

Berkshire Youth Hockey Organization Policies

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Berkshire Youth Hockey Organization Locker Room Policy

Along with fostering player development and a love for hockey, Berkshire Youth Hockey prioritizes the safety and well-being of all participants. Berkshire Youth Hockey follows USA Hockey's SafeSport Program to help protect participants from physical and sexual abuse, as well as other forms of misconduct, including emotional abuse, bullying, hazing, threats, and harassment. To further prevent abuse or misconduct in locker rooms, Berkshire Youth Hockey has implemented the following locker room policy. This policy is intended to protect personal privacy while reducing the risk of inappropriate behavior.

At Berkshire School, Berkshire Youth Hockey utilizes locker rooms provided by the facility. Some locker rooms include private or shared restrooms and shower areas. Teams may also travel to other facilities for games, where locker room, restroom, and shower arrangements may vary by location.

Locker Room Monitoring

During home events, Berkshire Youth Hockey has predictable, limited use of locker rooms, generally 30-45 minutes before and after practices and games. This allows for direct and regular monitoring. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make some players uncomfortable.

Players may enter the locker room to store their equipment and belongings but may not remain there without a SafeSport-trained adult present in or stationed directly outside the locker room. Locker room doors may be propped open only when appropriate privacy can still be maintained. Access to the locker room is limited to participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel, and family members.

Parents in Locker Rooms

With the exception of younger age groups, from Learn to Skate through Squirrels, parents are discouraged from entering the locker room unless it is truly necessary. If a player requires assistance with equipment or uniform, is injured, or has a disability that requires support, parents are asked to notify the coach in advance of their intent to assist.

For our youngest age groups, parental assistance with dressing is often necessary. However, we encourage parents to help players learn to dress themselves as early as possible to promote independence. In situations where parents are permitted in the locker room, coaches may ask them to step out for a period of time before and after

games or practices so they can address the players. As players get older, coaches may, at their discretion, restrict parental access to the locker room.

Mixed Gender Teams

Some teams may include both male and female players, and the privacy of all participants must be respected. While Berkshire Youth Hockey strives to make appropriate accommodations, separate locker rooms cannot always be guaranteed at our home rink or at away facilities. For players who are uncomfortable dressing in a shared locker room, we recommend arriving earlier and/or staying later to change privately in the facility's bathrooms. We recognize this may be inconvenient, but it is a reasonable approach to support and respect all players.

Co-Ed Locker Room Attire Policy

The Co-ed Locker Room Attire Policy is based on recommendations from USA Hockey and attempts to balance the social integration and camaraderie of a team sport while providing a safe and respectful environment for all of our participants.

- **Minimum Attire:** All players should arrive at the rink wearing an appropriate base layer (e.g., hockey base layers, or shorts and a T-shirt). Undergarments or sports bras alone are not permitted.
- **Changing Requirements:** Players who do not arrive in their base layer must change in a designated bathroom *before* entering the shared locker room.
- **Locker Room Access:** Players must be fully dressed in their minimum attire before entering. At no time may any player be visible to members of another gender in a state of partial or full undress.

Cell Phones and Other Recording Devices

The use of cell phones and other devices with recording capabilities—including voice recording, still cameras, and video cameras—is prohibited in locker rooms. If such devices must be used, they should be taken outside of the locker room. If necessary, players may be asked to leave their phones with a parent.

Prohibited Conduct and Reporting

Berkshire Youth Hockey prohibits all forms of physical, sexual, and emotional abuse, as well as bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing, as outlined in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook. Any participant or volunteer who violates these locker room policies or engages in misconduct or abuse that breaches USA Hockey SafeSport policies may be subject to disciplinary action.

Reports of actual or suspected violations can be made by emailing USA Hockey at SafeSport@usahockey.org or by calling 1-800-888-4656.

Berkshire Youth Hockey Organization Illness Policy

Berkshire Youth Hockey has adopted the USA Hockey Illness Policy and has included return-to-play and communication guidelines. The purpose of this policy is to help reduce the spread of illness and prevent larger outbreaks within the organization. Parents and guardians are expected to follow and comply with this policy to help protect the health and safety of their player and teammates. Coaches will not penalize players for absences related to illness.

Illness Policy:

- Avoid close contact with anyone who is sick
- If you're feeling sick or have flu-like symptoms, stay home and avoid contact with other players and coaches
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, and mouth
- Frequently wash your hands with soap and water or alcohol-based sanitizer
- Use individual water bottles
- Don't try to "play through" the illness
- See your doctor

Return-to-play guidelines:

- Fever-free for 24 hours *without medication*
- Symptoms improving
- Cleared by a doctor if necessary

Clear communication:

- Parents/participants must notify coaches or team manager of illness

Berkshire Youth Hockey Organization Dual Roster Policy

Purpose

The Berkshire Rattlers/Berkshire Youth Hockey (BYH) recognizes that some players may seek additional competitive opportunities by rostering with a separate organization (e.g., a "Select," "Full-Season," or "Split-Season" team) in addition to their Berkshire Rattlers team. The intent of this policy is to allow for maximum player development while ensuring the stability and competitive integrity of BYH team rosters.

Primary Affiliation and Commitment

- **Priority of Games:** In the event of a scheduling conflict between a Berkshire Rattlers game and a secondary organization's game, the family is expected to give the coaches at least 1 week's notice.
- **Attendance:** Players are expected to attend all scheduled BYH practices and skills clinics to maintain their development and team cohesion. If a practice must be missed due to a secondary organization's practice, the family is expected to give the coaches at least 1 week's notice.
- **Notification:** Any parent or guardian of a child intending to dual-roster must notify the BYH Registrar and the team's Head Coach prior to the start of the season to ensure proper USA Hockey and Massachusetts Hockey roster filing.
- **Dual rostering:** If a player's two teams happen to be playing against one another, players are expected to play for the home team at the home rink, including home tournaments. In the case that a player's two teams are both attending a tournament at a third-party venue, the player must declare in advance which of their teams they will be playing for at said tournament.

Playing Time and Coaching Discretion

While BYH promotes a fun and friendly environment that fosters improved skills and teamwork, dual rostering creates unique challenges for team chemistry.

- **Discretionary Authority:** Game playing time for dual-rostered players is at the **sole discretion of the Head Coach.**
- **Factors for Consideration:** When determining playing time, the Head Coach may consider factors including, but not limited to:
 - Attendance at practices and skill sessions.
 - Commitment to the BYH game schedule.
 - Effort and sportsmanship displayed during BYH events.
- **Absence Impact:** If a player misses BYH practices or games to attend events for a separate organization, the Head Coach is under no obligation to provide "equal" or "guaranteed" playing time during subsequent BYH games.

Conduct and Representation

- **Code of Conduct:** Dual-rostered players and their parents remain bound by the Berkshire Youth Hockey Code of Conduct at all times.

Financial Responsibility

- **Tuition:** Dual-rostered players are responsible for the full BYH registration fees as established by the Board of Directors.
- **No Discounts:** No "pro-rated" fees will be granted for ice time or games missed due to participation with a secondary organization