Return to Academics Protocol After Concussion/mild TBI

When a Concussion / TBI occurs, the effects may not be obvious, and educators might be unaware of a student's cognitive difficulties during recovery. Rest is essential for the brain to recover from a concussion. Taxing the brain with academic activity can impede or prolong recovery. Most students will recover fully in days or weeks, but some will take longer to heal. Each child and each brain injury is different. If full recovery is not evident in three months, an IEP may be helpful to meet the specific learning challenges.

Not all students will need academic accommodations following concussion; consult with each student's healthcare provider. All steps in this academic protocol must be completed before a student-athlete is ready to proceed to a return-to-play protocol.

Step in Protocol	Action of Step
Step 1. **Total rest.**	• No mental exertion (computer, texting, video games, or homework), stay at home, no driving.
Step 2. **Light mental activity.**	• Up to 30 minutes of mental exertion, but no prolonged concentration, stay at home, no driving. • Progress to next level when able to handle up to 30 minutes of mental exertion without worsening of symptoms
Step 3. **Part-time School.**	• Maximum accommodations (shortened day/schedule, built-in breaks, provide quiet place for mental rest, no significant classroom or standardized testing, modify rather than postpone academics, provide extra time, extra help, and modified assignments). • Progress to next level when able to handle 30–40 minutes of mental exertion without worsening of symptoms.
Step 4. **Part-time School.**	• Moderate accommodations (no standardized testing, modified classroom testing, moderate decrease of extra time, help, and modification of assignments). • Progress to next level when able to handle 60 minutes of mental exertion without worsening of symptoms.

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Step in Protocol	Action of Step
Step 5. **Full-time School.**	• Minimal accommodations (no standardized testing, but routine testing ok; continued decrease of extra time, help, and modification of assignments; may require more supports in academically challenging subjects). • Progress to next level when able to handle all class periods in succession without worsening of symptoms AND medical clearance for full return to academics.
Step 6. **Full-time School.**	• Full academics with no accommodations (attends all classes, full homework).

Should symptoms continue beyond 3–4 weeks, prolonged in-school support is required. Request a 504 Plan meeting to plan and coordinate.

REMEMBER

Progression is individual. Every concussion is different. Student may start at any step as symptoms dictate and remain at each step as long as needed. Return to previous step if symptoms worsen. No return-to-play protocol should be implemented until after the student has returned to full academics.

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