

Concussion and Head Injury Policy

Middle East

Kuwait

Oman

Qatar

Saudi Arabia

United Arab Emirates

COGNITA

Contents

1. Purpose	3
2. Scope	3
3. Policy Statement	3
4. Definitions	3
5. Roles and Responsibilities	3
6. Recognition of Concussion and Head Injury	4
7. Immediate Response	4
8. Sport and Physical Activity	4
9. Return to Learning, Play and Activity	5
10. Incident Reporting and Record Keeping	5
11. Training and Awareness	5
12. Monitoring and Review	5
13. Document Control	6

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1. Purpose

This policy sets out Cognita Middle East's approach to the recognition and management of concussion and head injuries in order to reduce the risk of harm and ensure appropriate response, escalation and support. The policy aims to protect students, staff and visitors by ensuring that suspected concussion and head injuries are identified promptly, managed safely and supported through appropriate medical assessment and recovery.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all Cognita Middle East schools and operations and covers:

- Students
- Staff
- Visitors

The primary focus of this policy is the safety and wellbeing of students. It applies to incidents occurring during school activities, physical education, sport, educational visits and other school-related activities, whether on or off site.

3. Policy Statement

Cognita Middle East recognises that concussion is a serious injury that may not be immediately apparent and requires a precautionary approach. Any person suspected of sustaining a concussion or head injury will be removed from activity immediately and will not return to activity on the same day. Cognita Middle East does not diagnose concussion. Medical assessment, diagnosis and clinical decision-making remain the responsibility of appropriately qualified healthcare professionals. Where appropriate, this policy is supported by operational guidance to assist schools in consistent implementation and to reflect varying levels of experience and competence across settings.

4. Definitions

Concussion:	A concussion is a mild traumatic brain injury caused by a blow to the head or body that results in rapid movement of the brain within the skull and may affect brain function.
Head injury:	Any injury to the head, face or scalp, whether or not concussion is suspected.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Regional H&S Lead	The Regional Head of Health and Safety sets the regional framework, provides guidance and assurance and reviews serious incidents and emerging trends.
Principal/Head of School	Principals hold accountability for ensuring this policy is implemented within their school and that appropriate arrangements are in place to manage suspected concussion and head injuries.
Clinic/Medical Team	Medical and first aid staff provide immediate care within their scope of practice, support escalation and advise on next steps.
All Staff	Staff supervising activities, including physical education and sport, are responsible for recognising potential signs of concussion, removing individuals from activity and escalating concerns promptly.

Parents/Guardians

Parents and guardians are responsible for obtaining appropriate medical assessment and following medical advice regarding recovery and return to learning and activity.

6. Recognition of Concussion and Head Injury

The following sections set out the minimum mandatory requirements for the recognition and management of concussion and head injuries across Cognita Middle East schools. Concussion may occur without loss of consciousness and symptoms may be delayed. Any concerning mechanism of injury or change in behaviour following a head impact must be treated as a potential concussion.

Concussion symptoms may be physical, cognitive, emotional or behavioural and may appear immediately or develop over time. Visible signs may include appearing dazed, blank or confused, being slow to get up, balance problems or clutching the head. Indicators may include headache, dizziness, confusion, nausea, balance difficulties, sensitivity to light or noise, changes in behaviour or concentration, or any behaviour that appears unusual following a head impact.

Where there is any uncertainty, the injury must be treated as a suspected concussion and managed accordingly.

7. Immediate Response

Where a concussion or head injury is suspected:

- The individual must be removed from activity immediately
- The individual must not return to activity on the same day
- First aid or medical support must be provided as appropriate
- Parents or guardians must be informed as soon as practicable
- The individual must not be left alone and must be supervised until assessed by medical or first aid personnel
- The individual must be accompanied by a member of staff and not left in the care of other students

Simple orientation questions may be used to identify possible confusion, such as:

- Where are we today?
- What activity are we doing?
- Who scored last in this game?

If red flag symptoms are present, emergency medical services must be contacted immediately. Red flag symptoms may include, but are not limited to; loss of consciousness, seizure or convulsion, repeated vomiting, worsening headache, neck pain, increasing confusion or drowsiness, weakness or numbness in limbs, visual disturbance or bleeding from ears or nose.

8. Sport and Physical Activity

Concussions frequently occur during sport and physical activity. A precautionary approach must be adopted at all times. Any student suspected of concussion during sport or physical education:

- Must stop participation immediately
- Must not return to training or competition on the same day
- Must only return to activity following medical clearance and confirmation through the school clinic or medical team where available.

No pressure must be placed on students to continue participation.

9. Return to Learning, Play and Activity

During recovery, the brain is more vulnerable to further injury. Returning to activity too soon may prolong symptoms and increase the risk of further harm. Return to learning and physical activity must be gradual and guided by medical advice. Return to learning takes priority over return to sport. Schools may need to implement temporary academic adjustments during recovery. Temporary adjustments may include reduced workload, rest breaks, modified timetables or temporary limits on screen use. Full return to physical activity and competitive sport must only occur following appropriate medical clearance.

Parents or guardians will be informed following any suspected concussion and must seek appropriate medical assessment from a qualified healthcare professional. A student with suspected concussion must not return to physical activity or sport until medical clearance has been provided. Where applicable, this clearance must be shared with the school clinic or medical team prior to return to activity.

A repeat head injury before full recovery can result in more serious consequences and must be avoided.

10. Incident Reporting and Record Keeping

All suspected concussions and head injuries must be recorded on to EVOLVE Accident Book platform in line with the Cognita Middle East Incident Reporting Policy. Records must include details of the incident, immediate actions taken, communication with parents or guardians and any follow-up actions. Serious incidents will be reviewed at regional level following the completion of a Serious Incident Report Form.

11. Training and Awareness

Schools must ensure that relevant staff receive appropriate awareness training on the recognition and management of concussion and head injuries, particularly those involved in sport, physical education and first response. Risk assessment competence is also important for those leading activities whereby there is a higher risk of concussion.

12. Monitoring and Review

This policy will be monitored through incident data, reviews and assurance activity. The policy will be reviewed every two years or sooner where required due to changes in guidance, legislation or following serious incidents.

13. Document Control

Ownership and Consultation	
Document sponsor (role)	Regional Head of Health and Safety
Document author (role)	Regional Head of Health and Safety
Legal advice	N/A
Consultation	Medical Leads PE Network Enrich ME
Document review and maintenance	Regional Head of Health and Safety

Compliance	
Compliant with	NICE guideline OSHAD SF Dubai Municipality Technical Guidelines DHA HAAD ADEK Qatar MoEHE Kuwait EPA Oman Ministry of Labour Saudi Ministry of Education

Audience	
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