

Head Injury Guidance

Written by: Welfare Officer (Based on NHS Advice)

Reviewed annually by: Headteacher



About minor head injuries

Minor head injuries are common in people of all ages and rarely result in any permanent brain damage. If a child experiences a knock, bump or blow to the head, sit them down, comfort them, and make sure they rest. Hold a cold compress to their head as soon as possible.

The symptoms of a minor head injury are usually mild and short lived. They may include:

- a mild headache
- nausea (feeling sick)
- mild dizziness
- mild blurred vision

If a child's symptoms get significantly worse, call the parent to take them straight to the accident and emergency (A&E) department of the nearest hospital or call 999 for an ambulance if necessary. The Ambulance will advise. The Welfare Officer will need to bring up the pupil's information for this call on Arbor.

What to look out for

Signs of a brain injury after a head injury include:

- unconsciousness – either brief concussion for a longer period of time
- fits or seizures
- problems with the senses – such as hearing loss or double vision
- repeated vomiting
- blood or clear fluid coming from the ears or nose
- memory loss (amnesia)

If any of these symptoms occur after a head injury, call the parent to take them straight to the accident and emergency (A&E) department of the nearest hospital or call 999 for an ambulance if necessary. The Ambulance will advise. The Welfare Officer will need to bring up the pupil's information for this call on Arbor.

Signs of a serious head injury

The following symptoms could be signs of a serious head injury:

- general weakness
- vision problems, such as significantly blurred or double vision
- having a seizure or fit (when your body suddenly moves uncontrollably)
- memory loss (amnesia), such as not being able to remember what happened before or after the injury
- a persistent headache
- vomiting since the injury
- irritability or unusual behaviour

If any of these symptoms are present, particularly a loss of consciousness – even if only for a short period of time – call 999 and ask for an ambulance or go immediately to your local A&E department. The Welfare Officer will need to bring up the pupil's information for this call on Arbor.

Role of the Welfare Officer

- Ensure the parent is informed of any head injury that has occurred in school as soon as possible. In the event of a parent not responding, monitor the child closely until the end of the school day.
- Care for the child (as noted above)
- Reassure the child that they should speak to an adult if symptoms do not improve/get worse.
- Record the injury in the accident log book
- Complete the accident form for the parent to have a record of the injury
- Inform the class teacher of the head injury and ask them to keep an eye on the pupil
- Follow up immediately on any concerns you are unsure about with a member of SLT
- Inform a member of the SLT if the child is showing symptoms of a major head injury
- Monitor any head injury trends

Advice to parents for treating a minor head injury at home

If your child has a minor head injury:

- give them paracetamol if they have a mild headache, but avoid NSAIDs such as ibuprofen and aspirin (aspirin should never be given to children under the age of 16)
- avoid getting them too excited
- ensure they rest
- don't have too many visitors
- don't let them play contact sports, such as football or rugby, for at least three weeks without talking to your doctor
- make sure they avoid rough play for a few days.

Most people who attend hospital with a minor head injury are allowed to return home shortly afterwards and will make a full recovery within a few days. After attending hospital with a minor head injury, the child will usually be discharged fairly soon and be able to recover at home. Most people will make a full recovery in a few days.

If your child or someone you know has sustained a head injury, observe them closely for 24 hours to monitor whether their symptoms change or get worse.

If your child has a minor head injury, they may cry or be distressed. This is normal – with attention and reassurance most children will settle down. However, seek medical assistance if your child continues to be distressed.

When to seek medical attention

Take your child to A&E if their symptoms worsen or they develop any new symptoms.

See your GP for advice if your child still has symptoms two weeks after the head injury, or you're unsure about them returning to school or sport.

Seek immediate medical attention if, after a knock to the head, you notice any of these symptoms in the pupil:

- unconsciousness, either briefly or for a longer period of time
- difficulty staying awake or still being sleepy several hours after the injury
- clear fluid leaking from the nose or ears – this could be cerebrospinal fluid, which normally surrounds the brain
- bleeding from one or both ears
- bruising behind one or both ears
- any sign of skull damage or a penetrating head injury
- difficulty speaking, such as slurred speech
- difficulty understanding what people say
- reading or writing problems
- balance problems or difficulty walking
- loss of power or sensation in part of the body, such as weakness or loss of feeling in an arm or leg.

