



## CONCUSSION POLICY AND RETURN TO PLAY PROTOCOL

Ringette Ontario is committed to ensuring the safety of everyone participating in the sport of ringette. Ringette Ontario recognizes the increased awareness of Concussion and their long-term effect and believes that prevention of Concussions is paramount to protecting the health and safety of our Participants.

### **Definitions**

1. The following terms pertain to this Policy:
  - a. **“Activity”** means all Ringette Canada, Provincial/Territorial Sport Organization (PTSO) and affiliated association/club business and activities.
  - b. **“Concussion”** – A brain injury that can result in an alteration in thinking and behaviour as a result of a physical impact to the head, neck, face or body.
  - c. **“Participants”**- Individuals associated with Ringette Canada activities including but not limited to coaches, athletes, volunteers, and officials;
  - d. **“Member”** – As defined in Ringette Ontario By-Laws
  - e. **“Suspected Concussion”** – Any time a Participant appears to have either experienced an injury or impact that may result in a concussion or is exhibiting one or more signs or symptoms that could be the result of concussion.

### **Application**

2. This Policy applies to Ringette Ontario, its members, and Participants. It applies to all times wherever an Activity takes place, including Ringette Ontario, or affiliated association/club workplaces as well as all events and activities sanctioned by Ringette Ontario.

### **Purpose**

3. The purpose of this Policy is to provide the framework to create a safe and positive sport environment through education and training, and by making Ringette Ontario Members and Participants aware of ringette-specific concussion awareness resources to assist in recognizing and managing a concussion injury.
4. Accompanying Ringette Ontario’s Concussion Management Guidelines, this Policy provides the directions to be followed in the event of a Suspected Concussion. Awareness of the signs and symptoms of Concussion and the knowledge of how to properly recognize and manage a Concussion is critical to recovery and helping to ensure the individual does not return to physical activities too soon, risking further health complications.
5. Concussions are a condition that can be assessed by physicians and other licensed / certified health care professionals. The difference being that only physicians can return the individual back to play.



### **Concussion Awareness and Prevention**

6. During all events, competitions, and practices, Participants must refer to the Concussion Management Guidelines and use their best efforts to remain aware of incidents that may cause a Concussion and recognize the signs and symptoms of a Suspected Concussion.
7. Signs and symptoms may appear immediately after the injury or within hours or days of the injury and may be different for everyone. For reference, some common signs and symptoms are included in the Concussion Incidence and Response section of the Concussion Management Guidelines.

### **Governance**

8. Ringette Ontario will:
  - ✓ Participate in multi-disciplinary working groups on sport-related concussions;
  - ✓ Develop and maintain a Concussion Policy and related Concussion Management Guidelines including Removal-from-sport and Return-to-sport protocols;
  - ✓ Develop and maintain a system for collecting and analyzing concussion injury data;
  - ✓ Develop or communicate concussion awareness resources for Participants;
  - ✓ Provide access to concussion education for Members, and Participants; and
9. Clubs should:
  - ✓ Follow the Ringette Ontario Concussion Policy and related protocols, which may include an appendix, if necessary, to comply with provincial or territorial legislation and regulations.
  - ✓ In collaboration with Ringette Canada and other PTSOs, assess data for changes in concussion rates over seasons and identify and, if possible, make recommendations with respect to those training or routine elements that put Athletes in a position of high risk for concussion injury.
  - ✓ In collaboration with Ringette Ontario, develop or communicate concussion awareness resources for Coaches, Athletes, and other Participants; and
  - ✓ Receive and investigate complaints of any breach of the Ringette Ontario Concussion Policy and Concussion Management Protocol and, where appropriate, determine an appropriate disciplinary response.

### **Removal from Play**

10. In the event of a Suspected Concussion, the Participant should be immediately removed from play by designated personnel and not be allowed to return to play that day.
11. The Participant should not be left alone and should be seen by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider as soon as possible.
12. A Participant who has been removed from play due to a Suspected Concussion must not return to play until the Participant has been medically assessed by a physician or other



licensed physician healthcare provider, even if the symptoms of the concussion appear to resolve.

### **Return to Play**

13. A Participant with any signs or symptoms of a Suspected Concussion will not be permitted to return to play until the Participant has been assessed by a physician or other licensed physician healthcare provider.
14. Prior to returning to play, the Participant must consult and follow the steps outlined in the Return to Play section of the Concussion Management Guidelines to return to play safely.
15. Student Participants must return to school regularly at their pre-injury level of performance and other Participants must have returned to their normal education or work prior to making a full return to play (i.e., stage 5 and 6 of Return to Play).

### **Medical Clearance and Monitoring**

16. In following the Return to Play section of the Concussion Management Guidelines, the Participant is required to consult a physician or other licensed physician healthcare provider prior to returning to play.
17. Once the Participant has been given medical clearance by a physician or other licensed physician healthcare provider, the coach, administrator and/or supervisor is required to forward a copy of the medical clearance letter to Ringette Ontario for the purpose of monitoring.

### **Summary of Reporting Obligations and Surveillance**

18. Ringette Canada must be informed whenever a Suspected Concussion incident occurs, the result of medical assessment by a physician or other licensed healthcare provider, and when the Participant is medically cleared for full return to play.

The following notifications should be completed online at [ringetteontario.com](http://ringetteontario.com):

- a. Ringette Ontario: Website by RAMP InterActive
- b. Letter from physician or other licensed healthcare provider indicating that Participant is cleared to resume participating in full ringette activities (i.e., stages 5 and 6 of Return to Play submitted through email to [membership@ringetteontario.com](mailto:membership@ringetteontario.com))

### **Coach/Administrator/Supervisor Responsibilities**

19. All members of the Ringette Ontario community (including coaches, trainers, officials, and even parents) must be familiar with their responsibilities under the Concussion Management Guidelines. The Guidelines explain how to recognize signs of a Suspected Concussion, the initial actions that should be taken, the return to play protocols and the reporting responsibilities to Ringette Ontario.



20. Every Suspected Concussion incident must be reported to Ringette Ontario.

**Policy Review**

This policy shall be reviewed/approved by the Board of Directors every three years.

Date of last review: September 2023