

INTERNATIONAL FALLS RECREATION HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

Policy Handbook

2026–2027

Minnesota Hockey – District 12
www.ifallsrechockey.com

Please be advised that the IFRHA Board will only address criticisms, complaints, and concerns detailed on the Complaint Form included in this Handbook.

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I. MISSION, VISION & VALUES

Mission

The International Falls Recreation Hockey Association (IFRHA) provides a safe, welcoming, and competitive youth hockey program that creates meaningful opportunities for all players, enriches their lives, and fosters individual and team achievement through effort, discipline, and sportsmanship.

Vision

To be a competitive youth hockey association in Northern Minnesota, developing skilled athletes and outstanding citizens who carry the values of teamwork, integrity, and respect throughout their lives.

Core Values

- Fun – Hockey should be enjoyable. Participation, friendship, and love of the game come first.
- Sportsmanship – Respecting teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents, and the game.
- Player Development – Giving every player the opportunity to grow their skills at every level.
- Safety – The health and well-being of every participant is always the top priority.
- Teamwork – Putting the needs of the team before individual interests.
- Integrity – Honesty, transparency, and accountability in all decisions and actions.
- Inclusion – Equal opportunity for all players regardless of skill level, gender, or background.

II. GOVERNANCE & ORGANIZATION

IFRHA operates within the following governance hierarchy. All IFRHA policies, rules, and regulations are subordinate to and must comply with each level above:

Governance Hierarchy

USA Hockey, Inc. – National Governing Body for amateur ice hockey in the United States.

Minnesota Hockey (MH) – State affiliate of USA Hockey; governs youth and amateur hockey in Minnesota.

MN Hockey District 12 – Iron Range district; organizes league play and District playoff tournaments.

International Falls Recreation Hockey Association (IFRHA) – Local member association.

IFRHA is a nonprofit volunteer organization governed by a Board of Directors as described in the IFRHA Bylaws. The Board consists of nine (9) members including President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, and five (5) Directors. Board members may also carry additional designated duties including but not limited to Coaching Liaison, SafeSport Coordinator, and Tournament Director.

Coaching Liaison (Board Designated Role)

Serves as the board-level point of contact between the Director of Hockey Operations and the Board.

Tracks USA Hockey registration numbers for the Scheduler.

Ensures all coaching staff have completed required certifications — background checks, SafeSport, and coaching clinics — prior to being on the ice.

Notifies coaches of upcoming training deadlines and reports compliance status to the Board.

The current Coaching Liaison can be identified by contacting the Board or visiting the IFRHA website at www.ifallsrechockey.com.

All IFRHA policies must be consistent with USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey rules and regulations. Where IFRHA rules are silent, USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey rules govern. IFRHA may adopt rules that are stricter than, but not in conflict with, USA Hockey or MN Hockey requirements.

For the current USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook, USA Hockey Playing Rules, and Minnesota Hockey Handbook, members are encouraged to visit:

- USA Hockey: www.usahockey.com
- Minnesota Hockey: www.minnesotahockey.org
- MN Hockey District 12: See IFRHA website for current District 12 link
- IFRHA Website: www.ifallsrechockey.com

III. PHILOSOPHY & OBJECTIVES

Philosophy

The aim of the Recreation Hockey Association of International Falls is to provide a well-balanced, competitive hockey program creating opportunities for all, aiding in the enrichment of the lives of the players and their realization of individual and team achievements of worth — accomplished through one's own efforts. These achievements are to be attained through the guidance of our recreation hockey coaches.

Objectives

A coach in the International Falls Recreation Hockey Program will help:

1. Provide an enjoyable introduction and experience in ice hockey and encourage every player to continue playing the game.
2. Help the player develop self-control, self-discipline, and good sportsmanship.

3. Expose the athlete to an environment in which his or her health and welfare are always of primary concern.
4. Develop total fitness for efficient and effective performance.
5. Develop an understanding of the theory of play, a thorough knowledge of the rules of the game, mastery of skills, and mental alertness to enable the player to perform successfully at the player's level of learning.
6. Provide the recreation hockey player with a program in which they are coached by qualified personnel whenever and wherever possible.

IV. HIGH SCHOOL COACHES INVOLVEMENT IN YOUTH HOCKEY

IFRHA values its relationship with the International Falls High School Hockey program as one of the most important collaborative partnerships in our community. The High School coaching staff and IFRHA are separate organizations — the High School coaches are employees of Independent School District #361 and have no employment or reporting obligation to IFRHA. The items below reflect the cooperative spirit both programs have embraced for the benefit of youth hockey development in International Falls.

The High School coaches have historically been a vital part of the IFRHA program and their experience, knowledge, and investment in our players is something we deeply value. IFRHA actively encourages their continued involvement at every level of the program.

1. Prior to the season, IFRHA welcomes and encourages the involvement of the High School Hockey Coach at all levels of the program.
2. IFRHA will provide the High School Coach with a copy of the current Board Policy Handbook for their reference.
3. The High School coaches have long been an important part of the IFRHA tryout process and their involvement is strongly encouraged. IFRHA welcomes the High School coaches to participate in tryouts and player evaluations alongside the Director of Hockey Operations, bringing their expertise and familiarity with players to help ensure fair and thorough assessments at every level.
4. IFRHA welcomes the High School Coach's involvement in on-ice operations, including providing drills, tactics, or other hockey-related guidance that Recreation coaches may find beneficial. Their input on development progressions that align with the high school program is particularly valued.
5. All Recreation Hockey coaches are encouraged and expected to attend the fall clinic conducted by the High School Coaches prior to the season, when offered. This clinic is an important opportunity to align development philosophies across the entire program.
6. High School coaches are welcome to attend games throughout the season when their schedule allows. When they do attend, it is encouraged that the High School and Recreation coaches take a few minutes following the game to discuss any hockey-related items they find useful.
7. Hockey-related development questions are best directed to the IFRHA Director of Hockey Operations, who will collaborate with the High School coaches as needed to provide guidance that is consistent with the program's long-term development goals.
8. IFRHA extends an open invitation to the High School Coach to attend the Recreation Hockey Board Wrap-Up meeting at the end of the season. Their feedback, perspective, and continued partnership are always welcomed and appreciated.

NOTE: Nothing in this section creates an employment, contractual, or supervisory relationship between IFRHA and the International Falls High School Hockey coaching staff. This section reflects a voluntary, cooperative partnership for the benefit of youth hockey development in the International Falls community.

V. DIRECTOR OF HOCKEY OPERATIONS

The International Falls Recreation Hockey Association has established the position of Director of Hockey Operations (DHO) to provide consistent, professional leadership across all on-ice and hockey-related operations. The DHO is a paid position appointed by and accountable to the full Board of Directors.

Purpose

The Director of Hockey Operations works closely with the Board of Directors to establish and execute a comprehensive hockey program with an emphasis on player and coach development. The DHO serves as the primary hockey operations resource for coaches and managers across all levels, and reports monthly to the Board on program progress and initiatives.

Who Should Contact the Director of Hockey Operations

Staff & Coach Contact Guide

The DHO is a resource for coaches, managers, and association staff. All parent concerns and complaints must follow the Complaint Process outlined in Section XX and begin with the Team Convener — parents should not contact the DHO directly.

Coaches & Managers – Contact the DHO For:

On-Ice Operations – Practice structure, drill design, skill progression guidance by level

Coach Development – Coaching resources, certification questions, feedback requests

Player Development – Level-appropriate development plans, skill assessment, goalie development

Tryout & Evaluation Process – Tryout planning, evaluator coordination, team structure proposals

Scheduling Coordination – Game and practice scheduling conflicts, ice-time efficiency

Tournament Operations – Tournament planning support and operational logistics

Coach Recruitment – Questions about coaching openings or application process

Escalated Hockey Issues – Concerns forwarded by a Team Convener through the complaint process (Step 2)

Parents & Families – Your Correct Contacts Are:

Concerns or complaints → Your Team Convener (Step 1 of the complaint process — see Section XX)

Registration, fees, fundraising, or policy questions → Your Team Convener or a Board member

SafeSport concerns → IFRHA SafeSport Coordinator immediately (see Section XXIII)

Website, schedules, or rosters → www.ifallsrechockey.com

NOTE: Parents and families should never contact the DHO directly regarding concerns or complaints. All concerns begin with the Team Convener. The DHO becomes involved only when a Convener escalates a hockey-related issue at Step 2 of the complaint process. This ensures concerns are handled efficiently and the DHO remains focused on player and coach development.

Responsibilities

On-Ice Operations & Player Development

1. Collaborate with coaches at all levels to meet Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey skill development targets appropriate to each age group, aligned with the USA Hockey American Development Model (ADM).
2. Attend practices and games at each age level throughout the season to evaluate coaching effectiveness, observe player development, and provide direct feedback to coaches.
3. Serve as primary instructor for power skating and skills clinics, and lead or coordinate dryland training and film analysis sessions as appropriate.
4. Plan and lead off-season skills clinics, training camps, and tryout sessions in coordination with the Board.
5. Supervise goalie development across all levels, coordinating with outside goalie development resources as appropriate.
6. Serve as a rostered coach for Squirt (10U) level and above as needed.
7. Assess and recommend tournament participation for each team in coordination with coaches and the Board.

Coach Recruitment, Evaluation & Development

8. Lead the coach recruitment process at all levels, including advertising openings, receiving applications, conducting interviews, and evaluating candidates. The DHO will present a hiring recommendation to the Board of Directors for review and final approval.
9. Ensure all coaches hold current USA Hockey coaching certifications appropriate to their level. Notify the Board of any certification deficiencies.

10. Work in coordination with the Board's Coaching Liaison to verify that all coaches and applicable volunteers have completed required USA Hockey coaching certifications, SafeSport training, and background screening prior to the season. The Coaching Liaison maintains these records on behalf of the Board. (See Section XXIII.)
11. Provide coaches with ongoing feedback, development resources, and support throughout the season.
12. Recommend coaching assignments and team structures to the Board for review and approval. No coaching hire is final until approved by a majority vote of the Board.

Tryout & Player Placement Oversight

13. Plan and coordinate the tryout and evaluation process for all competitive levels (Squirt/10U and above) in collaboration with coaches and the Board.
14. Source and coordinate independent evaluators for each level to ensure fair and objective player assessment.
15. Make player placement recommendations to the Board and respective coaches based on evaluation results. Final roster decisions remain with the coaching staff and Board as outlined in Section VIII.
16. Ensure the tryout timeline and roster announcement deadlines comply with IFRHA policy (see Section VIII, Regulation 6).

Scheduling & Game Coordination

17. Act as the primary coordinator for all ice-related scheduling activities, working in conjunction with the designated Game Scheduler/Webmaster to ensure game and practice schedules are efficient, equitable, and compliant with IFRHA and Minnesota Hockey game limits at each level.
18. Establish team sizes and playing levels prior to the season in coordination with the Board.
19. Assist in resolving scheduling conflicts and serve as a hockey operations resource for District 12 scheduling meetings when needed.

Tournament Planning & Operations

20. Collaborate with the Board-appointed Tournament Director to support the planning and execution of IFRHA-hosted tournaments.
21. Provide input on team tournament participation plans and ensure tournament selections are consistent with IFRHA game limits and Board-approved budgets.

Board Reporting & Compliance

22. Attend all regular IFRHA Board meetings and provide a monthly written or verbal Hockey Operations Report covering player development updates, coaching issues, scheduling status, fundraising and player retention initiatives, and any other relevant hockey operations matters.
23. Work with the Coaching Liaison to maintain records related to coach certifications, SafeSport compliance, and background screening, and make these available to the Board upon request.

24. Ensure all on-ice activities comply with USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey, and IFRHA policies and regulations.
25. Support association fundraising efforts and player retention initiatives as directed by the Board.
26. Bring all significant hockey-related issues, disputes, or policy concerns to the Board for review and final decision. The DHO does not have unilateral authority to override Board policy.

VI. COACHES

The Board shall appoint the Head Coach at each level. No other individuals shall be allowed on the ice until approved by the Board.

1. Coach applications will open no later than March 31 each year. The DHO will review applications, conduct interviews, and present hiring recommendations to the Board as soon as the process is complete. Coach selections are not held to a fixed meeting date and may be approved by the Board at any regular or special meeting following the completion of the DHO's review. The Board reserves the right to extend the application period by majority vote when circumstances require.
2. All Head Coaches in the Recreation Hockey program will be selected and approved yearly by the Board of Directors upon recommendation of the DHO. Assistant coaches and team managers are recommended by the Head Coach, reviewed by the DHO, and approved by the Board. No coach or manager may begin duties until Board approval is granted.
3. All Recreation Hockey coaches are required to attend the DHO-led coaching meetings held in October and April each year. The High School Hockey Coach is also in attendance at these meetings, working alongside the DHO to align development philosophies and ensure continuity across the program from youth hockey through the high school level. The Coaching Liaison will attend on behalf of the Board, and all other Board members are welcome and encouraged to attend when available. These meetings are separate from regular Board meetings and are focused on hockey operations, development planning, and coach alignment.
4. All Recreation Hockey coaches will follow all policies, rules, and regulations established by the Recreation Hockey Board. Failure to comply may result, at the Board's discretion, in the coach being relieved of his or her coaching responsibilities.
5. Coaches at the Mini Mite and Mighty Mite levels shall ensure that every player on their team plays, as nearly as possible, an equal amount of time on the ice in both regular games and tournament games.
6. Coaches at the Mini Mite and Mighty Mite levels shall rotate every player through all positions, including goalie.
7. No coach shall schedule games without the inclusion of the paid schedulers.
8. Coaches of all Recreation Hockey teams are expected to align their development philosophies with the program framework established by the Director of Hockey Operations. Coaches are also encouraged to collaborate with and draw from the experience of the High School coaching staff. (See Sections IV and V.)

9. Recreation Hockey coaches at all levels shall refrain from using profanity in front of players before, during, or after any practice or game. Coaches are also asked to abide by all smoking and tobacco-free rules of the arena.
10. There shall be at least one (1) certified head coach and two (2) certified assistant coaches designated to any one team, responsible for the coordination of all team practices so that ice time is utilized to the fullest. No more than three (3) adults are permitted in the players' box during a game.
11. Any time a coach has the lobby opened for use by their team, an adult supervisor must be present. The custodian should be contacted to lock up the lobby immediately after the team is finished.
12. All IFRHA coaches shall abide by the USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct:

USA Hockey Coaches Code of Conduct

Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game.

Be a positive role model. Display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.

Be generous with praise when deserved; be consistent, honest, and fair. Do not criticize players publicly.

Adjust to the personal needs of players; be a good listener. Never verbally or physically abuse a player or official.

Organize practices that are fun and challenging. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques, and strategies of hockey.

Maintain open communication with players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of the association.

Be concerned with the overall development of players. Stress good health habits and clean living.

To play the game is great; to love the game is greater.

13. The Board will inform each coach of the minimum number of players to be selected for each level after the October Board meeting, when player numbers are known. These items will be required in writing to the Board.
14. All coaches shall hold current USA Hockey coaching certificates for the level at which they coach. No person without a valid USA Hockey coaching certificate will be allowed on the ice at any time without Board approval.

VII. MANAGERS

1. There will be one manager designated for each team, recommended by the Head Coach, reviewed by the DHO, and approved by the Board. The team manager serves as the primary communication and coordination hub for their team. They are responsible for communicating game schedules to players and families, coordinating team travel and activities, and ensuring all parents have a clear understanding of team events and expectations. The team manager will be responsible for having the lobby open and ensuring someone operates the scoreclock for all home games.
2. Game scheduling is the sole responsibility of the designated IFRHA Game Scheduler. Managers do not schedule games but are responsible for communicating schedules to their team promptly and accurately once received.
3. Prior to the start of the season, the manager is required to meet with the Team Manager Liaison to review all tasks, responsibilities, and expectations related to the position. The Team Manager Liaison will provide guidance and resources to support new and returning managers throughout the season.
4. The manager is required to provide all rosters, schedules, and scores to the Webmaster/Game Scheduler in a timely manner.
5. The manager is responsible for reminding parents of concession hours required and for collecting and turning in raffle ticket stubs and money.
6. For home tournaments, the manager is responsible for ensuring all concession slots are filled. Managers will review open volunteer slots on the Crossbar app and directly assign team parents to any slots that have not been filled through voluntary sign-up, ensuring full concession coverage for the duration of the tournament.
7. Each team manager serves as the home tournament host for their team's tournament. In this role the manager works closely with the Board-appointed Tournament Director to ensure smooth tournament operations, clear communication with visiting teams, and that all tournament obligations are met. A Tournament Chairperson will be appointed from the participating team parents to assist with on-site coordination. (See Section XIII.)
8. Managers are responsible for organizing and assigning game-day duties to team families for all home games and tournaments. These duties include but are not limited to: GameSheet operation, score clock operation, penalty box monitoring, and any other needs specific to home tournament operations. Managers should establish a fair rotation among families and communicate assignments well in advance of each event.
9. All team managers are required to complete training on the GameSheet app prior to the season. Managers are then responsible for training their team parents on the proper operation of GameSheet scoring and the game clock so that home games run smoothly and accurately. The Team Manager Liaison will coordinate GameSheet training as part of the pre-season manager meeting.
10. All team managers are required to attend three meetings organized by the Team Manager Liaison each season: a pre-season meeting covering duties, expectations, and platform training; a mid-season check-in to address any issues and share updates; and a post-season wrap-up meeting to review the season and provide feedback. Attendance at all three meetings is expected.
11. At the end of each hockey season, each designated team manager shall prepare and distribute a financial statement to all parents connected with their team and to the Board of Directors.

VIII. REGULATIONS & AGE LEVEL GUIDELINES

The Association recognizes, supervises, and is responsible for competition in the following team categories. All age classifications are set by Minnesota Hockey. All rules and regulations apply equally to both boys and girls at their corresponding age level.

NOTE: Age classifications are updated annually by Minnesota Hockey. Refer to the current Minnesota Hockey Handbook or www.minnesotahockey.org for the most current age cutoff dates.

Girls Programs

Girls 8U

Total games shall not exceed 15, with no more than 10 full-ice games after January 15th. May participate in one (1) out-of-town Jamboree.

Girls 10U

Total games shall not exceed 35. Out-of-town tournaments shall be no more than two (2).

Girls 12U

Total games shall not exceed 45. Out-of-town tournaments shall be no more than three (3).

Youth Programs

Mini Mite

There will be no competition at this level and no traveling. Emphasis will be on skating skills with introduction to shooting and stickhandling. Mini Mites may participate in the Fort Frances and home Jamborees. The Mini Mite coach will coordinate with High School coaches to arrange two exhibitions between periods at home Bronco games. The emphasis at this level is on participation and enjoyment. Jamboree costs will be assessed to parents.

Mighty Mite (8U)

Emphasis will be on skating and stickhandling. Players will be exposed to all positions, including goalie. There will be limited competition with a maximum of 15 games approved by the Board; no more than 10 may be full-ice games after January 15th. Mites may participate in one (1) out-of-town Jamboree (must be Jamboree format and Board-approved). All Jamboree costs will be assessed to parents.

Squirt (10U)

Emphasis will be on team play and skill development. Every player shall play, as nearly as possible, an equal amount of ice time in both regular season and tournament games. Total games shall not exceed 35. Out-of-town tournaments shall be no more than two (2); more than two requires Board approval. All tournament costs will be assessed to parents.

- If there is more than one goalie, they will rotate on an equal basis.
- If player participation exceeds eighteen (18), there will be two Squirt teams.

Peewee (12U)

Emphasis will be on skills, development, and team play. This is the first level of District League and playoff games. Total games shall not exceed 45 without Board approval. Out-of-town

tournaments shall be no more than three (3); more than three requires Board approval. District and playoff games do not count toward this total.

Bantam (15U)

Emphasis will be on skills, development, and team play. Total games shall not exceed 60. District and playoff games do not count toward this total.

General Regulations

1. All players are required to have a helmet, approved mask, neck guard, and mouth guard before being allowed to participate on the ice at any level. (See Section XIX for full equipment requirements.)
2. If a team advances to Regional or State Minnesota Hockey competition, those additional games shall not be considered a violation of the game limitation.
3. IFRHA registration fees shall be set at the first meeting after Minnesota Hockey announces its fees for the coming season. The Board shall add any fee increases from Minnesota Hockey, USA Hockey, or the Recreation Director. Fees also provide medical insurance for players, coaches, and directors. Any balance will be placed in the General Fund.
4. Non-residents may participate in the IFRHA program provided there is no program available to them in their School District at the appropriate level, or if they have approved documentation (e.g., U.S. birth certificate or other residency documentation).
5. When the number of participants allows, at the Bantam, Peewee, and Squirt levels, A and B teams will be selected. The A team coach will select the players for that team.
6. Organized tryouts will begin in October. Teams will be selected by coaches and evaluators. Under no circumstances shall any coach announce players as selected prior to the announcement of the full team roster. THE INITIAL ROSTER IS TO BE ANNOUNCED NO LATER THAN THE FIRST THURSDAY OF NOVEMBER.
7. Any player movement between teams at like levels after tryouts must be completed by November 30th. A written reason for movement must be submitted to the Board for approval. A private meeting between both team coaches and all affected families must be held before any player movement is permitted. Exceptions require Board approval.
8. No games will be played by any team, unless pre-approved by the IFRHA Board, until after October 15th.
9. No player will be allowed to be a team member of more than one age level or traveling team.
10. A designated Scheduler shall be responsible for scheduling games and tournament hotel blocks at all levels. All games must be approved by the Board. In the absence of a coach or manager, the Board Chairperson shall appoint a Board member to attend the District scheduling meeting.
11. No recreation hockey funds shall be used for individuals participating in any hockey programs or teams other than an IFRHA team or International Falls High School team.
12. The IFRHA season may begin as early as October 1st, subject to ice availability at Bronco Arena and Kerry Park Arena, and continues through the end of March. Early ice time prior to tryouts is used for practice and player preparation. IFRHA shall not relinquish arena ice time to any party during the season for events that do not include IFRHA player participation.

13. No home games are allowed Monday through Thursday unless they fall during a scheduled practice time. Away games are permitted if they do not interrupt practice times.
14. The game limits stated above are guidelines. The Board has authority to allow more or fewer games, provided the number remains within Minnesota Hockey guidelines.
15. Kerry Park Arena locker room doors will be locked until an appropriate locker room attendant (coach and/or manager with completed background check) is present to unlock the door. The attendant shall remain in the locker room until all players are on the ice and return to the locker room after practice until all players have left, then return the key to the Zamboni office. All locker room attendants must complete BOTH a background check AND SafeSport training. Attendants MUST be present for all locker room use at home and away events in compliance with USA Hockey requirements. (See also Section XXI.)
16. Locker room monitor assignments are set out in Section XXII (Locker Room Monitors).

IX. MOVEMENT OF PLAYERS

Any movement of players to another age level of participation shall be made by the Board. When a move is being considered, both the outgoing coach and the incoming coach shall provide their input and assessment to the Director of Hockey Operations. The DHO will review that input, evaluate the situation, and make a formal recommendation to the Board for final decision.

Player movement is primarily numbers-based. If an age level does not have enough players to field a team, the Board may move players up to fill the roster need. In these situations the standard evaluation process may be bypassed at the Board's discretion.

Once a player has been identified as a potential candidate for movement, the player's parent or guardian will be contacted and asked whether their child is interested in participating in an evaluation for a possible move. Participation in the evaluation process is voluntary. If a move is subsequently offered following the evaluation, the parent or guardian retains the right to accept or decline on behalf of their child. No player will be moved without the consent of their parent or guardian.

Parents do not have the authority to request, pressure, or dictate a move to another age level. Any parent-initiated requests for player movement will not be considered through the standard process and may be grounds for exemption from the evaluation process entirely. All exceptions to this policy remain the sole decision of the Board of Directors.

X. ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. All players are expected to attend all team functions including practices (indoors or outdoors), games, and development training such as video sessions and dryland training.
2. If a player cannot attend a practice, the coach MUST be notified before practice time, or the absence will not be excused.

3. Players with an unexcused absence from practice will sit one (1) period of the next game per unexcused absence. Coaches must apply this policy consistently and equally across all players on the team to maintain fairness and continuity.
4. Coaches do not have the authority to suspend a player from games or the program. Suspensions are a Board-level decision only. If a coach believes a suspension is warranted due to disciplinary infractions on or off the ice, the matter must be referred to the Board through the Team Convener for review and determination. (See Section XI.)

XI. DISCIPLINE

Academic Expectations

IFRHA believes that academic success and athletic participation go hand in hand. Players are encouraged to maintain good standing in the classroom as a reflection of the values of discipline and responsibility that we promote through hockey. IFRHA supports the efforts of families, teachers, and coaches in helping our players succeed both on and off the ice.

Theft, Vandalism, or Sexual Harassment

Any player or individual caught engaging in theft, vandalism, or sexual harassment may be suspended or removed from the program by decision of the Board of Directors.

Suspension & Discipline Process

All disciplinary matters requiring suspension or removal from the program follow the process below:

1. The matter is first brought to the Team Convener, who documents the concern and escalates it to the Director of Hockey Operations.
2. The DHO reviews the situation, gathers relevant information from coaches and other parties, and makes a recommendation to the Board of Directors.
3. The Board of Directors reviews the DHO's recommendation and makes the final determination on any suspension or removal.
4. In cases where the severity of the violation may warrant action beyond IFRHA's authority — such as violations of Minnesota Hockey rules, USA Hockey policies, or SafeSport regulations — the Board may recommend escalation to Minnesota Hockey District 12 or the appropriate governing body. Such escalation recommendations are made by the Board following the Convener and DHO review process.

NOTE: SafeSport violations involving sexual misconduct must be reported directly to the U.S. Center for SafeSport and are not handled through this process. (See Section XXII.)

XII. CHEMICAL/TOBACCO/SUBSTANCE USE & HARASSMENT POLICY

IFRHA follows the chemical, tobacco, substance use, and harassment policies of Independent School District #361, which in turn follows the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) rules and regulations. Any player at any level involved in chemical or tobacco use or abuse, or acts of racial or sexual harassment and/or violence, will be subject to consequences consistent with ISD 361 and MSHSL guidelines as outlined below.

Prohibited Conduct

During the school year — including any portion of an activity season occurring before or after the school year — REGARDLESS OF QUANTITY, A STUDENT SHALL NOT:

- Use a beverage containing alcohol.
- Use tobacco or tobacco products, including e-cigarettes and vaping devices.
- Use, consume, possess, buy, sell, or give away any controlled substance.
- Engage in acts of racial or sexual harassment and violence as detailed in School District #361 policy.

Penalties

First Violation

After confirmation of the first violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next two (2) consecutive games or two (2) weeks of the season, whichever is greater. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program.

Second Violation

After confirmation of the second violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next six (6) consecutive games. No exception is permitted for a student who becomes a participant in a treatment program.

Third and Subsequent Violations

After confirmation of the third or subsequent violation, the student shall lose eligibility for the next twelve (12) consecutive games. If the student voluntarily enters a chemical dependency program after the third or subsequent violation, the student shall be certified for reinstatement after a minimum of six (6) weeks upon certification by the director or counselor of a chemical dependency treatment center.

A student shall be disqualified from all IFRHA activities for nine (9) additional weeks beyond the original period of ineligibility when the student denies a violation, is allowed to participate, and is subsequently found guilty.

Unless otherwise determined by the Board of Directors, a player serving a game suspension under this policy may continue to attend and participate in team practices during the suspension period.

XIII. GAMES AND TOURNAMENTS

1. All games or tournaments at all age levels are subject to approval by the Board of Directors. All games and tournament schedules must adhere to the Minnesota Hockey mandated rest periods between games for all age levels. No schedule may be approved that violates MN Hockey rest period guidelines.
2. Special advanced Board approval is required for any games or tournaments beyond 250 miles from International Falls.
3. Referees shall be appointed and coordinated by the Referee-in-Chief, who is appointed by and reports directly to the Board of Directors. All referees must be certified at all levels of play. There should be one (1) certified referee on the ice for all Pee wee games and two (2) certified referees on the ice for all Bantam games.
4. Weather-related cancellations of games and practices will be decided by the Board of Directors.
5. All tournaments will be conducted or co-sponsored by the Recreation Hockey Association. All home tournaments must be approved and sanctioned by Minnesota Hockey prior to the start of play. Tournament schedules must receive MN Hockey approval before the first game is played. The Tournament Director is a Board-elected position responsible for coordinating all home tournament operations. A parent of a player or players participating in the tournament shall be appointed Tournament Chairperson by the Tournament Director in coordination with the team manager.
6. The Board will approve a program-wide tournament budget prior to the season start. The week following tryouts, each team will meet with the Tournament Director to review tournament dates and discuss budget.
7. Home tournaments serve as the team fundraiser for end-of-season parties. Tournament proceeds will be turned in immediately following the closing game to a Board member. The Board member and team manager will verify the amount raised. Up to 25% of that team's profit will be available for the end-of-season party. All expenditures must be documented and receipts submitted to the Treasurer.

Tournament Awards

The Tournament Director will purchase the following:

- Trophies – Number determined by the number of teams participating.
- Medals – Mini Mite and Mighty Mite players will all receive medals. Squirts, Peewees, and Bantams will receive medals only as determined by the Board.

XIV. FUNDRAISERS

1. Any person or persons wishing to conduct a fundraiser for any Recreation Hockey team, including tournaments, must receive Board of Directors approval before making any arrangements.
2. All monies received from an approved fundraiser shall be turned over to the Recreation Hockey Board of Directors immediately upon conclusion of the fundraiser.
3. Fundraisers are an important part of our program. Full participation and cooperation are required from players and parents/guardians. Failure to participate in required

fundraising will result in an assessment against the following year's participation fees for any amounts not raised.

XV. REFUNDS

Refunds will be granted by the Recreation Hockey Board on a case-by-case basis prior to January 1st of the participation year. After January 1st, there will be NO REFUND. Prepaid registration fees to USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey are not eligible for refund at any time.

XVI. ARENA CONCESSIONS & VOLUNTEER HOURS

Required Hours

The following are the number of concession hours required to be worked by parents of players at each level per season:

Level	Required Hours
Mini Mite	8 hours
Mighty Mite through Bantam	12 hours
Girls 8U – 12U	12 hours

How hours will be designated will be decided by the Recreation Board and arranged through team managers and conveners.

Unfulfilled Hours

Prior to the beginning of the season, a post-dated personal check will be collected from each family to cover the cost of unworked hours. Personal checks will be returned upon completion of required concession hours, less any hours not worked at the rate of \$40.00 per hour.

Certified coaches and Board-approved managers will have their concession hours waived. On-ice helpers may have up to one-half (1/2) of their required concession hours waived, provided the Head Coach confirms to the Board that the on-ice helper has participated a sufficient amount of time with the team to merit the waiver. The Board retains final approval on all hour waiver requests.

No family is required to provide more than 24 hours of concession service. No parent shall work in the arena during his or her child's tournament unless he or she has already satisfied his or her tournament obligations. The Tournament Chairperson will provide approval to work concessions once those obligations are met.

Outstanding Balances

In order for your child to participate, you must NOT have any outstanding balance due for unworked hours or past-due assessments from the previous year.

XVII. SOLICITING FUNDS

Only Board members may solicit funds on behalf of the International Falls Recreation Hockey Association.

No coach, manager, parent, or team representative may solicit donations from local businesses or community members on behalf of any IFRHA team without prior approval from the Board of Directors. This includes requests for tournament sponsorships, prize donations, gift cards, or any other contributions.

International Falls is a small community with many local businesses that support our program. To protect these businesses from being approached multiple times by different teams, all donation and sponsorship requests must be coordinated through and approved by the Board. The Board will manage solicitation efforts in a way that is respectful of the business community and equitable across all teams.

Any team or individual found to be soliciting funds or donations without Board approval may be subject to disciplinary action by the Board of Directors.

XVIII. TEAM FUNDS & COACH REIMBURSEMENT

1. All teams are responsible for any expenses incurred during team play during the year. If a team advances past District play, the team is also responsible for all expenses for coaches' meals, mileage, and lodging.
2. Reimbursement to coaches will be as follows for one (1) head coach and one (1) assistant coach only:

Coach Reimbursement Schedule

Non-Parent Coaches:

- Hotel: One (1) room per night of tournament
- Meal Reimbursement: 1 game/day = \$25 | 2 games/day = \$60
- Mileage: \$0.50/mile for both head and assistant coaches traveling separately
- Mileage over 165 miles requires Board approval

Parent Coaches:

- Hotel: Two (2) nights for the season

3. Hotel reimbursement is limited to the standard room block rate that the rest of the team is paying. If a coach upgrades his or her room or stays at a different hotel that costs more, the coach is responsible for the difference.

XIX. TEAM JERSEYS & EQUIPMENT

Required Equipment

Per USA Hockey Rule 304, all players must wear the following equipment at all games and practices:

Required Equipment	Notes
Hockey skates	<i>Must be properly fitted</i>
HECC-approved helmet with full face mask	<i>Gold helmet required at Peewee/12U and above; must always be worn on ice and on the bench</i>
Neck laceration guard (neck guard)	<i>REQUIRED for all youth players per USA Hockey</i>
Mouth guard	<i>Colored (non-clear); covers all teeth of one jaw</i>
Shoulder pads	
Elbow pads	
Gloves	<i>Purple and gold gloves required at Peewee/12U and above</i>
Shin pads	
Padded hockey pants (breezers)	<i>Purple breezers required at Peewee/12U and above</i>
Protective cup	
Game socks	<i>Purple and gold socks required at Peewee/12U and above</i>

Jewelry shall not be worn except for religious or medical needs. Medals must be taped to the body under the uniform.

Purple & Gold Equipment

The following equipment is mandatory at the Peewee/12U level and above (Peewee for boys, 12U for girls):

- Helmet – Gold
- Gloves – Purple and gold
- Breezers (hockey pants) – Purple
- Game socks – Purple and gold

Players at levels below Peewee/12U are encouraged but not required to wear purple and gold equipment.

Jersey Policies

1. Special care shall be taken of all jerseys during the hockey season. Parents/guardians will be held responsible for the costs of damaged or lost jerseys. A Jersey Waiver must be signed and returned at the start of the season. At season's end, all jerseys are to be collected by the team manager or coach and turned over to the Board-appointed equipment manager for storage.
2. All IFRHA teams will wear their designated team jerseys for all games during the entire season.
3. Jerseys are to be worn for GAMES ONLY. Any exception requires Board approval.

XX. PARENTS & SPECTATOR CONDUCT

The International Falls Recreation Hockey Board of Directors has the power to suspend parents, players, coaches, directors, or managers by majority vote.

1. Parents are encouraged to become familiar with this Policy Handbook and assist in achieving the objectives of the IFRHA program.
2. All parents of Recreation Hockey players are encouraged to attend Recreation Hockey meetings during the hockey season.
3. Parent and spectator conduct expectations apply both at IFRHA events and on social media. Posting negative, inflammatory, or derogatory content about players, coaches, officials, other families, or the association on any social media platform is subject to the same disciplinary process as in-person conduct violations. (See Section XXIII for the full Social Media Policy.)
4. Complaint Procedure: If you have a suggestion, concern, or complaint, please follow the steps below. A copy of the Complaint Form is included at the end of this Handbook.

STEP 1 – Team Convener: Submit your completed Complaint Form to your team's Convener. The Convener will attempt to resolve the issue directly within five (5) days of receiving the form.

STEP 2 – Director of Hockey Operations: If the Convener is unable to resolve the issue, or if the concern is hockey-related (playing time, coaching approach, on-ice conduct), the Convener will bring it to the Director of Hockey Operations. The DHO will work with the relevant parties to reach a resolution.

STEP 3 – Board of Directors: If the issue remains unresolved after review by the Convener and DHO, it will be brought to the full Board at the next scheduled Board meeting for final determination.

NOTE: SafeSport concerns are handled separately and must be directed to the IFRHA SafeSport Coordinator immediately. Do not use the standard complaint process for SafeSport matters. (See Section XXIII.)

5. The Board has adopted the following Conduct Letter for situations involving parents or spectators. In the event the Board needs to address such a situation, the letter below will be promptly sent to the individual(s):

CONDUCT LETTER – INTERNATIONAL FALLS RECREATION HOCKEY

Dear _____,

Your conduct at the _____ has been brought to the attention of the International Falls Recreation Hockey Association.

Our hockey association has always encouraged parent involvement in our program. We will NOT tolerate abusive behavior toward players, coaches, team members, board members, or fans during any activity connected with our association. Parents have no business interfering with players during practice, during games, or in the players' box. Please let our coaches coach and our players play.

A parent needs to provide support, positive encouragement, and outstanding role modeling for the athlete. Hockey is not life or death. The rewards for a young athlete in a hockey program should be immediate — learning the game, enjoying time with teammates, competing, and learning to play by the rules.

Parents must realize that their actions affect not only their child, but other children on the team. Parents' conduct can and will affect how their child is accepted socially by teammates.

We as a Board will not penalize the player for a parent's conduct. If this issue arises again, you will be banned for the remainder of the playing season from all IFRHA-sponsored activities.

We hope this resolves the issue and allows you to better enjoy your child's time in Recreation Hockey.

Respectfully,

International Falls Recreation Hockey Association Board of Directors

XXI. TEAM CONVENERS

A Board member will be appointed as liaison (Convener) to each team once teams are formed. The Convener serves as the first point of contact for player and parent concerns within their assigned team, working to resolve issues at the team level before escalating to the DHO or Board. Conveners communicate relevant team concerns to the Board in a timely manner.

Complaint & Escalation Process

Team Conveners are responsible for managing the following three-step process:

1. **STEP 1 – Receive & Attempt Resolution:** The Convener receives the completed Complaint Form from the parent, player, or manager and attempts to resolve the issue directly within five (5) days of receipt.
2. **STEP 2 – Escalate to DHO if Needed:** If the Convener cannot resolve the issue, or if the concern is hockey-related in nature (playing time, coaching conduct, on-ice operations, player development), the Convener brings the matter to the Director of Hockey Operations. The DHO will engage with all relevant parties to work toward a resolution in a timely manner.
3. **STEP 3 – Escalate to Board if Needed:** If the issue remains unresolved after review by the Convener and the DHO, the Convener presents the matter to the full Board of Directors at the next scheduled Board meeting for a final determination.

Convener Guidelines

The Convener shall not have a child or grandchild on the team to which they are appointed.

The Convener is not expected to resolve issues unilaterally — their role is to listen, facilitate, and escalate appropriately.

The Convener should keep the Complaint Form and any notes confidential until escalation requires broader review.

Non-hockey matters (fees, fundraising, Board policy) that cannot be resolved at the Convener level go directly to the Board — not the DHO.

SafeSport concerns must be directed immediately to the IFRHA SafeSport Coordinator and are never handled through the standard complaint process.

XXII. SAFESPORT & LOCKER ROOM POLICY

USA Hockey SafeSport Requirements

IFRHA fully adheres to the USA Hockey SafeSport Program, including the SafeSport Code and the Minor Athlete Abuse Prevention Policies (MAAPP). These requirements are federally mandated and non-negotiable. Full compliance is required of all participants, coaches, managers, volunteers, and Board members.

Who Must Complete SafeSport Training & Background Screening

The following individuals must complete both SafeSport training AND a USA Hockey background screen before having any regular contact with or authority over minor athletes:

- All coaches and assistant coaches
- All team managers
- All locker room monitors
- All Board members
- Any adult volunteer with regular, routine, or frequent access to or supervision of minor participants

Annual Renewal Requirement

SafeSport training must be renewed annually (within 12 months of prior completion).

Persons with expired training will be automatically flagged as ineligible in USA Hockey registration records.

No individual with expired training may coach, manage, or volunteer in any role involving minor athletes.

To complete training: www.usahockey.com/safesporttraining

To complete background screening: www.usahockey.com/backgroundscreen

Locker Room Monitors

1. For all boys teams, the coaching staff will cover the duties of locker room monitors for the season.
2. For all girls teams (8U, 10U, and 12U), Team Managers will be responsible for monitoring locker rooms. A coach may request one additional volunteer locker room monitor (Board approved). The additional volunteer must complete a background screen (every two years) and SafeSport training. Further discussion may take place during individual team meetings.

Locker Room Policy

Locker room safety is among the highest priorities of IFRHA. Unmonitored locker rooms represent the greatest source of SafeSport violations. The following rules apply at all IFRHA events, home and away:

3. At least one (1) SafeSport-trained and background-checked adult must be present at all times while players are in the locker room.
4. Two locker room monitors are strongly preferred.
5. Locker room monitors must be inside the locker room or, at minimum, immediately outside the door within arm's length at all times.
6. All team locker room monitors must be listed as team staff members (maximum three per team).
7. No cell phones or recording devices are permitted in locker rooms.
8. Kerry Park Arena locker room keys will not be distributed until a qualified, credentialed locker room attendant is present. Keys must be returned to the Zamboni office after each use.

Reporting SafeSport Concerns

All Covered Individuals (adults over age 18) are required to report suspected SafeSport violations involving sexual misconduct to the U.S. Center for SafeSport. Non-sexual violations should be reported to the IFRHA SafeSport Coordinator. IFRHA does not unilaterally handle SafeSport complaints; all complaints will be properly routed in accordance with USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey procedures.

The IFRHA SafeSport Coordinator is appointed annually by the Board of Directors. The current SafeSport Coordinator will be listed on the IFRHA website at www.ifallsrechockey.com. If a

SafeSport Coordinator has not yet been appointed for the current season, concerns should be directed to the Board President until an appointment is made.

U.S. Center for SafeSport: www.safesport.org | USA Hockey SafeSport:
www.usahockey.com/safesportprogram

XXIII. TECHNOLOGY, COMMUNICATIONS & DIGITAL TOOLS

Official Communications

IFRHA will communicate with members through the following official channels:

- IFRHA Website: www.ifallsrechokey.com – Board meeting dates, minutes, rosters, and schedules.
- Facebook – Meeting dates, agenda items, announcements, tournament promotions, and general program updates. Facebook is an active and primary communication tool for reaching IFRHA families and the community.
- Email – Primary method for Board and team-level communications.
- Team Communication Apps – Coaches and managers may use approved third-party apps (e.g., TeamSnap, GroupMe, or similar) for team-level scheduling and updates.

Social Media Policy

All participants, coaches, managers, parents, and Board members representing IFRHA on social media (including but not limited to Facebook, Instagram, X/Twitter, TikTok, and YouTube) are expected to:

- Represent the association in a positive, respectful manner.
- Never post images or videos of players without the consent of their parent or guardian.
- Refrain from posting negative, inflammatory, or derogatory content about players, coaches, officials, or other associations.
- Refrain from posting content that could embarrass IFRHA, players, families, or the International Falls community.

Violations of this policy may result in disciplinary action up to and including suspension or removal from the program.

Digital Scheduling & Registration

IFRHA utilizes Crossbar as its primary platform for player registration, volunteer hour tracking, team management, invoicing, and tournament administration. The Board-designated Crossbar Admins are responsible for maintaining accurate information and are the only members authorized to charge, invoice, or refund funds to player accounts, and to modify volunteer commitments, both requiring majority Board approval.

Game scheduling is coordinated through Crossbar and the Iron Range Schedule in conjunction with the ISD361 Athletic Director for Bronco Arena ice availability. The Game Scheduler/Webmaster maintains all scheduling platforms and the association website. All game schedules and scores must be provided to the Webmaster in a timely manner by team managers.

AI-Assisted Tools

IFRHA may utilize artificial intelligence (AI) tools to assist with administrative tasks such as drafting communications, preparing policy documents, organizing schedules, and analyzing program data. The use of AI tools is subject to the following guidelines:

- AI tools may assist but do not replace Board decision-making authority. All final decisions remain with the Board.
- No personally identifiable information (PII) about players, families, or staff shall be entered into public or external AI platforms without Board approval.
- AI-generated content used in official IFRHA communications, policies, or documents must be reviewed and approved by a Board member before distribution.
- The Board retains the right to review and restrict the use of specific AI tools as technology evolves.

Photography & Video

By registering with IFRHA, families grant permission for IFRHA to use player names and/or photographs on the IFRHA website and in association-related communications. Families wishing to opt out must submit a written request to the Board. No recordings or photographs may be taken inside locker rooms at any time.

XXIV. MEETINGS

The Recreation Hockey Board will hold monthly meetings. Meeting dates, times, and minutes will be posted on the IFRHA website at www.ifallsrechokey.com and on the IFRHA Facebook page. The Board reserves the right to close any meeting for personal or sensitive matters.

Regular meeting format will follow the agenda structure outlined in the IFRHA Bylaws:

- Call to Order
- Roll Call
- Minutes
- Gambling Report
- Treasurer Report
- Scheduler / Tournament Director Report
- Hockey Operations Report – Director of Hockey Operations

- Committee Reports
- Old Business
- New Business
- Adjournment – Schedule the next meeting

XXV. POLICY HANDBOOK CHANGE

The Policy Handbook may be changed by one reading at a meeting of the Board of Directors, at which time a two-thirds (2/3) affirmative vote of the Board members present will effect the change.

The reading of the additions or changes to the original Policy Handbook, dated September 25, 1995, and as amended through December 18, 2024, was reviewed and updated for the 2026–2027 season. A vote of the Board of Directors was taken, with 8 of the 9 Board members present voting in favor of the additions or changes, which were adopted on September 23, 2026.

The date of adoption will be recorded in the official Board meeting minutes for the 2026-2027 season.

INTERNATIONAL FALLS RECREATION HOCKEY CRITICISMS, COMPLAINTS & CONCERNS FORM

The International Falls Recreation Hockey Board members welcome constructive criticism and encourage you to express your concerns so they can be addressed. This form is a collaborative effort to make the youth hockey program the best it can be.

If you would like the IFRHA Board to address a concern, please fill this form out in its entirety and submit it to your Team Convener. Use additional paper if necessary.

Player Name: _____ Team: _____
Level: _____
Team Convener Name: _____ Date Submitted: _____

1. Describe your concern(s) in detail:

2. In your opinion, what would a possible solution be and how would it improve the program?

3. Please describe how you plan to contribute toward solving this concern or problem:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

NOTICE

THIS FORM MUST BE FILLED OUT IN ITS ENTIRETY OR IT WILL BE DISCARDED.

IFRHA WEBSITE INFORMATION

The following information is available on the IFRHA website and Facebook page:

- Board Members & Support Staff
- Coaches & Managers
- Team Rosters & Schedules
- Meeting Dates, Times & Minutes
- Tournament Information
- SafeSport Resources & Links
- Announcements & Program Updates

Website: www.ifallsrechokey.com

Facebook: Search “International Falls Recreation Hockey”

POLICY HANDBOOK AGREEMENT 2026–2027

All athletes must have this form signed and returned before participating in any IFRHA practices or games.

STUDENT AGREEMENT

I agree to read the International Falls Recreation Hockey Policy Handbook for the 2026–2027 season. I commit to cooperation and philosophical support of its content and agree to adhere to the policies, standards, and guidelines detailed in this handbook.

Student's Name (print): _____ Grade: _____

Student's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENT / GUARDIAN AGREEMENT

I agree to read the International Falls Recreation Hockey Policy Handbook for the 2026–2027 season. I agree to partner with the hockey board and coaches in upholding the rules and procedures outlined. I understand that these rules and procedures will be enforced.

Parent/Guardian Name (print): _____ Date: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____