

Concussion Policies and Procedures

Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2018

On March 7, 2018, the Ontario government enacted [Rowan's Law](#) 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 came into effect on July 1, 2019, and give the Minister of Education the authority to require school boards to comply with policy and guidelines on concussions consistent with Rowan's Law.

As part of Rowan's Law, the government also established the last Wednesday in September of each year as Rowan's Law Day. Schools are encouraged to support student-led activities to recognize Rowan's Law Day and to bring increased awareness and education about concussion safety to their community.

School Board Policies on Concussion

The [Policy/Program Memorandum 158](#) (PPM158) addresses concussion safety across all school and school board activities and applies to all publicly funded elementary and secondary schools. It requires all school boards in Ontario to have a policy on concussion safety for students and outlines the minimum requirements for these policies.

This policy was originally released in 2014 and required school boards to have a policy on concussion that includes, at minimum:

- concussion awareness strategies,
- concussion awareness training,
- concussion prevention strategies,
- a process for the identification of a suspected concussion,
- a Return to School plan (including both Return to Learn and Return to Physical Activity), and

- a tracking system.

In 2020, the PPM was updated to reflect legislative and policy changes that occurred as part of Rowan's Law. These changes required school boards to provide additional policy direction on:

- Concussion Awareness Resources: including the receipt of confirmation of annual review prior to participating in board-sponsored interschool sports. (Refer to section on [Concussion Awareness Resources](#).)
- Concussion Codes of Conduct: including the establishment of Codes of Conduct and the receipt of confirmation of annual review of the relevant Code of Conduct by those individuals participating in board-sponsored interschool sports (i.e., students, parents/guardians, coaches, trainers). (Refer to section on [Concussion Codes of Conduct](#).)

Concussion Protocol

Concussion safety information has been included in the OPASSE since 2008. In 2014, this information was updated to align with current research and expert advice and renamed the Concussion Protocol. Since 2014, The Concussion Protocol has been identified by the Ministry of Education through PPM158 as the minimum standards for risk management practices related to concussion for school boards.

School boards may customize the components of the Concussion Protocol to meet their specific needs, keeping in mind that they can raise the minimum standards but cannot lower them. Although it is important to be familiar with the Concussion Protocol, educators must ensure that they follow their school board's concussion policy and procedures.

Information related to concussion prevention, identification and education, and Return to School plans is always evolving. To ensure school boards have the most current information they are advised to consult www.safety.ophea.net every September. If revisions/updates are of a critical nature, Ophea will inform school boards and other users by email.