

Subject:

**CONCUSSION – INFORMING THE SCHOOL
ADVICE FOR PARENTS**

Circular Number:
2015/07

Date of Issue:
3 March 2015

Target Audience:

- Principals and Boards of Governors of all grant-aided schools;
- Education and Library Boards; and
- Council for Catholic Maintained Schools.

Summary of Contents:

This Circular provides advice for school authorities to issue to parents about the importance of informing schools and other organisations about any concussion related injury sustained by a child.

Enquiries:

Any enquiries about the contents of this Circular should be addressed to:

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Governor Awareness:
Essential

Status of Contents:
Advice

Related Documents:
DE Circular 2014/12

Superseded Documents:
None

Expiry Date:
Not applicable

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Introduction

1. The Education Minister is committed to improving awareness about concussion and the fact that it can be fatal. As a result, the Department of Education, along with colleagues in the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure launched the '**Recognise and Remove**' concussion awareness campaign in April 2014.
2. As part of the campaign, leaflets and posters raising awareness of the dangers of concussion were issued to all schools. All teachers in primary and post-primary schools also received laminated copies of the Pocket Concussion Recognition Tool™ which provides a brief checklist to help identify concussion.
3. Advice to schools on dealing with cases of suspected concussion was also issued via DE Circular 2014/12. Teachers have been encouraged to discuss the concussion advice leaflet in their classroom to ensure that all our young people are educated about the dangers of concussion and the signs they should look out for if they or a friend has received a hit on the head.
4. The Minister has recently been contacted by some school principals about how vital it is that organisations such as schools, sports clubs and youth organisations are made fully aware when a child has concussion.
5. For this reason, the Department of Education would ask schools to highlight to parents the need to keep schools and other relevant organisations informed about any injury involving concussion and any restrictions placed on their child's activities as a result of advice from a medical practitioner.
6. The Department has produced the attached letter for parents and would appreciate it if Principals would arrange to issue this. It would be a matter for school authorities to consider the timing and most effective way of relaying this message to parents/guardians.
7. This is an important issue and the Department appreciates all the steps that school authorities are taking to raise awareness of the potential dangers of concussion amongst pupils, school staff and parents.

SHARON LAWLOR
Head of Curriculum Support Team

Dear parent/guardian

CONCUSSION AWARENESS – WHO NEEDS TO KNOW?

The Department of Education has requested that all schools should write to parents/guardians to highlight the need for you to keep all organisations informed if your child receives a concussion injury.

Concussion is a brain injury which is usually caused by hitting the head or a fall. It can happen at any time, anywhere: for example during sports, in the school playground, or at home.

Concussion must always be taken seriously and it is vitally important that any child/young person suspected of having concussion should **immediately** be stopped from continuing whatever activity they are doing and be assessed by a medical professional for diagnosis and guidance.

A second injury when a child has concussion can be extremely serious and may even be fatal. It is vitally important therefore that medical clearance is sought before your child returns to school/play. Children should not resume physical activities such as Physical Education (PE), sports or games until permitted to do so by a medical professional.

Concussion may also affect your child's ability to learn at school. This must be considered and medical clearance should be sought before the child returns to school. As symptoms vary from child to child, a graduated return to school programme may be needed.

If your child suffers a concussion in school or outside school, it is vitally important that you keep all people/organisations with responsibility for caring for your child informed so that they are aware of the potential dangers and any restrictions that may apply to the activities your child is permitted to do.

The '**Recognise and Remove**' leaflet produced by the Department of Education and the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure is available on the Department of Education's website <http://www.education-ni.gov.uk> and provides guidance on the signs to look out for.

Keeping everyone informed about concussion is in your child's best interests and parents/guardians have a key role in making sure that information is passed on to their child's teacher, sports coach, youth leader or other care provider.

Yours sincerely

SCHOOL PRINCIPAL