

## **General Considerations: TBI School Re-Entry Guidelines Following Extended Hospitalization/Rehabilitation**

- A timely return to school is beneficial for the student. The educational team can customize a student's school schedule to ease the transition and accommodate such factors as ongoing fatigue and other persistent physical symptoms.
- It is critical that a special education evaluation be completed prior to school re-entry if the medical team, parent/guardian and/or school staff feel that special education services may be warranted. Determination of eligibility for special education services must be established before those services can be provided, including, but not limited to specialized transportation, modified curriculum, customized instruction, emergency evacuation procedures, and Individual Health Plan, etc.
- Student observations (a requirement of educational evaluations) can take place in the hospital, rehabilitation center, or student home. The intent of an observation is to determine the student's current educational strengths, abilities and needs. Therefore, it is recommended that observations occur when the student is engaged in learning or functional activities in the above-mentioned settings whenever possible.
- For purposes of an initial evaluation: If there are limited opportunities for a more traditional school evaluation (which is often the case), it is suggested that the school team utilize whatever pertinent information can be gathered, including recent reports or evaluations completed by physicians, therapists, or neuropsychologists, or hospital school staff; anecdotal information provided by the parent/guardian; previous school records, and observations conducted in the medical and/or home settings.
- Educational needs and accommodations can change quickly in the first months/year following injury. This may require more frequent evaluation and subsequent modification of the educational program and the IEP than is typically seen. It is recommended that the school team document in the initial IEP that the student will continue to be observed following school re-entry, and that the IEP should be reviewed and/or revised by a specified date (usually 3 to 6 months following re-entry). This will ensure that the IEP is reflective of current educational needs.
- Collaboration and careful planning between the hospital, school, student and family is critical for a smooth transition between medical and educational settings for the school-age student with a brain injury. The TBI Re-Entry Guidelines found on the following pages are recommended for medical and educational staff who serve children and youth with a diagnosed TBI, and their families, following an extended hospitalization or rehabilitation.
- Schools should have clear knowledge of who their assigned TBI specialist is, what their services entail, and how to access their services.

Note: For an electronic copy of the *School Re-Entry Considerations and Guidelines for students with TBI*, click on the MN Low Incidence Projects website at: [www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/tbiresources](http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/tbiresources)

### **TBI Re-entry Guidelines Following Extended Hospitalization/Rehabilitation**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School/Grade:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Phone #:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Injury:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Possible Discharge Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

#### **Following Hospital Admission**

- The hospital representative will:
  - \_\_\_ Request that the parent/guardian sign a release of information, allowing contact with the school
  - \_\_\_ Contact the school representative (e.g., school principal, school nurse, special education administration, and/or TBI specialist if known)
- The school representative will:
  - \_\_\_ Attend care conferences as appropriate
  - \_\_\_ Obtain release of information between school/hospital
  - \_\_\_ Contact the child's case manager at the hospital to discuss the school's re-entry issues/questions, and provide pertinent educational information to hospital staff
  - \_\_\_ Contact the school administrator, school nurse, and/or the child's classroom teacher(s) to:
    - Inform them of the child's condition
    - Obtain/review current educational records

#### **After Student's Condition Has Stabilized**

- The hospital and school team will:
  - \_\_\_ Discuss important dates such as anticipated timeline for discharge/school re-entry; and school re-entry plans, including school calendar considerations
  - \_\_\_ Discuss the full re-entry plan, including potential environmental and educational needs and accommodations, including shortened school days if required.
- The school representative will:
  - \_\_\_ Confirm who the primary school contact will be for the remainder of the re-entry process
  - \_\_\_ (If requested) provide the hospital teachers with appropriate educational materials
  - \_\_\_ Attend care conferences as appropriate
  - \_\_\_ Obtain copies of hospital updates, evaluations, and documentation of the medical diagnosis of TBI; this information should then be incorporated into the school evaluation process.
  - \_\_\_ Contact the parent/guardian and initiate special education due process requirements and evaluation

### **Prior To Hospital Discharge/School Re-Entry**

- The school educational team will:
  - \_\_\_ Complete special education evaluation and develop an IEP  
Note: It is recommended that the school evaluation results and IEP meetings be combined with the hospital discharge planning meeting
  - \_\_\_ Assure that all educational supports/accommodations are in place prior to discharge
  - \_\_\_ Collaborate with other school staff as necessary (e.g., school nurse, OT, PT, speech/language clinician, DAPE instructor, etc.), and contact the student's family to provide information and resources about the student's brain injury and accommodations and/or modifications in the school setting

### **Arrival at School**

- The team will:
  - \_\_\_ Continue to communicate with medical/hospital staff and family with regard to ongoing physical, health and learning needs as they relate to the student's educational program
  - \_\_\_ Further modify school environments to meet the student's needs
    - Length of school day
    - Rest periods
    - Specialized transportation
    - Schedule
    - Check-in contact
    - Technology supports
    - Emergency evacuation procedures
    - Other
  - \_\_\_ Provide staff and peer inservices as appropriate

### **After First Weeks in School/Ongoing**

- The team will:
  - \_\_\_ Re-evaluate the student's needs and modify educational plan accordingly
  - \_\_\_ Maintain periodic contact with parent/guardian, teacher, and medical team about the student's changing needs and progress

Note: For an electronic copy of this and other related documents, go to the MN Low Incidence Projects website at: [www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/tbiresources](http://www.mnlowincidenceprojects.org/tbiresources)

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