

NORTHWEST ARKANSAS AMATEUR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Policy and Procedures Manual

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INTRODUCTION, PHILOSOPHY, AND GOVERNING BODIES

These policies and procedures were initiated, established and adopted to provide written guidance and direction for the Northwest Arkansas Hockey Association (the "NWAHA") and supersede any earlier adopted policies regarding the same subject matter. In no way should these Policies and Procedures be construed to supersede the by-laws (where conflict exists), but rather used as a tool to provide guidance and consistency from year-to-year.

The purpose of the Policies & Procedures is to promote, govern, and enhance hockey for the good of all players; to foster a community spirit among members, supporters and teams; to increase interest in the game of hockey in the Northwest Arkansas area; and to promote team participation, sportsmanship, fair play, safety and equal opportunity to all members relative to the game of ice hockey.

The NWAHA Policies & Procedures should be considered dynamic, subject to change, and may be revised as necessary to meet the needs of the NWAHA organization. Such additional policies and rules may be adopted as deemed necessary by the NWAHA Board of Directors. These additional provisions shall be restated in the Policies and Procedures. Within seven days following a vote implementing a change to this document, the Board Secretary will update this document with the new changes and post the new version to the NWAHA website. Further, the Secretary will document all changes and will keep historical copies of each revision that is approved by the Board.

The philosophy of NWAHA is consistent with that of USA Hockey for its Youth Programs: "*To provide an improved grass-roots foundation for the growth and development of USA Hockey, designing programs aimed at increased participation, improved skills, and a responsible environment for the conduct of youth hockey.*"

NWAHA supports the following core values as stated by USA Hockey:

- Sportsmanship: Foremost of all values is to learn a sense of fair play. Become humble in victory, gracious in defeat. We will foster friendship with teammates and opponents alike.
- Respect for the Individual: Treat all others as you expect to be treated.
- Integrity: We seek to foster honesty and fair play beyond mere strict interpretation of the rules and regulations of the game.
- Pursuit of Excellence: Each member of the organization, whether player, volunteer, or staff, should seek to perform each aspect of the game to the highest level of his or her ability.
- Enjoyment: It is important for the hockey experience to be fun, satisfying and rewarding for the participant.
- Loyalty: We aspire to teach loyalty to the ideals and fellow members of the sport of hockey.
- Teamwork: We value the strength of learning to work together. The use of teamwork is reinforced and rewarded by success in the hockey experience.
- All NWAHA Teams are registered and play under the rules established by USA Hockey and the Southeast Amateur Hockey Association (SAHA).

Any youth who resides within a one-and-a-half-hour radius of the home rink is considered a resident of Northwest Arkansas and is eligible to participate. Youths who reside outside of Northwest Arkansas may be accepted on a space-available basis at the discretion of the NWAHA Board. Players must have the consent of their parents or guardians to participate. Debarred, previously dismissed or indefinitely suspended players or those otherwise ineligible for placement on a team may be denied the privilege of participating in the NWAHA by the Board of Directors. All players are subject to USA Hockey eligibility rules.

HOCKEY OPERATIONS

TEAMS

The Northwest Arkansas Hockey Association offers programs for all ages and skill levels from Learn-to-Play to House League to Travel Hockey. The amount of practice time will be determined by ice availability, budgets, and scheduling practices. Below are division descriptions and what the Association will strive to provide:

Learn-To-Play (LTP)
Is sponsored by the St. Louis Blues and run by our experienced LTP volunteers. Learn-to-play sessions are held up to twice per year, for a period of 6 weeks. LTP players will learn the basics of skating, stick handling, passing and shooting. Open to all kids, generally 3-9 years old.

6U-8U American Development Model Program (ADM)
This program closely follows the guidelines set forth by the American Development Model (ADM) provided by USA Hockey. Program objectives include nurturing a love of the game at an early age and emphasizing fundamentals including skating, stick handling, passing and shooting. Station based practices are utilized to maximize learning and to capture the attention of young children. Games are played utilizing the half-ice model against other players in the association. More information on ADM can be found at www.ADMKids.com. 6U and 8U Programs may be combined, determined by allotted ice time.

House League
Players interested in playing the game in a less competitive environment competing with other players in the association as well as occasional out-of-town tournaments or friendly games. Open to all players 9 years old through high school.

Travel Hockey
10U Squirt, 12U Peewee & 14U Bantam (MAIHA-YD-Missouri Amateur Ice Hockey Association-Youth Division)
Players interested in playing at a higher competitive level of hockey, competing with teams primarily from the St. Louis area, in the St. Louis area, as well as an out-of-town tournament(s) or friendly games. Selection Skates are held annually for ages 9-10 years old, 11–12-year-olds, 13–14-year-olds.

*10U all teams will be focused on development
*12U will be focused on development. If there are enough players to make up two or more teams, the highest team may be more focused on competition and may see cuts based on skills.
*14U will be focused on level of competition and may see cuts based on skills.

16U and 18U Midget-High School (MAHSHL-Mid America High School Hockey League)
Players interested in playing at a higher competitive level of hockey competing with teams from surrounding states. Selection Skates are held annually for ages 14-18 years old.

**16U and above will be focused on level of competition and may see cuts based on skills.

NUMBER OF TEAMS

The number of travel teams each year will be subject to Board approval based on available ice time and budget. In the event of an excess number of teams, priority will be given to higher-level teams. Those not making the top teams may be reassigned to the recreation division to ensure balanced competition and organization efficiency.

PRACTICES, GAMES, TOURNAMENTS

The amount of practice time will be determined by ice availability, budgets, and scheduling practices. The Association will strive to provide the following:

- 6U-8U ADM Program - 2 ice touches per week
- House League - 2 ice touches per week
- 10U Squirt, 12U Peewee & 14U Bantam - 2-3 ice touches per week
- 16U and 18U Midget - 2-3 ice touches per week

Ice times will be as convenient as availability allows with the earlier times being given to the younger age levels. The amount of home ice available for practice, league games, friendlies, etc. will be determined each year in partnership with the rink management and the Board.

Player skater fees will cover practice ice time, ice fees for all league games, referees for league games, and practice jerseys. Covered skills clinic fees will be determined annually by the Board of Directors based on available budget.

Budgeted funds for tournament registrations shall be decided annually by the Board of Directors and communicated prior to opening registrations. Funds, if any, shall be set equally across all teams at each level for 10U Squirt, 12U Peewee, 14U Bantam, and High School. Additional tournament procedures are as follows:

- To the extent possible, head coaches must determine any required tournaments (up to 4) for the upcoming season and communicate to all team families during the start of the year Parent Meeting.
    - Information shall include expected cost, stay-to-play requirements and shall indicate which tournament NWAHA will help fund (if applicable).
        - If this information is not fully available, the Head Coach should provide at minimum the number of expected tournaments and potential weekends being considered.
- All roster changes must be vetted and approved by NWAHA and SAHA registrars prior to tournament registration as lined out in the Dual Roster procedure below.
- Teams should only enter official USA Hockey sanctioned and reputable tournaments.

GENERAL ASSOCIATION POLICIES

ACUTE MEDICAL ISSUES

When necessary, the association may enact special policies and procedures outlining the club's response to acute medical issues (e.g. viruses, other contagions). It's the expectation that all club members (players, parents, coaches) abide by these policies when enacted and approved by the board. These guidelines will be clearly communicated to the club and available for reference on the club website and may be frequently updated to reflect current conditions and public health guidance.

SKATER/REGISTRATION FEES

Each player is required to be registered through USA Hockey and NWAHA. Registration links can be found at www.nwahockey.com. During the registration process you will be asked for the player's USA hockey number, medical information and contacts, various permissions, and to review and acknowledge codes of conduct. Completion of each of these items is required to be a registered player.

The NWAHA registration fee is formulated based on the cost of items such as ice costs, insurance, game sheets, administration expenses, membership dues, and other miscellaneous costs. Registration fees are required at the time the player is registered with NWAHA as specified by the Board.

Players joining a team prior to December 1st of each year shall pay the full amount of dues established by the Board. Players joining on or after December 1st shall pay a reduced amount, based on costs incurred to the date of joining the team, but this amount will not be less than 50% of the full amount of dues.

The Association reserves the right to suspend a skater's skating privileges for non-payment of fees.

The Board will set a refund schedule during the annual budget meeting and can be found on the player registration page of the website. USA Hockey fees are non-refundable. The Association will not grant refunds for injury or illness unless there are extenuating circumstances as determined by the Board.

EDUCATION FREEDOM ACCOUNT (EFA) POLICY

NWAHA recognizes that eligible families may choose to use Arkansas Education Freedom Account (EFA) funds toward qualifying hockey-related expenses.

All players utilizing EFA funds must complete the standard NWAHA registration process and satisfy all applicable registration requirements, payment deadlines, and financial obligations. Participation in or anticipated reimbursement from the EFA program does not constitute payment to NWAHA and does not reserve or secure a player's roster position.

Parents or guardians utilizing EFA funds must complete registration and payment in the same manner as all other NWAHA families. NWAHA does not accept EFA funds as direct payment on behalf of individual players. Parents or guardians wishing to utilize EFA funds must seek reimbursement through the Arkansas EFA program after payment has been made to NWAHA.

Upon request, NWAHA will provide an itemized receipt or other reasonable documentation of payment for submission with an EFA reimbursement request. The parent or guardian is responsible for submitting the reimbursement request, providing any required supporting documentation, and complying with all EFA program requirements.

NWAHA does not determine whether a player, fee, purchase, or activity qualifies for reimbursement under the Arkansas EFA program and cannot guarantee approval of any reimbursement request. EFA eligibility, allowable expenses, reimbursement limits, documentation requirements, and approval decisions are determined by the Arkansas Department of Education and its designated EFA program administrator.

Denial, delay, reduction, or unavailability of EFA reimbursement does not alter the parent or guardian's financial obligation to NWAHA or extend NWAHA payment deadlines.

Participation in the EFA program does not create any additional right to a refund from NWAHA. All refunds, credits, withdrawals, and cancellations remain subject to NWAHA's applicable registration and refund policies.

SCHOLARSHIPS

The association currently has in place a limited scholarship fund. The principal of this fund is in an interest-bearing account. Interest generated by this account will be made available to skater's seeking financial help. Any skater seeking assistance from this fund must meet scholarship requirements and apply via a form available on the website. The form must be turned in by September 1st. Any requests received after this date will be subject to the availability of remaining funds.

SKATE-UP POLICY

As a general rule, NWAHA discourages skaters from competing with a higher age level. In most cases, the Association believes skaters are better served by skating at their age-appropriate levels. In rare instances, it is recognized that a skater may possess such advanced skills that skating up is warranted. If a skater desires to skate at a higher age classification, each of the following criteria must be met:

- At least two weeks prior to scheduled selection skates, the Skate-Up Request t Form must be submitted to the Board President and the Head of Coaches. (Appendix 1)
- The skater must skate out at both their age-appropriate level as well as the level they desire to skate at, unless otherwise approved by the Head of Coaches.
- After selection skates, the skater must be ranked in the top five (5) of all skaters at the higher age level.
- After considering the skater's age, size, experience, and physical and emotional maturity, the Head of Coaches and the Head Coach from each team in which the player tried out must endorse the skater's placement at the higher age level.
- Upon consideration of the numbers of skaters at each level, the Head of Coaches will present to the Board the case on whether moving the skater will adversely affect balance at either level. If the Board finds that moving the skater up will have a detrimental effect on numbers, it will not approve the request. A skater should not be moved up if it would directly result in higher-age-level skaters being cut from a travel team that would have otherwise made the team as determined by the Head of Coaches.
- Final approval for any skate-up request requires a vote of the Board.
- Any 8U player approved to skate up must comply with all current SAHA and USA Hockey play-up regulations, including any limitations on the number of players permitted to move up.

DUAL ROSTER PROCEDURE

From time to time, it may be appropriate for a team to include players on its roster from the next lower age classification. These dual rostered players can then be available to fill in temporarily when the team finds itself shorthanded. The dual rostered player's primary obligation will be to their age-appropriate team. Such a player will not compete for the higher age level team if it will adversely affect his/her obligation to their age-appropriate team. Every attempt to fill the position from the same age group and skill level will be made before pulling from a lower age group.

The intent of dual rostering is not to give a skater additional ice time on a permanent basis, but to temporarily assist teams with a critical shortage of players. If a need for a dual roster is identified for a given team, the players to be included will be determined as follows:

- The coach from the team in need of dual roster players will meet with the coach of the team below to identify which skaters are eligible for dual roster. Both coaches must agree that a particular skater is an appropriate choice.
- After the skaters are identified, the coaches will meet with the parents of the skaters to explain the dual roster and to seek the parent's consent.
- Upon obtaining consent, the coaches will submit the skater's name to the Board President for approval to add the name to the roster. If approved, the Registrar will add the name to the roster to be approved by SAHA.

DUAL ASSOCIATION POLICY

NWAHA Team players shall not participate in any other hockey association or associate with another competitive team during the regular SAHA season. The SAHA season normally runs continuously from August through March. Violation of this policy will result in the member being dismissed from the NWAHA with forfeiture of all registration and other fees. Dual association exceptions will normally be limited to participation in an in-house recreation league or high-school team. Exceptions must be approved on a case-by-case basis in advance of any dual association by the NWAHA Board in its sole discretion.

TRANSFER & RELEASE POLICY

It is the policy of the Association that it will not release skaters residing within a one-and-a-half-hour radius of the home rink to skate with teams of other associations unless otherwise required by SAHA or approved by the NWAHA Board. Families requesting a transfer or release for their skater should provide the Board a brief outline of the circumstances surrounding their request. The Board will review the request and approve or deny the request at the next scheduled Board meeting. Families must request transfers/releases each subsequent season following an initial approved transfer/release in accordance with SAHA transfer/release policy. Transfer requests should be filed no later than September 1.

NWAHA may consider rostering non-resident players in accordance with SAHA and USA Hockey rules. Participation in a selection skate does not guarantee roster placement or transfer approval. Any player residing within the boundaries of another member association must comply with applicable SAHA transfer, release, and residency requirements prior to being rostered with NWAHA. NWAHA may consider requests involving players who reside outside the Association's boundaries; however, approval is subject to applicable SAHA rules and restrictions regarding community-based hockey programs and player eligibility. All non-resident players remain subject to NWAHA policies, attendance expectations, and financial obligations. Travel distance, scheduling conflicts, or missed practices do not qualify for fee reductions or prorated assessments. NWAHA prohibits improper recruiting or circumvention of SAHA transfer procedures.

All regionally approved transfer and release decisions remain at the discretion of the NWAHA Board.

FACILITIES

NWAHA expects all players and team families to treat all facilities, including locker rooms, restrooms, ice rinks, hotels, lobbies, and all general areas with respect. The Association reserves the right to suspend a skater's skating privileges for abuse of any facilities.

All female players will have an adequate private area in which to dress, if required (e.g., Mites and Squirt age players generally do not require separate dressing room facilities).

ICE ACCESS

No players are allowed on the ice surface and the rink doors shall remain shut while the Zamboni is resurfacing. The only exception is an adult NWAHA member or game official who shall remain on the ice only long enough to move the goals. Players will not be allowed on the ice surface during NWAHA ice times unless a USA Hockey registered coach is present.

MANDATORY USE OF PROPER EQUIPMENT

Protective hockey equipment is important to the safety and well-being of all skaters participating in the sport of hockey. It is therefore the policy of the Association that all skaters must wear properly fitted and well-maintained protective equipment. All Association skaters for all games and practices must wear the following USA Hockey approved equipment:

- Helmet with face mask and securing straps (HECC approved)
- Colored mouth guard
- Shoulder Pads
- Elbow Pads
- Gloves
- Neck Guard
- Breezers with hip pads and thigh and tailbone protection
- Protective cup for boys / pelvic protector for girls

- Knee and Shin pads
- Hockey Skates
- Anyone on the bench, under the age of 18, must also wear a helmet

Tournament teams are permitted to wear official NWAHA jerseys and socks in any tournament or exhibition game. There is no requirement that practice jerseys be of similar or reverse colors as the official NWAHA jersey.

ELECTRONIC DEVICES

The use of one or two-way radios, cameras, microphones, lights or other electronic devices by a player during any on or off ice activity, shall be prohibited, unless worn specifically for medical purposes. Violation of this policy would result in missed practice time or game playing time.

OFFICIAL ICE HOGS UNIFORMS

All NWAHA teams will be known as the "Northwest Arkansas Ice Hogs" and will adhere to the standardized equipment, clothing, and dress code policies of the NWAHA. NWAHA team colors must be a combination of either black, red, or white and must be easily identified as a NWAHA team by displaying the NWAHA logo prominently on the jersey.

Players are required to purchase official jerseys and socks through NWAHA. Captain/assistant captain crests can be placed on the NWAHA jersey; otherwise, game jerseys must not be altered in any way. Travel team players must wear the NWAHA official team jerseys and socks for all scheduled games, together with black (preferred), red or white helmets and black pants. Goalies have flexibility on the helmet color requirement.

Alternative jerseys may be permissible with Board approval. Any and all jerseys must be easily identified as a NWAHA team by displaying the NWAHA logo on the jersey.

PLAYING TIME

To foster player development, all skaters on the same team shall be provided with equal ice time for practice. Recreation, 8U Mites, 10U Squirts; and any 12U Peewee or 14U Bantam team that is “C” level should be provided proportionate ice time over the course of a season in practice and in games in which they participate. This is based on the association philosophy that learning to play the game takes precedence over winning. This policy is designed to prepare players for competitive hockey while promoting accountability, commitment, and team success.

We also believe in developing competitive hockey players by balancing skill development, effort, and game performance. While every player will have opportunities to contribute, **playing time in games may not be equal** for those on travel level teams 12U B level and above.

Coaches may allocate playing time based on the following factors:

- **Effort & Work Ethic:** Players who consistently give their best effort in practices and games will be rewarded with more ice time.
- **Attendance & Commitment:** Players who miss practices or games without prior communication and coach’s approval may see reduced ice time.
- **Coachability & Attitude:** Players who show a positive attitude, respect coaches and teammates, and remain engaged will earn more opportunities.
- **Game Situations:** In certain game situations (power plays, penalty kills, close-score situations), ice time may be allocated strategically based on skill sets and team needs.

- **Positioning & Role:** Certain positions and special teams may require different playing time allocation based on game strategies.

All players of the same team will receive equal practice ice time to foster skill development and improvement. Players are expected to attend and participate fully in practices to maintain their role in game situations.

The Head Coach will provide playing time expectations to all parents and players and communicate this during the team's pre-season Parent Meeting. If a parent or player has concerns about ice time during games, they must follow the 24-hour rule before discussing with the coach. Players are encouraged to take personal responsibility by speaking with coaches to understand what they can do to earn more ice time.

FUNDRAISING AND VOLUNTEER HOURS

The Association will provide fundraising opportunities to help reduce overall ice fees for the association. In some cases, fundraising may allow members a means of earning a portion of their skater fees. The Fundraising Committee and the Board shall determine what fundraising events the association will participate in. As part of this process, they will also determine which events will be "mandatory" events (if any) requiring association wide participation and which events will be voluntary and used for direct skater fee reductions. The mandatory fundraising events for the upcoming season will be identified at registration.

COACH SELECTION

COACHING ELIGIBILITY

Head coaches and assistant coaches must be knowledgeable about the rules and regulations governing amateur ice hockey and must abide by the rules of NWAHA, SAHA, and USA Hockey. The Head of Coaches will make annual recommendations for Head Coach appointments to be approved by the Board. Applicants will be reviewed based on various criteria including, but not limited to, hockey knowledge and experience, coaching skills, ability to interact and communicate with children and parents, results of surveys (sent one to two times per year by the Head of Coaches) and history with NWAHA. **All matters discussed in selecting coaching staff are confidential and will not be disclosed to third parties.**

Eligibility for coaching includes but is not limited to:

- Submittal of a complete coaching application.
- Consent for Criminal Background History Check as required by USA Hockey

Coaches who decline either of the above will not be permitted to participate with a NWAHA Team. Any person who has been convicted of sexual or physical abuse of a child is ineligible to coach for NWAHA. The Board will not knowingly appoint such a person to a coaching position or any other position within the association.

COACHING REQUIREMENTS

- Head Coaches may not hold a NWAHA Board position unless Board approved.
- Coaches less than eighteen (18) years old will be used at the discretion of NWAHA and must comply to USA Hockey Student Coach requirements. Student Coaches
- Become familiar and comply with the USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct, the NWAHA Coaching Ethics Code (Appendix 2) and the NWAHA Coaches Code of Conduct (Appendix 4).
- Sign the NWAHA Coaching Ethics Code (Appendix 2) each season.
- All Head Coaches must have:
- USA Hockey registration number (as a coach)

- Complete a background screening (as mentioned above)
- Complete USA Hockey Safe Sport training
- Complete the Foundation of Player Development prerequisite
- Complete online age-specific module(s) for the age level of play they are coaching.
- No coach shall consume alcoholic beverages before a scheduled game or practice.

COACHING RESPONSIBILITIES

To Individual Players:

- Coaches are to provide a safe and healthy environment for the skaters and will familiarize themselves with concussion signs and protocol.
- Coaches are to provide fair opportunities for participation on special teams.
- Coaches are to treat all players with dignity at all times.
- Coaches are reminded that skaters at all levels are still children and are encouraged to promote the fun aspect of the sport.
- Coaches are encouraged to play all skaters at all positions, including goalie, and continue this practice through the 10U Squirt level to ensure a better understanding of the game as well as to facilitate overall development.
- Coaches should regularly check all players' equipment to make sure it meets safety standards.

To the Team:

- Coaches are to exemplify qualities of good sportsmanship, conduct, and other positive traits that they expect from their players. It is never appropriate for coaches to take illicit drugs, to use tobacco during a game or practice, to attend a game or practice while intoxicated, or to drink in excess in the presence of the team.
- Coaches are expected to foster team spirit and actively encourage cohesiveness and camaraderie.
- Coaches are to work to develop maximum team effort and play, as opposed to encouraging individual play.
- Coaches are expected to maintain and uphold team discipline. In exercising discipline, coaches should deal with unacceptable behavior immediately and uniformly.
- Coaches and assistant coaches are responsible for the equal development of players on their team to the best of the coaches' and players' abilities.
- All coaches are responsible for making their players aware of the USA Hockey Players Code of Conduct as stated in the USA Hockey Annual Guide and enforcing the NWAHA Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct (Appendix 5) and NWAHA Player Code of Conduct (Appendix 6).

To the Parents:

- Coaches should hold a beginning of season meeting immediately following team selection to communicate team expectations and policy and procedures, including USA Hockey Rule 601 (Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct), Rule 603 (Attempt to Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponents), Rule 607 (Checking from Behind), Rule 613 (Fighting), Rule 615 (Gross Misconduct) and Rule 625 (Leaving the Player's Bench or Penalty Bench).
- Coaches should always provide an atmosphere of open communication with parents.
- Coaches are responsible for discussing and explaining their expectations for the season.

To the Association:

- Coaches are expected to be supportive of the NWAHA philosophy and guidelines.
- Coaches are reminded that they are representatives of NWAHA and that their attitudes and behaviors not only reflect themselves, but the club as well and therefore must uphold a high standard of conduct.

- All coaches will become familiar and comply with the USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct and the NWAHA Coaches Code of Conduct, if applicable.
- Coaches should familiarize themselves with basic first aid procedures and should make every effort to attend first aid clinics, as they become available.
- Coaching staff must review and reinforce USA Hockey Rules specifically USA Hockey Rule 601 (Abuse of Officials and Other Misconduct), Rule 603 (Attempt to Injure/Deliberate Injury of Opponents), Rule 607 (Checking from Behind), Rule 613 (Fighting), Rule 615 (Gross Misconduct) and Rule 625 (Leaving the Player's Bench or Penalty Bench).

DISMISSAL OF COACHES:

Coaches may be dismissed by the NWAHA Board or Head of Coaches for the following:

- Noncompliance with USA Hockey, SAHA or NWAHA rules, regulations, policies or procedures.
- Violations of the Coaching Ethics Code.
- Mistreatment of players (physical, emotional or psychological abuse).
- Misappropriation of team funds.
- Failure to fulfill commitments to the Team (e.g. recurring absences from practices or games).
- Failure to provide adequate team instruction.
- Failure to maintain player discipline.
- Failure to work with the assistant coaches or Team manager in a respectful manner.
- Physical or verbal abuse of parents, referees, opposing coaches, or NWAHA officials.
- Failure to enforce or comply with the NWAHA Policies & Procedures.

The foregoing list is not exclusive, and the Board reserves the right to determine if dismissal is in order in its sole discretion and without the consent of players or parents of the affected Team.

PLAYER EVALUATION PLACEMENT PROCEDURES

PLAYER PLACEMENT PROCESS

Selection Skates for all travel teams will be led by the appointed Head Coach(s), other coaches as necessary, with oversight from the Head of Coaches and Head of Player Development. Team placements will be based on evaluation scores, prior season performance, attendance, coachability, and team dynamics.

Session Format

Only skaters, coaches, and evaluators will be allowed in the rink area during Selection Skate sessions. Parents and other family members will be asked to remain outside of the ice rink. The Selection Skate placement procedure will consist of multiple sessions for each age level. All sessions will concentrate on both individual skills and competitive situations. The skills will focus on hockey fundamentals, i.e. skating skills, stickhandling and shooting. The competitive situations will focus on game type situations including team play.

Placement Considerations

When making placements in the placement meeting, skills and position will be considered foremost. Secondarily, input from past coaches regarding such things as coachability, physical, mental and emotional maturity, and attitude will be considered. All teams within each age level will have an equal number of skaters whenever possible.

- Goalie Placements: Goalies will be rated during the selection skatet skill sessions. If necessary, separate goalie sessions will also be used. There is a maximum of two rostered goalies permitted per travel team.
- Missed Sessions: Any player that misses a session will be evaluated on the sessions they attend, the input from previous coaches, and the coaches of the current level. If a player does not attend the Selection Skate sessions, they may be evaluated by the coaches of that level in conjunction with team practices.
- Vacancies: If, after selection skates, a team permanently loses a player or players to such things as injury or family relocation, the Head of Coaches will determine if adding a player from the next lowest team is warranted. If it is determined that such a move is warranted, consensus on chosen player(s) will be obtained from the coaches of both teams, the skater, and the parents or legal guardians.
- Selection Skatet Grievance Procedures: NWAHA will assign hockey players to appropriate teams based on our Association's evaluation and selection process. The Association volunteers strive to make these team placements a fair and positive experience for all families. Any grievances or issues regarding the evaluation or placement process must be made in writing to the Head of Coaches describing in detail the basis for the request for review.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES DURING SELECTION SKATES

Parents should not approach, talk to, or attempt to influence evaluators before, during, or after Selection Skate sessions. Communications should be restricted to the NWAHA administrative official(s) coordinating the Selection Skates.

PLAYER AND PARENT COMMITMENTS

Players and parents must be agreeable to the major commitment of time, energy, and money to travel hockey during the season, which will begin in early August and may last until late March. Once selected, players are expected to fulfill their commitment to the team for the entire season. Conflicts with "select" or other teams must be avoided. Failure to honor such commitments may result in a player's suspension of all team play or dismissal from NWAHA.

TEAM GUIDELINES

Each NWAHA Team is responsible for its own business and must coordinate with NWAHA to ensure no conflicts exist. Each Team will be assigned Head and Assistant Coaches. Any member wanting to volunteer as Team Manager should reach out to the Head Coach. Head coaches will select a Team Manager prior to the start of the season parent meeting. To avoid conflict of interest, Head Coaches may not be selected as Team Manager. Assistant Coaches will not be selected as Team Manager unless Board approved.

TEAM RULES

Head Coaches may adopt appropriate team rules governing the conduct of team players. This may include, among other things, game dress codes, arrival times before games, and procedures on notification of absences. Team rules must be consistent with the substance of NWAHA Policies and Procedures and communicated to the players and their parents in writing. A copy of the team rules should be provided to the Head of Coaches. The Head of Coaches will approve and provide copies to the Board President.

GENDER-NEUTRAL AND NON-DISCRIMINATION

Coaches and Team Managers will ensure a gender-neutral environment for all team meetings and discussions. Gender-neutral is defined as fully clothed, excluding gloves, helmets, and skates.

All coaches and players will follow USA Hockey Guidelines and NWAHA policies in preventing gender harassment and discrimination.

LOCKER ROOM POLICY

In addition to the development of our hockey players and enjoyment of the sport of hockey, the safety and protection of our participants is central to NWAHA's goals. NWAHA adheres to USA Hockey's SafeSport Program as a means to help protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of misconduct, including emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing. To help prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring in our locker rooms, NWAHA has adopted the following locker room policy. This policy is designed to maintain personal privacy as well as to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms.

At the Jones Center there are locker rooms available for our program's use. Some teams in our program may also occasionally or regularly travel to play games at other arenas, and those locker rooms, rest rooms and shower facilities will vary from location to location. NWAHA team organizers will attempt to provide information on the locker room facilities in advance of games away from our home arena. At arenas for which you are unfamiliar, parents should plan to have extra time and some flexibility in making arrangements for their child to dress and undress and shower.

- **Locker Room Monitoring:** NWAHA has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas (e.g., generally 30-45 minutes before and following practices and games). It is the policy of USA Hockey that all Affiliates, Districts, Leagues, and local hockey Programs have at least one responsible adult present directly monitoring the locker room during all team events to assure that only participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel, and family members are permitted in the locker room and to supervise the conduct in the locker room. Any individual meetings with a minor participant and a coach in a locker room shall require a responsible adult be with the coach. Further, responsible adults must personally monitor the locker room environment at all times while participants are present and also make sure the locker room is appropriately secured during times when minor participants are on the ice. Teams, Leagues, and local hockey Associations shall also comply with the USA Hockey Co-ed locker room policy.

- **Parent in Locker Rooms:** Except for players at the younger age groups (Minis and Mites), we discourage parents from entering locker rooms unless it is truly necessary. If a player needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear, if the player is or may be injured, or a player's disability warrants assistance, then we ask that parents let the coach know beforehand that he or she will be helping the player. Naturally, with our youngest age groups it is necessary for parents to assist the players getting dressed. We encourage parents to teach their players as young as possible how to get dressed so that players will learn as early as possible how to get dressed independently. In circumstances where parents are permitted in the locker room, coaches are permitted to ask that the parents leave for a short time before the game and for a short time after the game so that the coaches may address the players. As players get older, the coach may in his or her discretion prohibit parents from a locker room.

- **Co-Ed Locker Rooms**: Head Coaches are responsible for selecting, clearly communicating, and ensuring that their team consistently follows an approved dressing/undressing option outlined below. For the purposes of this policy, sports bras, underwear, and jocks are *not* considered base layers.

  (Copied from USA hockey Safe Sport Program Handbook pages 21-22)

  As a team sport in which youth teams can often include players of different genders, special circumstances may exist that can increase the chance of abuse or misconduct. If the team consists of players of different genders, the privacy rights of all players must be given consideration and appropriate arrangements made. It is not acceptable under USA Hockey's Sexual Misconduct Policy for persons to be observing the opposite gender while they dress or undress. There are a variety of ways

to comply with the above tenets, and what works may depend on the locker rooms that are available at a particular Facility. Although there are likely other acceptable ways to accommodate teams of different genders, below are some other options for compliance with USA Hockey's Co-ed Locker Room Policy:

a. *Minimum Attire.* Have a minimum attire policy if sharing one locker room. All players should be required to arrive at the rink wearing their hockey base layers or shorts and t-shirts (in good condition – no holes or tears in clothing) under their street clothes. All members of the team must have this minimum attire before entering a co-ed locker room so that no player of one gender has the opportunity to see players of the opposite gender in a state of dress/undress. If a player is not wearing the required minimum attire, that player can be directed to a restroom or private area to change into his/her minimum attire before entering the locker room.

b. *Separate Locker Rooms.* A second option is for the program to have players of different genders change/ dress in separate, supervised locker rooms. Then approximately ten (10) to fifteen (15) minutes before each game/practice everyone is to be ready in gear in one designated locker room so the coach can address the entire team. If a player is not fully dressed by the time the coach arrives, then *that player* must go to a separate locker room or bathroom to finish dressing. The onus is on the players being properly dressed when the coaches begin preparing the team for the practice or game.

c. *Alternate Use of One Locker Room.* Another option is the alternate use of a single locker room. Players of one gender dress in the locker room while players of the opposite gender wait outside. When the one group is ready (this may mean dressed in gear but not skates and helmets), then the players switch places and the players in gear wait for players of opposite gender to get dressed. No coaching is to be done until all the players are together in the locker room. Taking turns is a means of reasonable accommodation; neither gender group should be favored, nor should one group be the group who always has to wait to change.

Where possible, when players of different genders are together in the locker room, there should be at least two adults in the locker room that have completed SafeSport Training and been properly screened in compliance with USA Hockey Screening Policy. USA Hockey would consider it acceptable to have one locker room monitor immediately outside the locker room and regularly checking in on the locker room, but two locker room monitors is always preferable. If there are two monitors, then they can monitor from inside the locker room. Having only one monitor inside a locker room can expose that person to allegations or possible policy violations, so a second person can help protect one another from allegations. The USA Hockey Safe Sport website (usahockey.com/safesportprogram) contains sample approaches that may be used by a Member Program depending on the facilities available at a particular arena.

- **Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices:** Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, are not permitted in the locker rooms. If phones or other mobile devices must be used, they should be taken outside of the locker room. It may be permissible to have a team manager, or designated parent volunteer collect phones.

- **Prohibited Conduct and Reporting:** The NWAHA organization prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook. Participants, employees or volunteers in NWAHA may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of these locker room policies or for engaging in any misconduct or abuse or

that violates the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Reports of any actual or suspected violations, you may email USA Hockey at SafeSport@usahockey.org or may call 1-800-888-4656.

SAFETY

Safety is a priority in NWAHA. In case of minor injuries first aid will be administered. Should an injury be serious the proper authorities will be contacted (parents, 911, etc.). As part of the continuity of safety, parents are responsible for ensuring proper fitting equipment, its protective quality, and proper equipment maintenance.

CONCUSSION AWARENESS

It is the responsibility of the coaching staff to underscore concussion awareness with his/her players and their parents. During the pre-season talk, coaches should remind players never to hit another player from behind or in the head due to the possible health impacts.

The most likely concussion in hockey is from a hit to the chest that stops the body and the player's head snaps forward causing brain impact in the skull. A concussion is a type of traumatic brain injury — or TBI — caused by a bump or blow to the head or by a hit to the body that causes the head and brain to move quickly back and forth. Bouncing or twisting of the brain in the skull can cause chemical changes and sometimes stretching of the brain cells. A concussion disrupts the way the brain normally works. Most concussions are mild, but all concussions should be taken seriously because permanent brain damage and death can occur from another injury. A concussion may be difficult to recognize. A person does not have to be "knocked-out" to have a concussion. Less than 10% of persons concussed actually lose consciousness. Signs and symptoms may show up right after the injury or can take hours or days to fully appear. Do not attempt to treat a concussion. Always consult a physician.

RETURN TO PLAY

It is NWAHA Policy not to send a player back on the ice unless that player has fully recovered from injury. In the event of a concussion, the player may not return to play without a physician's approval and be symptom free both at rest and while exercising. If any symptoms return, the player should be removed from play and re-evaluated by a physician. A USA Hockey Concussion Management Return to Play Form (Appendix 8) is required before returning to the ice.

Team Managers are required to complete the NWAHA Accident Report Form (Appendix 7) for any serious injury (concussion, broken bones, etc) occurring in connection with the Team's activities and provide the completed form to the NWAHA President as soon as reasonably possible.

TEAM MANAGER

A successful hockey season is the responsibility of the Manager and the Coaching staff. The Manager should work closely with the head coach(es) to clarify practice and game scheduling policy and communicate this to parents and serve as the conduit of information between the coaches and parents/skaters (in both directions), and to coordinate tournaments etc. The Team Manager must:

- Solicit assistance and assign responsibilities such as tournament registration, hotel booking, water bottles, team social events, etc., to additional parents on the team.
- Distribute information to coach and team members concerning practices and game schedules.
- Schedule all games by being the lead communication point for the team when booking opponents and maintaining the team schedule.
- Attend league scheduling meetings to coordinate in league games with awareness of playdown requirements. (travel teams only)

- Schedule scrimmage games at the discretion of the Head Coach.
- Coordinate a meeting, in conjunction with the Head Coach, of team parents and coaches shortly after the team is formed to review association/team/coach philosophies, review schedules and answer or identify remaining questions that parents may have about the upcoming season.
- Work with the coaches and parent volunteers to schedule tournaments and organize travel arrangements.
- Identify need and appetite for team funds to cover additional tournaments and other team activities.
- Ensure proper financial accounting, record-keeping, and reporting in compliance with NWAHA Policies & Procedures.
- Update the Scheduling app/website with team schedule and confirmed games.
- For Games: Create roster labels and provide three for every game. Provide a scoresheet for every home game to be presented to the on-ice officials before the game. Collect the score sheet after every game & ideally share the score sheet image with coaches and/or parents.
- Recruit and coordinate off-ice officials from among the parents on the team, and coordinate their training in running the clock, penalty box, score sheet, etc.
- Ensure that the USA Hockey code of conduct is communicated to all parents at the beginning of the season.
- Managers can be reimbursed for expenditure during the season not to exceed $100.
- Complete Accident Report Form (Appendix 7) for any injury occurring in connection with the Team's activities.
- Be step one in the complaint reporting process for any problems or concerns within the team. If difficulties cannot be resolved, the Manager will present the situation to the Age Board Representative Director pursuant to the Dispute Resolution Procedure. (Appendix 9)

TEAM FUNDING AND FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING

Team Budget

NWAHA requires each team to decide if they will establish a team budget at a parent's meeting early in the season, preferably at the first meeting. Due to the nature of the game, High School Teams are required to establish a budget. Team budgets must comply with all NWAHA guidelines. The team budget will specify the dollar figure that each player is projected to contribute.

- Funding for Team Functions: Team participants are solely responsible for all funding for Team activities and functions, tournaments, and other games. Participants will share costs equally based on player participation in each activity.
- Expenses for Team Coaches: When the coaches of a Team do not have a child participating on the team, NWAHA families should defray travel costs for the coaching staff, including payment for the cost of single room, a reasonable per diem for meals, and mileage rates based on current IRS rates.
    - Any limits on a maximum stipend to be communicated to the coach at the start of each season.
    - The coach will turn in receipts for reimbursement.
- Funding Challenges: Players and parents who anticipate difficulty paying the Team fees and costs, above and beyond registration fees, should discuss the situation with the Team Manager or coaching staff at the earliest possible time. When possible and with early notice, NWAHA recommends that the Team provide opportunities for an installment payment plan. If a player is unable to fulfill the team fee obligations via installment payments or otherwise becomes and remains delinquent in remitting payments, it is the expectation of NWAHA that all reasonable alternatives will be explored before a player is excluded from play.

Team Accounting

Each Team is required to maintain an accounting of all receipts and expenditures in connection with the Team. All cash transactions should be evidenced by a receipt in writing.

- Team Bank Account: Each team may utilize a bank account or online account (i.e., Venmo, Paypal, etc.) independent from the NWAHA bank account for use as a team fund. The Age Board Representative and Team Manager are required to be signers on a checking account, if applicable.
- Financial Reporting: Each Team Manager will be responsible to provide parents a financial report no later than the following dates: January 15th, (interim report for the period ending December 31st), and a March 30th (final report to cover the full season).
- Excess Funds: Excess funds in the team account at the end of a season should be returned to team parents, utilized for an appropriate team purpose as agreed to by a majority of the parents, or turned over to the NWAHA when the funds were raised through any form of public solicitation made in the name of youth hockey and representing NWAHA. No person may receive at season end more than the proportionate share of funds actually contributed. (e.g., if a person has fundraised $810.00 and contributed $100 in cash for a total of $910 with actual spending of $600, then they can only receive $100 at year end).
- Consent to Audit: The NWAHA Board can review or audit the bank and other financial records of any Team at any time. The Team financial records must be provided to the Board within seven (7) days of a written request.
- Referee and Ice Times: All referee and ice times should be managed through the NWAHA Treasurer regardless of team level for all league games. Referees for friendly games will be paid for by the team.

Team Fundraising Guidelines

Fundraising efforts are authorized for Team participants and will be approved by the Board on a case-by-case basis to ensure no conflicts exist between NWAHA and the Team's efforts. Direct public support can be requested through activities such as candy sales, car washes, etc., provided that they align with NWAHA policies and procedures. All fundraising programs must be included in the team budgets, discussed and approved at a team meeting, comply with the NWAHA guidelines and state and municipal laws and be well supervised and controlled. Failure to participate in fundraising activities may not be held against a player or parent in any way, and NWAHA will support all players even if they or their parents do not participate in fundraising activities.

Teams may plan, budget and fundraise only for the following are permissible team purposes:

- Tournament team registration fees.
- Special Team hockey jerseys and socks (one away and one home set).
- The cost of one hotel room, per diem, and travel expenses for coaching staff at away tournaments, if the coaches are not parents of players on the team.
- Additional ice time.
- Referees for exhibition games.
- Team articles such as pylons, pucks, and first aid kits.
- Costs for the end of the year banquet or party and trophies/awards.
- Other related Team expenses such as clerical needs.

Fundraising for any other items or purposes not identified above must be approved by the Board. Fundraising may not be utilized for individual gain.

Team Sponsorships

Team sponsorships are subject to approval by the Board. Team sponsorships are the sole responsibility of the Team. Each team may have as many sponsors as needed to raise sufficient funds. NWAHA will not allow or

approve sponsorships from businesses which directly endorse the use of alcohol, tobacco, or drugs. The Board reserves the right to reject any proposed team sponsorship.

- Any special logos for team banners or tournament programs should be provided by the sponsor and approved by the Board. Other forms of sponsor recognition must be approved by NWAHA and must follow the spirit of these guidelines.
- The Team Representative or Manager has the following assigned duties regarding sponsors: obtaining the approval from the Board; maintaining regular verbal or written contact with the sponsors; and delivering a team token of gratitude to the sponsor, as early as possible.

CODES OF CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY MEASURES

GENERAL CONDUCT

Members must adhere to all NWAHA codes of conduct. Players and coaches must show respect for the game, their opponents, the officials and the fans. Those violating the Policies & Procedures of NWAHA, the ice rinks, displaying unruly conduct, or causing off ice altercations before, during or after games in or around the rinks may be disciplined. Any Board member witnessing such violations at a NWAHA event must immediately refer the matter to the Disciplinary Committee for review.

- **Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct:** All parents/guardians and players will be required to sign the Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct during the registration process. The Code of Conduct is designed to help parents/guardians understand their role with their player's participation in hockey. Players of parents/guardians refusing to sign the agreement will not be registered by NWAHA.

- **Conduct of Officials:** It is the expectation of NWAHA that referees and linesmen will demonstrate positive conduct towards the game of hockey and all participants. Mutual respect between officials and all players, coaches and parents should be exhibited in all divisions.

- **Drug and Alcohol Policy:** During team activities, persons transporting players must not be under the influence of alcohol or illegal drugs. NWAHA supports zero tolerance. Participants transporting players in an impaired condition are subject to suspensions or other appropriate discipline, including debarment from the NWAHA.

- **Harassment and Abuse Policy:** NWAHA prohibits harassment or abuse. Upon receipt of a harassment/abuse allegation, an individual/committee as designated by the Board will review the situation and make recommendations for follow-up. The individual/committee reserves the right to forward allegations to the Police or Child Protective Services. Harassment of volunteers will not be tolerated and is grounds for possible suspension from NWAHA.

- **Board Disciplinary Authority:** The NWAHA Board reserves the right to take disciplinary actions against any player, coach, parent, guardian, spectator, Board member or other individuals associated with the NWAHA for good cause as determined by the Board in its sole discretion. This may include, but is not limited to, probation, suspension from games or practices, exclusion from games, practices or other activities or dismissal or debarment from the NWAHA. Disciplinary action against a parent may be enforced

by suspending or excluding the player from games or practices if the parent fails to abide by the NWAHA Board's action. Any player subject to a suspension must be provided a hearing. Board discipline shall be imposed fairly, consistently and in relation to the wrongdoing but without regard to the player's importance to his/her Team.

PLAYER BEHAVIOR AND CONDUCT

Learning Environment
The NWAHA Board and its coaches, team managers and parents all have a vested interest in providing a safe, fun-filled environment for each player. In return, each skater must understand that coaches, assistant coaches and volunteer parents are to be treated with respect and consideration. NWAHA players are expected to be attentive to coaches' directions and instructions and to avoid disruption. The NWAHA Board will support the coaching staff in cases where reasonable discipline must be exercised in order to maintain an organized and enjoyable learning environment.

Hockey Core Values
All players are responsible for upholding the USA Hockey Core Values as stated in the USA Hockey Annual Guide and in the NWAHA Policies & Procedures. These ideals should be communicated to the players through their respective coaches.

Player Code of Conduct
All players will be required to sign the Player Code of Conduct attached as Appendix 6. The Code of Conduct is designed to help players understand their role and the standard of conduct expected of them. Players who refuse to sign the agreement will not be registered by NWAHA. Suspensions will be assessed for offenses as specified on the Player Code of Conduct and/or for violations of the Policies & Procedures of NWAHA. Team coaches and Managers are responsible for enforcing the Code of Conduct and the NWAHA Policies & Procedures and for notifying the NWAHA Board immediately of any player offenses. The NWAHA Board reserves the right to suspend or dismiss players refusing to abide by the Code of Conduct, NWAHA Policies & Procedures or suspensions assessed.

Punctuality
Players should be punctual to practice and to games. Ice time is valuable and should not be wasted. All participants should arrive at games and practices as directed by coaches in sufficient time to allow for suiting up and the necessary pre-game/practice instruction and/or warm-up.

Attendance
Reliable attendance is essential to personal skill development and the development of team continuity. Unexcused absences may have an impact on game playing time.

Theft/Vandalism
Any participant found guilty of theft or vandalism in connection with any team activities will be subject to dismissal immediately from the NWAHA program without refund.

Behavior
All applicable hotel and ice-rink rules and regulations must be adhered to while away from the home rink. NWAHA's policies regarding theft/vandalism apply to all hotels where players and parents lodge. The

parent/guardian will ultimately be responsible and held accountable for the conduct and behavior of their player.

PLAYER DISCIPLINE

The NWAHA Board, in its discretion, may act as an independent disciplinary committee to review serious or repeated misconduct offenses and determine appropriate action. Coaches must advise the NWAHA President and Disciplinary Committee of all full game suspensions and the reasons via the Player Discipline Notification Form. The Disciplinary Committee will also serve as part of a required USA Hockey practice of reviewing match, game, or gross penalties received by any NWAHA player. Players receiving abnormal amounts of minor or major penalties will be referred to the Disciplinary Committee and may receive additional suspensions or other discipline. USA Hockey Bylaw 10 must be followed when imposing discipline.

- **Right to a Hearing:** Any volunteer, player, or parent of the affected player will be given a hearing in front of the Disciplinary Committee. The committee must hold a hearing within 30 days unless a later date is agreed upon by the parties and approved by the Committee.
- **Notice of Hearing**: The hearing committee must provide at least 7 days' notice of the hearing, which shall include time and place of the hearing, the manner in which the hearing will be conducted, the grounds for any proposed suspension or discipline, the possible consequences of an adverse finding, and the issues to be resolved by the panel.
- **Right to Appeal:** The affected persons, if not satisfied with the decision of the Disciplinary Committee may appeal to the Board of Directors, and if still not satisfied, they may appeal to SAHA. Requests for an appeal hearing must be in writing and comply with all NWAHA policies and procedures and be received within 7 days of the Disciplinary Committee's decision. Any suspension or other action will remain in effect until the appeal is heard and decided on by the Board of Directors.
- **Players Under Suspension:** Players under suspension (other than the originating game) are only allowed within the spectator area of the arena while their team is playing. They are not allowed in the dressing room or bench area. In addition, penalties and punishments carry over from league to league. For example, if a player gets a game penalty in a High School contest and is next scheduled to play in a President's Day tournament with his or her league team, the penalty carries over to the league team. If the penalty occurs in league play, the penalty must also carry over to the next league game, which could result in a two (2) game suspension for a one (1) game penalty. To the extent that this provision conflicts with current MAIHA-YD or MASHAL rules, MAIHA-YD or MASHAL rules will apply.
- **Checking from Behind, Minor/Major Penalties, Deliberate Attempt to Injure:** NWAHA will adhere to all USA Hockey, SAHA, and league rules. Coaches must advise the NWAHA President and Disciplinary Committee of all player discipline and the reasons via the Player Discipline Notification Form within 24 hours of the occurrence.

DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCESS

As a not-for-profit organization whose services are provided by volunteer effort, NWAHA has established this Dispute Resolution Process to provide an efficient, orderly and uniform method of resolving disciplinary disputes and grievances. This process provides the exclusive remedy to resolve disputes.

A "grievance" is defined as any conflict, dispute, or disagreement between Members, who allege a violation of NWAHA Policies & Procedures or SAHA or USA Hockey rules and policies. All Members should attempt to resolve grievances expeditiously and fairly at the lowest possible level within the Dispute Resolution Procedure. Grievances must allege a specific violation of the NWAHA, SAHA, or USA Hockey rules, policies or procedures.

Unless the nature of the grievance requires immediate attention, NWAHA members are required to wait at least twenty-four hours after the event or incident before initiating these procedures. Premature grievances may be deferred by the Coaches or the Team Managers until expiration of this cooling-off period.

Coaches and Team Managers should work with the Members involved to resolve the grievance internally in an expeditious and fair manner. If the grievance is not resolved by the Coach or Team Manager, the Member should then contact the Age Representative Board Member and complete the Grievance Form. This will escalate the grievance to the Disciplinary Committee for further review. The person(s) filing a complaint may skip any step and file directly with the Board if necessary.

Any SafeSport violations must be reported to the Board/Disciplinary Committee immediately and/or reported directly to SafeSport. USA Hockey Safe Sport Program. Any Board member receiving a notice of a SafeSport violation is required to report it to SafeSport immediately.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Some problems may not be resolvable by the Coaches or Team Managers at the team level using the beginning of the Dispute Resolution process or some complaints, by their nature, may cause the Participant(s) to be concerned about discussing the matter with the Team Manager(s) or coaching staff. The Disciplinary Committee is charged with the overall responsibility and authority for hearing and resolving disciplinary issues involving participating players, coaches, and parents of the NWAHA.

- **Relationship to USA Hockey and SAHA Rules:** NWAHA will comply fully with the rules of USA Hockey and SAHA. The Disciplinary Committee is specifically barred from waiving or imposing an action less severe than that called for by the rules of USA Hockey or SAHA.

- **Membership and Quorum:** The Disciplinary Committee must be composed of one representative from each age group who is not otherwise holding a current Board position as members. The Vice President is the Chair of the Disciplinary Committee, but does not vote on matters before the committee. The Vice President will nominate potential members who must then be approved by the NWAHA Board. Although members of the Disciplinary Committee must be NWAHA members, the Committee may call on up to two consultants who are not NWAHA members to aid in the dispute resolution process on an ad hoc basis. Each member will serve until NWAHA's next annual membership meeting. Members of the Disciplinary Committee may serve multiple terms. A majority of the appointed members constitutes a quorum. Decisions of the Disciplinary Committee are determined by a simple majority of voting members, provided a quorum is present. Members of the Disciplinary Committee may vote on matters involving their own teams but are expected to exercise sound judgment in determining whether a particular situation may represent a conflict. Members of the Disciplinary Committee must excuse themselves from all matters involving themselves or a family member and may excuse themselves from other matters when they cannot exercise sound judgment.

- **Specific Authorities and Responsibilities:** Specific authorities and responsibilities of the Disciplinary Committee are:
    - To review major, match, and misconduct penalties involving coaches and players as needed;
    - To hear complaints of misconduct involving coaches, players, parents, fans, and teams as needed;
    - To determine and assess disciplinary action against players, coaches, parents, fans, and teams, as considered appropriate in the circumstances, up to and including suspension or dismissal from the team and forfeiture of games;
    - To maintain a record of and report to the NWAHA Board of all actions taken;

    - To report other matters of which the NWAHA Board should be aware that may come to its attention as a result of its activities;
    - To compel the appearance and testimony of a player, coach, or parent at a hearing or compel production of score sheets, video tapes, and other documentation in the possession of a coach, player, member, or representative of the NWAHA;
    - To solicit statements, testimony, evidence, or other documentation from interested parties other than players, coaches, and NWAHA members, as considered necessary in the sole judgment of the Disciplinary Committee;
        - Must establish the facts and the violation of rules or bylaws by a preponderance of evidence (i.e., more likely true than not true); and
    - To establish such procedures as it considers necessary to conduct its activities.
- **Time and Place of Meetings:** The Disciplinary Committee will meet as necessary during the season. The exact date and time of such meetings will be established by the Vice President and communicated to all affected parties.
- **Process for Appeal:** Decisions of the Disciplinary Committee may be appealed to the NWAHA Board by sending a request in writing to the Board President. The Board will convene a special meeting to hear the appeal within ten (10) days of receiving the written notice of appeal. Any actions taken by the Disciplinary Committee will continue in effect until the NWAHA Board hears and rules on the appeal.

DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The Disciplinary Committee will initially review the grievance and determine whether it should formally consider the matter. In some cases, the Committee may determine that a grievance can best be resolved through mediation between the parties. In the event that the Committee decides to hear the matter, the NWAHA Vice President must notify the party against whom the grievance has been filed. Once the Committee has decided to hear a grievance, it will determine if enough facts are known to make a decision on the matter. If not, the Committee may direct that an investigation be conducted. Once the investigation has been completed, the Investigator must prepare a Report of Investigation. The Disciplinary Committee will review the Report of Investigation, consider any written response made by the person against whom the grievance has been filed, and determine whether further investigation is necessary. The Committee may direct that further investigation be conducted and request any person to appear before the Committee to assist a resolution. If the grievance is not resolved to the satisfaction of the Members, then the Members may pursue an appeal to the Board of Directors within ten days of the decision; and then to SAHA within ten days of the Board decision. Filing a formal grievance with SAHA should be considered the last resort. Detailed Disciplinary Committee Procedures must be provided to all parties at the time of the grievance.

SUSPENSIONS

There are very few situations that allow USA Hockey, or any Affiliate, local league or organization, Council, Committee or Section, to suspend a Member without providing a hearing prior to the suspension. The limited circumstances where a suspension may be imposed prior to a hearing are:

- **Playing Rules Suspensions:** Suspensions where a playing rule expressly permits the suspension – if the suspension is a result of a Match Penalty, a playing rule hearing is required pursuant to USA Hockey Bylaw 10.C
- **Assault of a Game Official:** An immediate suspension occurs if a match penalty is assessed for assault on a game official, with a subsequent hearing under USA Hockey Bylaw 10.C
- **Summary Suspension:** A summary suspension is an emergency action to quickly halt activity when there's belief of a serious risk or non-compliance. The suspension is immediate and temporary and takes effect without a prior hearing, pending the results of an investigation or formal hearing to determine if the

suspension should be upheld. Summary suspensions are appropriate only when a grievance has been filed with the NWAHA Board against a member alleging conduct that poses a potentially serious threat to others. A summary suspension may be imposed upon the vote of two thirds of the Discipline Committee. If a summary suspension is imposed, the NWAHA President must inform the member of the suspension and its parameters. Additional procedures regarding summary of suspension can be found here in Bylaw 10.

APPEALS

Any person suspended or otherwise disciplined may appeal that suspension after the hearing or failure to have a hearing.

- 1st appeal would be in front of the NWAHA Board
- 2nd Appeal would be SAHA
- 3rd Appeal would be USA Hockey

APPENDIX 1: SKATE UP REQUEST

APPENDIX 2: SAMPLE TEAM BUDGET

APPENDIX 3: USA HOCKEY COACHING ETHICS CODE

APPENDIX 4: USA HOCKEY COACHES CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX 5: USA HOCKEY PARENT/GUARDIAN CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX 6: USA HOCKEY PARTICIPANT CODE OF CONDUCT (signature page)

APPENDIX 6A: USA HOCKEY PLAYER'S CODE OF CONDUCT

APPENDIX 7: ACCIDENT REPORTING FORM

APPENDIX 8: USA HOCKEY CONCUSSION MANAGEMENT RETURN TO PLAY FORM

APPENDIX 9: DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE

APPENDIX 10: PLAYER DISCIPLINE NOTIFICATION FORM

APPENDIX 11: USA HOCKEY BYLAW 10.C

- P&P Amended July 2026 (Skate Up Policy and Transfer Policy
- P&P Amended Sept 2026 (EFA & replacement of "tryout" with "selection skate"