

COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE
Report 20-006

21 JANUARY 2020

UPDATES TO POLICY P.137.SCO CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT

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PURPOSE:

1. To seek approval of the proposed revisions to Policy P.137.SCO Concussion Management in alignment with the updated requirements of the Ministry of Education updated PPM 158 School Board Policies on Concussion (Appendix A).

CONTEXT:

2. On March 7, 2018, Ontario enacted *Rowan's Law*, 2018 and amended the *Education Act*, to protect amateur athletes, including students, by improving concussion safety on the field and at school.

The amendments to the *Education Act*, which came into force on July 1, 2019, provide the Minister of Education with the authority to establish and require school boards to comply with concussion policies that are consistent with *Rowan's Law*. As a result, PPM 158 has been updated with new mandatory requirements for school boards that are consistent with *Rowan's Law*. Requirements for concussion safety will now be consistent for the education and sport sectors in Ontario.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS:

3. New Requirements
The updated PPM 158 will be a mandatory policy for school boards when it becomes effective on 31 January 2020. To strengthen concussion safety, the following are the new requirements of the PPM:
 - a. The confirmation of annual review of approved concussion awareness resources by individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - b. The establishment and confirmation of annual review of concussion code of conduct for individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports;
 - c. Annual concussion training for relevant school staff;
 - d. The establishment of an updated process for the removal of students with a suspected concussion from physical activity and, for those diagnosed with a concussion, a Return to School Plan, which includes their return to learning and return to physical activity; and

- e. The establishment of a process to document and track a student's progress from the removal from an activity due to a suspected concussion, to the return, through graduated steps, to learning and to physical activity.

4. Gap Analysis

Of the above mentioned new requirements as per the updated PPM 158, the confirmation of the annual review of the concussion resources and code of conduct are the gaps in the current policy. There will be some revisions to the procedure.

Samples of concussion codes of conduct from Ontario Physical Activity Safety Standards in Education (OPHEA) focus on the roles and responsibilities of students, parents/guardians and coaches and team trainers in preventing and managing concussions. Such roles and responsibilities are covered by the OCDSB concussion management policy and procedure and therefore together they constitute the OCDSB's concussion code of conduct.

The District will ensure mechanisms are in place to receive the confirmation of the revision of the policy, procedure and the concussion awareness resources from participants in inter-school Board sponsored activities. OPHEA defines inter-school activities as "school-sponsored, competitive programs which involve competitions against outside teams." Though not specifically required by the PPM, the District may wish to expand this definition and the revision requirements to include tryouts and practices associated with inter-school sports.

OPHEA has forms for identifying and managing concussions as well as sample Concussion Codes of Conduct that can be accessed as templates for District forms. The use of the OPHEA templates would ensure that the resources are continuously up to date. If the decision of the District is to use the OPHEA forms, then it would be important that the language of the policy and procedure be aligned with OPHEA language.

RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 5. PPM 158 requires that the District identify strategies for providing annual training for relevant school staff about both the policy and the content of the approved Concussion Awareness Resources. OPHEA offers e-learning modules on concussion identification, management and prevention that can be accessed on their website and take approximately 90 minutes to complete. If completed on the OPHEA website, a certificate of completion can be generated. Alternatively, the e-learning modules could be transferred to a platform that would allow the District to electronically monitor completion. Suggested relevant staff could include coaches and trainers of interschool sports, physical education and outdoor education teachers, first aid attendants, administrators, office administrators and conveners.

COMMUNICATION/CONSULTATION ISSUES:

6. Changes to the policy are proposed in order to meet the minimum requirements of the updated PPM 158; there is insufficient latitude for discretion to undertake a consultation on options.

A cross-departmental team has been working on an updated version of the procedure. Once the policy is approved, it, along with the procedure, will be communicated with staff with ongoing implementation support from the physical literacy instructional coach of the District.

A memo would be prepared annually in early September to recognize Rowan's Law Day and ensure that annual concussions awareness events for students and parents are held on or around Rowan's Law Day, which occurs on the last Wednesday in September.

STRATEGIC LINKS:

7. The proposed policy revisions align with our Strategic Plan, including connections to championing and nurturing a safe, caring and respectful environment as reflected in our Culture of Caring.

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the proposed revisions to P.137.SCO Concussion Management, attached as Appendix B to Report 20-006, be approved.

Nadia Towaij
Superintendent of Instruction

Camille Williams-Taylor
Director of Education

APPENDICES

Appendix A - PPM 158 School Board Policies on Concussion
Appendix B - Updated Policy P.137.SCO Concussion Management