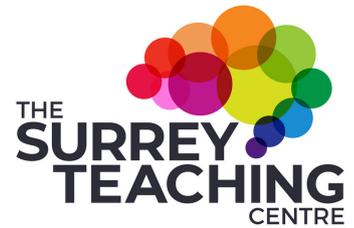


FATIGUE AFTER A BRAIN INJURY



Supporting in Secondary School & College...

WHAT IS FATIGUE?



Fatigue is a persistent feeling of exhaustion, lack of energy, and weakness that is not relieved by rest or sleep. Fatigue is a common effect of Acquired Brain Injury. Everyday tasks may take more effort, and tiredness can continue long after the injury.

RETURNING TO SCHOOL/COLLEGE AFTER A BRAIN INJURY...



For many young people, a gradual phased re-integration to school/college following a brain injury will be appropriate, with considerations such as:

- planning to attend at optimal times of day/week when energy levels are highest
- start by attending for key subject lessons that are highly motivating
- ongoing monitoring of fatigue levels throughout the day, and providing rest breaks / fatigue management strategies in school (see below and next pages)
- regular review of the re-integration plan
- work with the young person to enable them to independently manage their timetable

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS...

Environment	Quiet workspaces, seating near front, reduced visual/auditory distractions
Workload	Shortened tasks, alternative formats (oral vs written), more time
Pacing	Frequent rest breaks (every 20-30 minutes), break cards
Communication	Provide written instructions, visual schedules, chunked information
Assessment	Extra time, rest breaks, scribes, or use of a laptop as needed

Strategies to support fatigue management

English

Challenges:

- Sustained concentration
- Reading comprehension
- Structuring written work
- Fatigue from handwriting

Support Strategies:

- Reduce reading load: Use abridged texts, summaries, or audiobooks.
- Break writing into steps: Plan → Introduction → Paragraphs → Conclusion. Allow rest between stages.
- Use alternative outputs: Oral presentations, mind maps, video recordings.
- Support planning: Graphic organisers like storyboards or timelines.
- Reduce writing strain: Use scribes, laptops, or speech-to-text tools.
- Mark for content: Focus on ideas over grammar/spelling where fatigue affects accuracy.

Maths

Challenges:

- Slower processing speed
- Multi-step problems
- Difficulty with mental recall

Support Strategies:

- Focus on core concepts: Prioritise essential outcomes, not full coverage.
- Scaffold tasks: Provide step-by-step instructions and worked examples.
- Use visuals and manipulatives: e.g. algebra tiles, bar models, and diagrams to support understanding.
- Reduce time pressure: Avoid timed tasks; extend time limits.
- Implement breaks: Allow rest after each mini-task or new concept.
- Allow tools: Use calculators and maths apps to support recall and working memory.

Science (Biology, Chemistry, Physics)

Challenges:

- High cognitive load from multi-sensory tasks
- New vocabulary
- Fatigue during practicals

Support Strategies:

- Pre-teach terms: Glossaries, visual word walls, and flashcards.
- Simplify practicals: Let students observe or watch videos instead of participating if fatigued.
- Provide templates: Use structured lab report outlines.
- Break up lessons: Teach in small blocks with opportunities for rest.
- Use visuals and models: Diagrams, simulations, and infographics.
- Support responses: Provide sentence starters for assessments and activities.

Strategies to support fatigue management

PE

Challenges:

- Physical exhaustion
- Heat sensitivity
- Pressure to perform socially

Support Strategies:

- Adapt activity level: Lower intensity exercises (e.g. yoga, stretching).
- Offer non-active roles: Scorekeeper, observer, or peer mentor.
- Allow frequent breaks: Provide rest periods and water access.
- Monitor signs: Teachers to watch for dizziness, overheating, or motor fatigue.
- Flexible kit expectations: Allow students to wear alternative clothing for comfort.
- Exempt from full participation: Where medically advised, provide alternate learning tasks (e.g. sport analysis).

Humanities (History, Geography, RE)

Challenges:

- Large volumes of content
- Extended writing
- Abstract or complex topics

Support Strategies:

- Focus learning: Identify 1–2 key learning objectives per lesson.
- Visual aids: Timelines, annotated maps, charts, and diagrams.
- Scaffold writing: Sentence frames, paragraph templates, or mind maps.
- Reduce reading fatigue: Use videos, summaries, and guided reading.
- Use oral alternatives: Verbal presentations or recorded responses instead of essays.
- Break down assessments: Allow longer completion time and rest breaks.

Computing & Design Technology

Challenges:

- Screen fatigue
- Memory load
- Fine motor fatigue from typing or designing

Support Strategies:

- Limit screen exposure: Use breaks, screen filters, and low-light modes.
- Use structured coding: Provide partially written scripts or code snippets.
- Highlight steps: Colour-code instructions for easier focus.
- Assistive tools: Dictation software, mind-mapping tools, and auto-formatting.
- Reduce design complexity: Focus on core skills.
- Provide templates: Help structure their work and reduce initiation load.