

**Ministry of Education**

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**Ministère de l'Éducation**

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**Memorandum to:** Directors of Education  
Supervisory Officers and Secretary-Treasurers of School Authorities  
Executive Director of Provincial and Demonstration Schools

**From:** Denise Dwyer  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Indigenous Education and Well-Being Division

**Date:** January 5, 2018

**Subject** Bill 193 - Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2017

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On December 14, 2017, the Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport (MTCS) introduced [Rowan's Law \(Concussion Safety\), 2017](#), which sets out a legislative framework for concussion management and prevention in organized amateur competitive sports in schools, colleges and universities and community sports organizations. The intent of the proposed legislation is to ensure the safety of athletes, including students, regardless of where they play.

I am writing to provide you with information on how this legislation, if passed, would impact school boards and schools across Ontario. The Ministry of Education (EDU) and other ministries, have worked with MTCS on the legislation that, if passed, would set out the following requirements:

- Concussion awareness for athletes, including students, parents/guardians, coaches, officials and educators;
- A protocol on removal-from-sport for athletes, including students suspected to have sustained a concussion;
- A protocol for return-to-sport to ensure athletes, including students who have been concussed or who are suspected of having sustained a concussion; and
- A concussion code of conduct for athletes, including students, parents/guardians and coaches that sets out expectations specific to concussions.

The legislation would also declare a “Rowan’s Law Day” to be held every year on the last Wednesday of September to promote concussion awareness, management and prevention.

The legislation includes a complementary amendment to the *Education Act* that would, if passed, give the Minister of Education authority to issue binding policies and guidelines for school boards respecting concussions in students, consistent with Rowan’s Law (Concussion Safety), 2017.

In 2014, the ministry released Policy/Program Memorandum (PPM) 158: School Board Policies on Concussion, along with related evidence-based resources which are available on the government's Concussion Web-portal ([www.ontario.ca/concussions](http://www.ontario.ca/concussions)). The PPM expects boards to have concussion policies that include awareness, prevention, identification, training and concussion management.

As a result, all school boards were expected to have concussion policies in place since 2015 that are consistent with most of the four mandatory requirements in the proposed legislation. This includes:

**Awareness:** Under PPM 158, board policies are already expected to include strategies for sharing information on the seriousness of concussions, and on concussion prevention, identification, and management, with students, parents, board employees, administrators, educators, school staff, volunteers, doctors and nurse practitioners, and community-based organizations.

**Removal-from-Sport protocol:** Board policies are already expected to include information on the safe removal of an injured student from activity, initial concussion-assessment strategies and steps to take following an initial assessment.

**Return-to-sport protocol:** Board policies are already expected to include information on the development of an individualized and gradual "return to learning and/or return to physical activity" plan for every student with a diagnosed concussion.

**Code of Conduct:** Under the *Prevention* component of PPM 158, board policies are already expected to include strategies for preventing and minimizing the risk of sustaining concussions (and other head injuries) in schools and at off-site school events. However, PPM 158 currently does not require a code of conduct.

If the legislation is passed, it would make PPM 158 mandatory, and in addition, some enhancements to the PPM would be required, including a concussion code of conduct, to ensure consistency with Bill 193, Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2017.

## **Next Steps**

As the Bill proceeds through the legislative process, the government is also providing an opportunity for public consultation on Rowan's Law (Concussion Safety), 2017. The Bill is now posted on Ontario's Regulatory Registry. I invite you and your school community and partners to submit feedback on the [Registry](#) until January 29, 2018. Your feedback will help to inform how the legislative requirements will affect the education sector.

Beginning early in the new year, the ministry will be engaging with school boards and other partners to determine what changes would be required to PPM 158, and potential updates to resources that may be needed.

In addition, a third party evaluation of the implementation of PPM 158 began in the 2016/2017 school year, led by Dr. Charles Tator, a leading international expert on the topic of concussions and a neurosurgeon and senior scientist at Toronto Western Hospital (a hospital affiliated with the University Health Network). As part of the evaluation, a voluntary survey will be sent out to a representative sample of school boards and schools across the province in February 2018. I thank you in advance for your assistance and support for this evaluation project, which will

inform the ministry's next steps on supporting school boards with their ongoing implementation of PPM 158.

The ministry remains committed to working with school boards and other partners to ensure that well-being, safety and an emphasis on the whole learner continue to inform our approach and collective efforts.

Thank you for your ongoing work and commitment to the safety and well-being of all students.

Sincerely,

Denise Dwyer  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Indigenous Education and Well-Being Division

c: Council of Ontario Directors of Education