MEMORANDUM TO: Directors of Education

FROM: Marg Connor
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
Leadership and Learning Environment Division

DATE: September 17, 2014

SUBJECT: Concussions – Update

As you know, the Ministry released the School Board Policies on Concussion (PPM 158) last March directing every school board to establish a concussion policy no later than January 30, 2015. A concussion can have a significant impact on a child or youth’s health, including their ability to learn. We know that awareness of the signs and symptoms of a concussion and knowledge of how to properly manage a concussion is critical in a child or youth’s recovery and in ensuring the child or youth does not return to learning or physical activities too soon, risking further complications.

I want to remind boards that the Ministry has contracted with the Ontario Physical and Health Education Association (Ophea) to assist and support boards as their policies are being developed or refined. Ophea has created a concussion community collaboration site (opheacanada.ning.com). If you have any questions about the site, or if you require further assistance in finalizing your board concussion policy, please contact Muriel Rounthwaite at Muriel@ophea.org.

The development of your concussion policies is also supported by the existing Ontario Concussion web portal at: www.ontario.ca/concussions. Launched in 2013, this web portal is intended for anyone who may be impacted by concussions, and provides links to credible, third party resources on concussion prevention, identification and management. The web portal is a collaborative effort between the Ministries of Health and Long-Term Care, Tourism Culture and Sport, and Education.

Also, the Ministry considers the information in the concussion protocol, outlined in the Ophea Ontario Physical Education Safety Guidelines (OSG), to be the minimum standard that school boards should adopt. This information can be found at http://safety.ophea.net. Ophea updates the OSG annually to help ensure that the guidelines are current. Ophea is also working on a new Ontario Safety Guidelines app that is expected to be available in the Fall.
We recognize that we all have a role to play in ensuring the safety of children and youth while participating in physical activity, inside and outside of the school setting and also for encouraging and motivating children and youth to assume responsibility for their own safety and the safety of others. Concussions have the potential to cause immediate and lifelong negative effects therefore, it is important that everyone, including children, know the signs of a concussion and what they should do if they have one.

The Ministry of Education has supported the development of a revised *Concussion 101* YouTube video for parents and kids, with Dr. Mike Evans providing advice on the signs of concussions and the importance of return to activity and return to learn plans after a concussion. This video can be viewed at [www.ontario.ca/concussions](http://www.ontario.ca/concussions).

Thank you for your continued dedication to the well-being of children and youth in Ontario. I look forward to continuing to work together to help ensure all students are able to succeed and lead safe, healthy, and productive lives.

Sincerely,

Original signed by

Marg Connor
Assistant Deputy Minister (A)
Leadership and Learning Environment Division