accident, injury during a physical education lesson, sports training sessions or during a match fixture in an inter-school sports competition or competing with representative level organisations. Concussion is more readily sustained during contact sports such as Rugby Union and AFL, but it is not exclusive to these sports. Shore has introduced this policy to allow the school to better manage the recovery of students who sustain this injury while in the school environment.

It is important to note that when a student is seriously injured, all appropriate first aid measures are always administered, and emergency services called to formally manage and transport students to hospital for care. After a serious injury requiring hospitalization or time away from

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School, Shore is guided by the medical plan for this student from their specialists and doctors. This policy applies where diagnosis and level of concussion still allow the student to attend and participate in School life.

## Definitions

Concussion is a traumatic injury to the head, which occurs through a collision with another person or object, resulting in transient brain-neurological dysfunction, including headache, memory loss, balance disturbance, difficulty walking, change of level of consciousness, vomiting, behaviour change. Concussion can occur with minor 'knocks,' and symptoms can evolve over hours or days. Concussion can present in the following forms -

Simple concussion is a temporary abnormality of the functions referred to in the definition of Concussion above.

Complex concussion is a prolonged abnormality of the functions referred to in the definition of Concussion above, a deteriorating level of brain function, prolonged unconsciousness, a second or further concussion episode within 12 months or concussion particularly with decreasing traumatic force.

Concussion Watch is the term Shore uses for the assessment and recovery program within the school during their 21-day program. This watch period can last longer if there are issues which delay their progress through the program.

## Prevention of Concussion

Shore provides a physical environment in which students are free from obvious risks which may cause injury or accident. Within PDHPE classes, sports training sessions and match fixtures, students are coached and conditioned in the safest ways to participate in each sport. Shore also follows each sports code safety recommendations and mandated standards for protective equipment, training protocols and safety in

competition. Risk management and prevention is at the forefront of our actions and management of these activities.

## **Management of Concussion**

Prevention is not always possible and therefore Shore has measures in place to manage concussion and the ongoing recovery of these students as they return to academic and sporting life.

As covered by our definition, concussion can be simple or complex in nature and present through varied symptoms. Concussion can be the result of accident, but a majority of cases at Shore is via contact sport.

Upon sustaining a head knock, Shore action the following –

- for sport, after initial first aid assessment, students will be removed from the remainder of the activity. It is communicated to families or boarding staff this student needs to be seen by an external medical doctor or hospital to be formally assessed and diagnosed with for concussion.
- for accidental injury, a first aid assessment is conducted, and the student is transferred to either a hospital or the medical centre for collection by parents or carers and again, are required to see an external medical professional or hospital for assessment and diagnosis.

All student incidents are recorded in the school's incident reporting system, and they are added to the Concussion Clinic register.

Confirmation of suspected concussion means these students are put on concussion watch for their time at School. It is a requirement that written confirmation is provided to the school by a medical professional with a conformation of concussion in order to access Shore's concussion clinic.

Shore provides a Concussion Clinic in the school for the management of our concussion program. This clinic is co-ordinated by Shore's Concussion Officer. The assessment and rehabilitation program is provided by external medical professionals engaged by the school to provide this service during the concussion clinic operating times. This clinic currently runs during the Winter sport calendar.

The information disclosed by from Shore's medical clinic, Concussion Officer and from the Concussion Clinic falls within the parameters of our Privacy policy and with the knowledge and consent of student families. Only appropriate staff are informed, confidentially of the relevant medical information so to appropriately manage the student through this period.

Concussion watch is essential for staff to monitor the progress and wellbeing of students during their time in recovery. Shore has made the decision to apply Rugby Australia's 21-day watch period for concussion as a standard across all students regardless of the sport or circumstance they received their injury. We have chosen this timeline as it provides the longest recovery time. There will be no variations or exceptions offered around this timeframe.

During concussion exclusion three levels of progress are applied, through which students must pass to resume full Shore activities –

- a) Stage 1 - **Return to Learn** – For the first 7 days after a student return to School with externally medically confirmed concussion with certification, they are removed from major assessment and academic pursuits. This medical notification can be used to cover a misadventure application during this time.
- b) Stage 2 - **Return to Train** – Passing this assessment level means students may return to 'no contact' physical activities in PDHPE classes and sports training sessions. It is in this stage the Shore Concussion Officer will co-ordinate families gaining another external medical sign off on the recovery of students to pass into

Stage 3. Without this external assessment, stage 3 will not be progressed.

- c) Stage 3- **Return to Play** – This means the student has passed all medical assessment and is cleared to resume all aspects of their academic and sporting life at Shore.

A more comprehensive outline of these protocols and the assessment process are outlined in our Concussion procedures are available from the school upon request.

## Extended Concussion Exclusion

When a student sustains **three** concussions in a 12-month period they will be automatically excluded from School organised contact sport, contact training and activities in PDHPE for the remainder of the school year. These are concussions that are sustained either within School-based activities, community sport or personal activities. We do rely on families to disclose external concussion incidents. Students will not be able to resume contact activities without a written report from a doctor at the end of the exclusion period. The Shore Concussion officer will liaise with each family at the commencement of a new academic year to revisit recovery and ensure we are fielding students who have recovered from fully injury.

## Concussion Management and Boarders

While students are boarding at Shore, the School accepts carer responsibility as guardians. If any Boarder sustains a suspected concussion Shore will ensure that student sees a medical professional or is taken to hospital for assessment on the day of injury and follow recommended action. These actions will always be in co-ordination and communication with families. These students will then be placed on

concussion watch and monitored through the weekly concussion clinic. As an extension and precaution for boarders, we also have them reviewed daily by the school nurse at Shore's medical centre to ensure there are no changes to their condition. The boarding staff also monitor the boys as they are notified of concussion cases. Shore's Concussion Officer will provide updates to families as the boys recover.

## **Concussion Management during Summer Sports season**

Presently Shore only runs the Concussion clinic during Terms 2 and 3 where we see the highest occurrence of the injury. During Terms 1 and 4 we do still engage the Concussion Officer role. During this period Shore will follow our notifications processes to families and request external diagnosis and treatment. We still instigate a 21-day physical activity exclusion for concussed students with the Concussion Officer checking in on the student's recovery. We request families to have the students assessed again by their doctor towards the end of this period to ensure they are fit and well to resume sport at PDHPE at the conclusion of the 21 days. The Shore Sporting Leadership along with Risk and Compliance review the concussion program and requirements annually to assess suitability and need.

## **Working with Families and Community Sport**

Shore has put in place many measures to manage concussion safely and where possible, to prevent it. However, to help the school effectively manage injuries and enable recovery we rely on families to support and assist in the process. Shore understands students will participate in outside activities such as club-based sport. The school has an expectation that if a student receives a concussion in a club sport activity or during an incident, this will be disclosed to the school. We encourage families to use our concussion program and clinic as part of the recovery process under these circumstances also. Students in these circumstances will be required to have a formal medical assessment and diagnosis of concussion

presented to the school via their Housemaster or Sargent Major. This will be given to the Concussion Officer who will liaise with families and students.

It must be remembered that if a student receives an injury in club sporting fixtures, the student is also excluded from School sport. Recovery is paramount. Shore will still apply a 21-day exclusion regardless of the sports code mandate for the injury involved.

Shore is also aware boarders play in club sports over the weekend. Again, there is an expectation of transparency when injuries are sustained during these events. As the guardians of these students and as part of our duty of care, Shore will ensure the appropriate medical attention is given, and they are treated appropriately and put into the Concussion program.

If any student suffers a serious concussion and is under the care of an external medical practitioner or specialist, Shore will follow the medical plan provided and will exclude them Sport and PDHPE activities until such times as clearances are provided. Special academic consideration may be discussed with the Office of the Deputy Head Academic for these circumstances. Stage 3 clearances to resume sport and PDHPE will only be granted in these cases in consultation with families and clearance by the responsible medical professional.

If a family chooses not to use the concussion clinic in the follow up of a head knock report from the school, Shore will review the families choice and send a notification via email which will be stored in the students file, acknowledging the choice and reiterating Shore's protocols. Please note, in consideration to our student duty of care and future health, Shore will still exclude these students from sporting participation of any kind for 21 days. This is not negotiable under any circumstances.

Concussions, and its immediate and long-term effects on our students, are a serious consideration for Shore in its management of events and sport. Shore prioritises working on a program of prevention, where possible, and professional care whilst students recover. Any queries around our

Concussion policy should be addressed to the Risk and Compliance Manager on 02 9923 2277.

DOCUMENT CONTROL REGISTER	
Author	Sarah Deacon – Risk and Compliance Manager
Compliance	
Legislation	Child Guardian Act 2019 (NSW)
	NSW Education Act 1990 (NSW)
	Privacy Act 1990 (Cth) and 13 Australian Privacy Principles (APPs)
	NSW Education Act 1990 (NSW)
	Health Records and Information Privacy Act 2002 (NSW)
Reference Materials	Rugby Australia Concussion Procedure Cricket Australia Concussion Procedure AFL Concussion Standards
	<a href="https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1090680/concussion-and-brain-health-position-statement-2023.pdf">https://www.concussioninsport.gov.au/__data/assets/pdf_file/0006/1090680/concussion-and-brain-health-position-statement-2023.pdf</a>
	<a href="https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Headtraumainsport/Submissions">https://www.aph.gov.au/Parliamentary_Business/Committees/Senate/Community_Affairs/Headtraumainsport/Submissions</a>
Other Related Regulation	NESA - Registration and Accreditation Individual Non Govt Schools NSW Manual 3.6.2
Related Shore's Policy	Privacy Policy Child Safeguarding Policy Suite