

COMMUNITY HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT #117

Code and Eligibility Requirements for Competitive, Extracurricular Athletics and Activities

PREAMBLE

Participation in competitive, extracurricular activities is a privilege extended to the student body by the Board of Education. Students participating in competitive, extracurricular activities represent the school district. Accordingly, they are expected to behave at all times to the highest standards of conduct.

PHILOSOPHY

The co-curricular code at Community High School District #117 is designed to establish high expectations/standards for students participating in competitive, extracurricular activities. Its principles embody a total lifestyle approach with an emphasis on respect for self, others, and property, self-discipline, trust and acceptance of responsibility for choices made. The effectiveness of the extracurricular code is dependent on a collective commitment from students, parents and school personnel and a proactive approach to prevention and assistance. No co-curricular program in District #117 should be considered **No-Cut**. This policy applies to all students involved in competitive, extracurricular athletics and activities. ***The prohibitions and expectancies provided in this code apply from the date this policy is signed until the student's athletic eligibility expires.***

STANDARDS

I. Curfew

- A. On weekday and weekend nights a student must be home by the curfew as established in his/her community.

II. Personal Conduct Expectancies - Inappropriate Conduct, Dangerous Behavior, Illegal Activity

A. Definitions

1. Students are expected to refrain from conduct that discredits themselves or their school. Violations of this standard include, but are not limited to, the boasting about the use of alcohol or other drugs, insubordination, lying to school officials, cheating/plagiarism, gang-related activities, fighting, vandalism, theft, gross misconduct during the school day or extra-curricular activities, excessive absences/tardies from school and any criminal activity or conduct endangering others.
2. Students are expected to refrain from dangerous behavior, which includes, but is not limited to, the sounding of false fire alarms, possession of dangerous materials or weapons, and physical or verbal threats to others.
3. Students are expected to refrain from actions that can harm others physically or degrade others' self esteem. This would include hazing, as defined in Standard IV.
4. Students are expected to refrain from representing themselves to others as a person who violates the extra-curricular code or openly supports the use of alcohol or drugs. This would include, but not limited to, images or other representations found on the internet, social networking sites or other public means of transmitting the images. Cell Phones or Electronic recording devices are not to be used in locker room or restroom areas unless emergency or special circumstances make it necessary for the electronic device to be used.
5. Students are expected to refrain from the use of hate speech, words that attack, threaten or insult a person or group on the basis of national origin, ethnicity, color, religion, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, political affiliation/affinity, or disability.

Students suspended out of school will be ineligible during the period of suspension. Any interventions that occur as a result of the action(s) that led to the suspension from Standard II will be served either concurrently or subsequent to the suspension as determined by the Athletic or Activity Director.

B. Personal Conduct Expectancies Interventions – Violations of the Personal Conduct

Expectancies may Result in the Following Interventions:

1st Offense - Warning/Parent meeting up to 50% suspension of competition/performances.

2nd Offense – Mandatory community service plus one contest up to 75% suspension of

Competition/performances.

3rd Offense - 50% up to 100% suspension from competition/performances.

At any intervention level the athletic director may include or combine community service for/to the intervention. If the offense is considered serious, the maximum penalty will be given at any step.

III. Use or Possession of Banned Substances and Related Paraphernalia

A. Definitions

There shall be no use, possession, or sale of tobacco, any tobacco products, hookah, e cigarettes, vaping products, alcoholic beverages, controlled substances, illegal drugs, look-alike drugs or paraphernalia related to banned substances. In addition, there shall be no abuse of over-the-counter medications or medications prescribed by a physician. Student's who knowingly are associated with or attend functions where there is illegal possession or consumption of tobacco, hookah, e cigarettes, vaping products, alcohol and other illegal substances present, must leave immediately. Failure to do so will be considered a violation of this code and students will be subject to the standards detailed in this code regardless of whether or not the student participated in the use of any banned substance during the time that he/she was in attendance at the function. Students who are discovered to appear in pictures, such as internet, cell phones, etc., where there is illegal possession of tobacco, hookah, e cigarettes, vaping products, alcohol and other illegal substances present, will also be found in violation of this code.

B. Drug Testing

District #117 requires mandatory and random drug testing. Students choosing to participate in a competitive, co-curricular activity at District #117 may be asked to submit to a mandatory, pre-athletic/activity drug test. In addition, all participants could be randomly drug tested during the school year. Teams/Levels may be selected randomly during the season for testing. A team and level will be identified by its roster prior to the testing date. Students are eligible for random selection for one year from the start of the sporting season in which they last played.

1. If a student fails to get drug tested when required, they will be suspended from all practice and contests/games until they are tested. This will also be considered a violation of Standard III of this policy.
2. Upon notification of a positive test result, the parent(s)/guardian have twenty-four hours to make a request to have another sample re-tested at the family's expense. Should the second test be confirmed positive, and there is not a satisfactory explanation for the positive results, the student will have forty-eight (48) hours to schedule a meeting with the SAP Coordinator. The student will remain suspended from competition or performances during the re-testing process.
3. Any student who tests positive on a drug test will be required to submit to random drug testing for up to one year when requested by the Athletic or Activity Director or the SAP Coordinator. Failure to comply will result in the loss of athletic eligibility and a meeting with the Athletic or Activity Director will be required in order to discuss steps needed for reinstatement.

C. Intervention Steps:

1st Offense – The student will be suspended from all practices and competition or performances for 25% up to 50% of the season or of performances. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) must confer with the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator. Students must complete a drug and alcohol education component and agree to non-random drug testing (paid for by the student, with the exception of students that meet eligibility for a fee waiver as set forth by Board Policy 4:140), scheduled by the SAP coordinator, in order to practice and regain eligibility. Community service may be required as part of the intervention in order to regain eligibility.

The first incident of being present where others are in violation of this code, in possession, selling, delivering, using or under the influence of alcohol if, and only if, a legal breathalyzer report of 0.00 is presented. The student will be suspended from all practices and competition or performances for 10% to 20% of the season or of performances. Subsequent incidents are full violations. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) must confer with the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator. Students must complete a drug and alcohol education component and agree to non-random drug testing (paid for by the student, with the exception of students that meet eligibility for a fee waiver as set forth by Board Policy 4:140), scheduled by the SAP coordinator, in order to practice and regain eligibility. Community service may be required as part of the intervention in order to regain eligibility.

2nd Offense – The student will be suspended a minimum of 50% up to a maximum of the entire season of practices and competitions or performances. The student and parent(s)/guardian(s) must confer with the Athletic or Activity Director and/or SAP Coordinator. In order to practice and regain eligibility, the student must:

1. Must have a drug assessment from an alcohol and other drug counselor (CADC) licensed by the state of Illinois for a drug/alcohol assessment and follow any recommendations of the counselor. Any costs of this assessment will be the responsibility of the student, with the exception of students that meet eligibility for a fee waiver as set forth by Board Policy 4:140. The parents will also need to sign a waiver allowing the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator to discuss the student's assessment with the counselor.
2. Follow an individually developed program (which could include non-random drug testing scheduled by the SAP Coordinator, paid for by the student, with the exception of students that meet eligibility for a fee waiver as set forth by Board Policy 4:140), approved by the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator and signed by the student and parent(s)/guardian.

3rd Offense – The student shall be ineligible from all competitive athletic/activity programs a minimum period of 365 days. At the end of the 365 days the student may request a hearing from a committee composed of the Principal and Two Head Coaches, where he/she can request to begin to participate in co-curricular programs again. If the committee believes the student has made sufficient progress in terms of changing the behavior(s) that caused the suspension from co-curricular activities, it may reinstate the student.

<i>Step</i>	<i>A- Athlete communicates to a coach or administrator before the offense becomes known to them.</i>	<i>B- When questioned about an offense, the athlete takes responsibility.</i>	<i>C- When questioned about an offense, the athlete denies occurrence. Later found to have happened.</i>
<i>1st Offense</i>	<i>25% suspension of contests</i>	<i>35% suspension of contests</i>	<i>50% suspension of contests</i>
<i>1st Offense (dance & cheer)</i>	<i>2 contests and 2 side lines</i>	<i>2 contests and 4 side lines</i>	<i>2 contests and 6 sidelines</i>
<i>2nd Offense</i>	<i>50% suspension of contests</i>	<i>65% suspension of contests</i>	<i>Up to 100% suspension of contests</i>
<i>2nd Offense (dance & cheer)</i>	<i>50% of competitions and 3 sidelines</i>	<i>70% of competitions and 5 side lines</i>	<i>85% -100% of competitions and 7 sidelines</i>

D. General

1. Any student who is found to have violated Standard III will be required to submit to random drug testing for up to one year when requested by the Athletic or Activity Director or the SAP Coordinator. Failure to comply will result in the loss of athletic eligibility and a meeting with the Athletic or Activity Director will be required in order to discuss steps needed for reinstatement.
2. Any expenses resulting from interventions related to the extracurricular code will be the family's responsibility, with the exception of students that meet eligibility for a fee waiver as set forth by Board Policy 4:140.
3. Failure to complete any recommendations will result in the reinstatement of the reduced suspension.
4. Any students distributing or trafficking items listed above will serve a minimum suspension of 50% of the season up to a possible permanent ban from all extracurricular events as determined by the Athletic or Activity Director.
5. Nothing contained in this extracurricular code shall prohibit or limit the application of the District's regular student disciplinary rules and regulations and are considered an addition to all other rules and regulations governing student conduct and discipline.

E. Voluntary Admission

To be considered a voluntary admission, a student must come to the Athletic or Activity Director or the SAP Coordinator to turn themselves in for a violation of the extracurricular code of conduct, school rules or school policies.

1. Admission must occur prior to any school personnel or police department/officer being aware of or becoming aware of the incident (this would include if a student's use would be discovered as a result of any school personnel or police department/officer being made aware of the use as the result of some type of investigation). A student cannot admit an incident for avoidance of a consequence and specifically may not admit to drug use upon receipt of notification for drug testing.
2. Voluntary admission may be used before a first or second violation but may be used only one time in the student's entire high school career.
3. Admission of alcohol and/or substance abuse will result in no suspension and admission before a second violation will result in 35% suspension with no chance for reduction.
4. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian will be required to schedule an appointment with the SAP Coordinator and adhere to the recommendations made by the Coordinator.

F. Due Process

1. The student and/or his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be advised by the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator of the concerns as the result of the student violation.
2. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be given the opportunity to discuss the situation with the Athletic or Activity Director.
3. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be advised by the Athletic or Activity Director and/or the SAP Coordinator of any disciplinary action to be taken as a result of the violation.
4. The student and his/her parent(s)/guardian(s) will be provided the opportunity to appeal the violation charge, not the consequence, to the Extracurricular Review Board (two building administrators and one varsity head coach or sponsor) within three (3) school days. Upon notification of appeal, the Review Board will review the appeal within five (5) school days and the results communicated to the parents(s)/guardian.
5. The student will remain suspended from competition or performances during the appeal process.

IV. Position on Hazing and/or Inappropriate Initiation Activity

Hazing and inappropriate initiation activities are not consistent with the District's mission and character education goals. As such, all forms of hazing and inappropriate initiation activity are prohibited.

District #117 defines hazing and inappropriate initiation activity to be any act whether physical, mental, emotional or psychological which subject a student who is joining or affiliating with a student organization to any situation or expectation that may potentially abuse, mistreat, degrade, humiliate, harass, harm, intimidate a student, denigrate either an individual or another group or compromise a student's inherent dignity as a person. The District's definition of hazing and inappropriate initiation activity also includes actions such as those described in the previous sentence which are directed toward any student even though the student may not be joining or affiliating with a student organization. For example, the District considers hazing and inappropriate initiation activity to include a situation in which an older student subjects a younger student to rites of initiation. The fact that a student participates voluntarily in a hazing or inappropriate initiation activity does not alter the District's prohibition of such conduct.

District #117 staff members do not believe students are ameliorated as a result of being humiliated or degraded. Our staff realizes that school and team unity is developed in our classrooms, hallways, practice areas, locker rooms, and athletic fields with a shared commitment to excellence.

Upon receipt of either a complaint or report of hazing or inappropriate initiation activity, the student's school shall conduct an investigation. Upon completion of the investigation, the school shall take appropriate action. Such action will be designed to deter future violations and appropriately discipline students who have engaged in prohibited behavior. Disciplinary action may include consequences for individual students (e.g., suspension/expulsion/criminal prosecution) and/or sanctions/suspensions being imposed on a team, squad, or student organization. Such responsive actions shall be consistent with the requirement and expectations of school district policies and regulations.

V. Expectations and Eligibility Requirements

Definition of Suspension from Athletic/Extracurricular Activities

Suspension percentages are based on a full athletic or activity season and suspensions may carry over from one season to the next as necessary. If a student was not cleared to participate in a contest due to injury or academic ineligibility, a student's suspension from contests will not begin until the athlete has been cleared. If a student is injured subsequent to a suspension from athletic contests, the suspension will remain the same regardless of when the student is cleared to participate. Academic ineligibility that occurs after a student is suspended from contests will result in the athlete to not be able to count any contest towards their athletic suspension, until the student has been cleared academically. During a suspension a student must attend all practices, unless prohibited by school or extracurricular code violations, be with the team or performance group during competition and performances, but may not participate in competition or performances. Suspended students may not wear the team's game uniform or parts of the game uniform during the time of suspension. This includes the wearing of football jerseys, team sweaters, etc., during school, after school, or at the contest. Pre-season competitions are not considered scheduled athletic events and do not count as part of the season. Therefore, they are not considered part of any suspension.

Students who participate in a co-curricular event(s) defined as a sport by the IHSA, along with field hockey or dance, may not use a non-athletic co-curricular event to serve a suspension from competition/performance. If a student is involved in both athletic and non-athletic co-curricular activities, the administrator responsible for administering these activities will assign a suspension in accordance with this code for the athletic activity, followed by an addition suspension which he/she feels is appropriate (which is not more severe than what is written in this code) for the non-athletic activity

If a student's suspension either carries over to or involves a new sports season, the student must finish that season in good standing for any part of the suspension associated with that season to count towards his/her ineligibility.

VI. Attendance at Practice and Contests

- A. It is the responsibility of the students to attend all practices, contests, performance, games. The only exceptions will be illness, emergencies, or prearranged absence. In all cases, except in the case of emergency, the coach/sponsor should be consulted and/or notified before the practice, contest, performance or game is missed. It is also the student's responsibility to be on time for all activities. Exceptions to this rule, such as academic tutoring, should be prearranged with the coach/sponsor.
- B. When a student athlete is committing to a competitive high school program, the expectation is that the athlete is agreeing to a six day a week schedule, which could include winter and spring breaks.
- C. Schedule and calendar changes may occur during a season due to weather conditions, facility availability, or other unforeseen circumstances or situations.
- D. District 117 realizes the importance of college visits. Every effort should be made to schedule these visits during times that do not conflict with scheduled practices or contests. Student athletes are encouraged to schedule these visits in the offseason. Normal team rules apply in the event an athlete misses for a visit.

VII. School Rules for Extracurricular Participants

- A. In order to try-out or participate on a District #117 athletic team, including field hockey, the student must **REGISTER ONLINE THROUGH R-SCHOOL**. In order to **REGISTER** a student must have a physical current for the entire sports season, the clearance form found at the back of this document filled out and properly signed, and have passed five academic classes the previous semester (sophomores, juniors or seniors). If a freshman's insurance will only allow the physical to be performed during the middle of a sports season, an exception will be made with the understanding that the student will obtain a physical during the summer which will be current for which ever athletic season the student chooses to participate during the next school year. **ATHLETIC PHYSICALS ARE ONLY CURRENT FOR 395 DAYS FROM THE DATE THEY ARE OBTAINED**. Both Antioch and Lakes have arrangements with local groups for students to receive discounted physicals during the summer.
- B. In order to **REGISTER ONLINE**, all athletic and non-athletic fees must be paid unless prior arrangements have been made with the fees clerk.
- C. In order to practice or participate in an extracurricular activity, the student must be in school four (4) periods of the day in order to practice or participate in competition or performances. No student will be eligible to participate in after-school extra-curricular activities if s/he leaves school before the end of his/her scheduled classes, **once s/he has started attending school** for that day, regardless of how many

- periods he/she attended. If a pattern of morning absences becomes evident, a student risks losing extra-curricular privileges. This decision will be made after a conference with the Athletic or Activity Director in consultation with the student and parent(s)/guardian(s). This rule may be waived if special arrangements have been made with the Athletic or Activity Director (e.g., college visitation, emergency etc.). The coach/sponsor should be consulted and/or notified in these cases.
- D. Students absent for 5 consecutive days or more because of illness must be cleared through the school nurse upon return.
- E. *When school staff are aware that a student has been hospitalized and/or is participating in an outpatient program due to personal safety (i.e. self-harm, suicidal ideations, eating disorders, anxiety/depression etc.), the following procedure should be followed:*
- *The student needs to provide a doctor's note including the doctor's opinion that student is emotionally fit enough to participate in the practice/game/performance. The doctor should be specific as to the activity involved and not just give a general clearance for "extra-curricular activities." This will allow staff to monitor participation on a case-by-case basis.*
 - *For interscholastic sports, ensure the student complies with any attendance requirements imposed by IHSA to ensure eligibility to participate in games. Note that IHSA by-law 3.015 provides that a student may not have a lapse in "school connection" greater than 10 consecutive school days; otherwise, they are ineligible for the remainder of the semester. A request to waive this restriction may be submitted to IHSA Executive Director to determine if the illness of the student or their immediate family causes the loss of school connection.*
- F. Students who are referred to a doctor by our athletic trainers must be released to participate by a doctor prior to return.
- G. Students are expected to ride the bus (or other school transportation) to and from and extracurricular activity. Students are not permitted to drive to extracurricular activities. When it is more practical, or necessary, students may leave an activity with their parents. In this case, the parent(s) is expected to inform the coach/sponsor personally or via a handwritten note stating their intentions. This provision only applies to a parent and their child. Any other special considerations must be cleared in advance with the Athletic or Activity Director.
- H. Limitations upon participation:
1. Rules of IHSA, or other applicable governing body, must be followed.
 2. No participant in the athletic program may be a member of two squads at the same time without the approval of the Athletic Director.
 3. If there is an overlap in schedule or activity, the activity the student started first shall have priority. In case of an overlap, the student may not start the second activity until completion of the first unless approved by the Athletic or Activity Director.
 4. If a student or participant quits an activity more than two weeks after that activity began, she/he may not join another activity in that season. If a student is cut, they may go out for another sport in that season within two weeks of that sport's cut date.
 5. A student who does not participate in physical education class may not practice or participate in a competition or performance on that same day without the approval of the Athletic or Activity Director.
 6. After the start of a sport season, students may not participate on an outside team in the same sport until the end of the season in accordance with Section III F.
- I. A student may participate on a team outside of the school's sports season, but may only attend practices within four weeks of the first contest or any subsequent contests and must cease participation in any outside school team/club/activity of a sport they are participating in at their school within 5 days of the school team beginning their season or the day before the school's first interscholastic competition, whichever comes first. Failure to do so will result in the student becoming ineligible for the remainder of the school's sport season and the school forfeiting any contests that the student participated in. Students may try-out for a non-school team, as long as the try-out is only evaluative. During the school year, students may not attend clinics or camps where more than two students from the same District #117 school are in attendance.
- J. All students who participate on District #117 teams will pay a participation fee of \$150 per season with an individual cap of \$300 and a family cap of \$450 for the school year. Students are responsible for this fee once the first contest of the season they are participating in has been contested. Students with free and reduced lunches may have this fee waived. Other unique circumstances may also apply (i.e. loss of a job, etc.).

VIII. Lines of Communication

There are times that concerns may arise during the course of a season that a student/athlete and/or parent might want to discuss. In order to most effectively handle these situations, we ask that the following lines of communication be followed:

1. Parent to level head/coach
2. Parent to program head coach
3. Parent to athletic director
4. Parent to principal

IX. Notification of Risk

Athletes and their parent(s)/guardian(s) are to be aware that extracurricular participation may have inherent dangers and risks. Even though participation in competition/activities and practice is within the rules of the sport/activity and the student is following the instruction of the sponsor/coach, a catastrophic injury may occur. These injuries may include, but are not limited to, death, or serious head, neck or spinal injuries that may result in complete or partial paralysis or brain damage. Serious injury to any of the internal organs, bones, ligaments, muscles, tendons or other parts of the muscular-skeletal system are possible. The injuries that occur may affect the future ability of the student to participate in athletic and recreational activities, earn a living, or engage in other business and social activities. To attempt to avoid the possibility of injury, the student should follow the sponsor's instructions regarding activity rules, techniques, training, and team rules at all times and participate within the rules of the activity.

X. IHSA Performance Enhancing Drug Testing Policy

Any student-athlete who ingests or otherwise uses substance from the association's banned drug classes, without written permission by a licensed physician, to treat a medical condition, violates IHSA By-law 2.170 and its subsections, and is subject to IHSA penalties, including ineligibility from competitions. The IHSA will test certain randomly selected individuals and teams during the regular season and that participate in state series competitions for banned substances. The results of all tests shall be considered confidential and shall only be disclosed to the student, his or her parents, and his or her school. All District #117 student/athletes must participate in the IHSA drug testing program if requested by the organization. If they elect to not participate they will become ineligible to participate in IHSA sanctioned activities.

XI. Insurance

District #117 requires each student/athlete to be covered by accident insurance. The signature of the parent/guardian on the athletic clearance form (attached) certifies that, along with permission for the student to participate, that the parent/guardian accepts the responsibility of maintaining an insurance program to cover the student in the event of injury, that participation in the District #117 sports program is entirely voluntary, and acknowledges understanding that there are risks of injury as a result of participation. By granting permission for the student to participate in this program, the parent/guardian is agreeing to accept responsibility for the risks, and agrees to release and hold harmless the student's school, the School District, and their employees and agents from any claims, demands, or causes of action arising from the child participating in the extracurricular program. School accident insurance can be purchased through the school at a nominal fee.

XII. Eligibility Requirements

- A. All students who participate in any school sponsored or school supported extracurricular activity must maintain a minimum of a C (2.0) or better grade point average and be passing five classes during the semester(s) in which the school sponsored, school supported athletic or extracurricular takes place. Students who fall in the range of a 1.5-2.0 grade point average will be allowed to go through a three week probationary process that will involve the student, teachers, coach and parent/guardian, where he/she will remain eligible while working to improve his/her grade point average. A student will only be allowed to go through this probationary period once a semester. If during this probationary period the student fails to maintain at least a 1.5 grade point average and/or pass five classes, he/she will become ineligible.
- B. Any student who fails to meet the minimum requirements established in Section III A shall be suspended from further participation in any school sponsored, school supported athletic or extracurricular activity

until such requirement is met. However, a student may continue to practice during the time he/she is suspended from participation.

- C. All students who participate in any school sponsored, school supported athletic or extracurricular activity shall, in addition to the requirement set forth in Section III A of this policy, satisfy all scholastic requirements of the Illinois High School Association, including passing five (5) academic courses weekly. If a student does not pass five (5) academic classes in a semester, then s/he will be ineligible for the next semester. If a student fails a class or classes in the spring semester, s/he may make-up the class in summer school and, if successful, be eligible for a fall activity.
- D. Extracurricular eligibility runs from 8:00 a.m. Monday until 8:00 a.m. on the following Monday. If a student's cumulative grade is D or F in a class, the teacher will notify the Athletic or Activity Director's office by 12:00 Noon on Friday. If a student is not passing five (5) academic classes on a given Friday, and maintaining a C- semester GPA, he/she will be ineligible for competition/participation the following Monday through Monday. Once the student sits out one week, they regain eligibility the day they meet eligibility requirements. It is the student's responsibility to get written verification from the teacher once he/she is passing the class. As stated in Letter A, students who fall in the range of a 1.5-2.0 grade point average will be allowed to go through a three week probationary process that will involve the student, teachers, coach and parent/guardian, where he/she will remain eligible while working to improve his/her grade point average. A student will only be allowed to go through this probationary period once a semester. If during this probationary period the student fails to maintain at least a 1.5 grade point average and/or pass five classes, he/she will become ineligible.

XIII. Concussion Information

The information included in this section is mandated by the State of Illinois and IHSA to be read by every student athlete and parent/guardian before the student may participate in interscholastic athletics at an IHSA member school.

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:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Headaches • "Pressure in head" • Nausea or vomiting • Neck pain • Balance problems or dizziness • Blurred, double, or fuzzy vision • Sensitivity to light or noise • Feeling sluggish or slowed down • Feeling foggy or groggy • Drowsiness • Change in sleep patterns 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amnesia • "Don't feel right" • Fatigue or low energy • Sadness • Nervousness or anxiety • Irritability • More emotional • Confusion • Concentration or memory problems (forgetting game plays) • Repeating the same question/comment

Signs observed by teammates, parents and coaches include:

- Appears dazed
- Vacant facial expression
- Confused about assignment
- Forgets plays
- Is unsure of game, score, or opponent
- Moves clumsily or displays incoordination
- Answers questions slowly
- Slurred speech
- Shows behavior or personality changes
- Can't recall events prior to hit
- Can't recall events after hit
- Seizures or convulsions
- Any change in typical behavior or personality
- Loses consciousness

What can happen if my child keeps on playing with a concussion or returns too 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. This can lead to prolonged recovery, or even to severe brain swelling (second impact syndrome) with devastating and even fatal consequences. It is well known that adolescent or teenage athletes will often fail to report symptoms of injuries. Concussions are no different. As a result, education of administrators, coaches, parents and students is the key to 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. IHSA Policy requires athletes to provide their school with written clearance from either a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches or a certified athletic trainer working in conjunction with a physician licensed to practice medicine in all its branches prior to returning to play or practice following a concussion or after being removed from an interscholastic contest due to a possible head injury or concussion and not cleared to return to that same contest. In accordance with state law, all IHSA member schools are required to follow this policy.

You should also inform your child's coach if you think that your child may have a concussion. Remember it's 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 on concussions you can go to:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ConcussionInYouthSports/>