A concussion is a brain injury and all brain injuries are serious. They are caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to the head, or by a blow to another part of the body with the force transmitted to the head. They can range from mild to severe and can disrupt the way the brain normally works. Even though most concussions are mild, all concussions are potentially serious and may result in complications including prolonged brain damage and death if not recognized and managed properly. In other words, even a “ding” or a bump on the head can be serious. You can’t see a concussion and most sports concussions occur without loss of consciousness. Signs and symptoms of concussion may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. If your child reports any symptoms of concussion, or if you notice the symptoms or signs of concussion yourself, seek medical attention right away.

Symptoms may include one or more of the following:

- Headaches
- Pressure in head
- Nausea or vomiting
- Neck pain
- Balance problems
- Dizziness
- Disturbed vision
- Light/noise sensitivity
- Sluggish
- Feeling foggy
- Drowsiness
- Changes in sleep
- Amnesia
- “Don’t feel right”
- Low energy
- Sadness
- Nervousness
- Irritability
- Confusion
- Repeating questions
- Concentration problems

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches may include:

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Unsure of game/score etc
- Clumsy
- Responds slowly
- Personality changes
- Seizures
- Behavior changes
- Loss of consciousness
- Uncoordinated
- Can’t recall events before or after hit

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns to soon?

Athletes with the signs and symptoms of concussion should be removed from play immediately. Continuing to play with the signs and symptoms of a concussion leaves the young athlete especially vulnerable to greater injury. There is an increased risk of significant damage from a concussion for a period of time after that concussion occurs, particularly if the athlete suffers another concussion before completely recovering from the first one (second impact syndrome). This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often under report symptoms of injuries, and concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key for the student-athlete’s safety.

If you think your child has suffered a concussion:

Any athlete even suspected of suffering a concussion should be removed from the game or practice immediately. No athlete may return to activity after an apparent head injury or concussion, regardless of how mild it seems or how quickly symptoms clear, without medical clearance. Close observation of the athlete should continue for several hours. You should also inform your child’s coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it is better to miss one game than miss the whole season. And when in doubt, the athlete sits out.

For current and up-to-date information from the CDC on concussions you can go to:  
https://www.cdc.gov/headsup/youthsports/index.html

For a current update of DIAA policies and procedures on concussions you can go to:  
http://www.doe.k12.de.us/Page/3298

For a free online video on concussions you can go to:  
https://nfhslearn.com/courses/61064/concussion-in-sports

All parents and players must sign the signature portion of the DIAA PPE indicating they have read and understand the above.