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Head Teacher



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Dear Head Teacher

## **CONCUSSION IN YOUTH SPORT**

You may be aware of the tragic death of a young rugby player, Benjamin Robinson, in January 2011, as a result of second impact syndrome and concussion. We are writing to you to raise awareness of concussion amongst children and young people taking part in sport and physical activity and, specifically, how to identify the signs of concussion, and what to do about it.

Concussion is a brain injury caused by direct or indirect force to the head. It results in a variety of non-specific signs and/or symptoms and most often does not involve loss of consciousness. Most people recover in a few days but recovery can take longer for children and young people.

The Scottish Government are committed to creating more opportunities for children and young people to get involved in sport and physical activity but, in doing so, they should not be exposed to a disproportionate level of risk. That is why it is critically important that everyone involved in youth sport is aware of the signs of concussion and understand the need for a young person to be medically assessed and then only gradually reintroduced to physical activity and sport if concussion is diagnosed.

*'We do not yet know everything there is to know about concussion, however, we do know that all concussion should be taken seriously, particularly in children and young people who are at the greatest risk from sport-related concussion. Any young person suspected of having concussion should be, immediately removed from the activity, medically assessed and should not return to play until they have received medical clearance. If in doubt, sit them out'*

**Sir Harry Burns, The Chief Medical Officer for Scotland**

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The message around concussion is simple, **IF IN DOUBT, SIT THEM OUT**. Everyone involved in leading a sports team or physical activity session for young people should be aware of the signs of concussion, and if concussion is suspected they should immediately remove the young person from the activity. As Ben's case shows, failure to do so can be fatal.

We have enclosed a leaflet containing the latest guidance on sports concussion. Please take the necessary steps to share this guidance and raise awareness amongst all coaches, teachers and parents in your school who are involved in leading sport teams, physical activity or physical education sessions for young people. You can access electronic copies of the leaflet on the Scottish Government website at the following link:

[www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/01/7565](http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2014/01/7565)

Yours sincerely



**MICHAEL RUSSELL**



**SHONA ROBISON**