



PLAYER + PARENT HANDBOOK

2025-26 Season

Rink Address:

City of Saratoga Springs Ice Rinks
30 Weibel Ave, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

Mailing Address:

PO Box 247
Saratoga Springs, NY 12866

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ABOUT SYHI

Saratoga Youth Hockey Inc. (SYHI) is an all-volunteer, not-for-profit, community-based grassroots hockey program dedicated to providing all ages of youth participants with the opportunity to experience the great game of hockey. Our goal is to offer the best possible experience by encouraging, developing, and advancing youth participants through a structured program that emphasizes hockey skill development (including skating, puck-handling, passing, and shooting), having fun, and learning the game. SYHI programs emphasize teamwork, respect for others through team play, and a positive sense of responsibility to self, team, and organization.

USA Hockey is currently the governing body for the sport of ice hockey. The [New York State Amateur Hockey Association](#) (NYSAHA) is one of the 34 districts that comprise USA Hockey and is the one in which SYHI is affiliated as a Tier II organization. For more information on how youth hockey is administered at the district and national levels, please visit <http://www.nysaha.com> and <http://www.usahockey.com> to consult their guidebooks.

In alignment with USA Hockey principles, SYHI strongly believes in the benefit of youth participating in a range of organized sports, to further their overall athletic development. SYHI is committed to the robust implementation of the [American Development Model \(ADM\)](#). The ADM is designed to provide age-appropriate, age-specific skill development to offer the best possible competition and training environment for its players.

To be effective, this philosophy must be implemented by the Coaches, Parents, and Administrators whose dedication to the sport and volunteering of their time allows our youth program to operate.

ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SYHI is a 501(c)3 governed by a [Board of Directors](#), elected by the general membership for a two-year term, which has representation across all age groups and functions within the organization. The officers comprise the Executive Committee and conduct day-to-day business of SYHI, while the Board of Directors is responsible for policy decisions and management. Please see the [Bylaws](#) on the website for specific board member duties and responsibilities.

Contact information for all Board Members can be found on the [Board of Directors page](#) on the organization's website.

The Board of Directors typically meets during the first week of each month. Minutes from the board meetings are posted on the [organization's website](#).

FACILITIES

SYHI's home ice is the two rinks operated by the City of Saratoga Ice Rinks located at 30 Weibel Ave Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. SYHI is one of many ice customers at this facility.

ANNUAL CALENDAR

These activities are not inclusive of all organization events that will occur throughout the season; timing may vary from season to season.

April Season Year Begins Tryouts + Teams Rostered	May Determine Summer Hockey Programming Board Planning Retreat Team store open	June Planning + Budgeting for the upcoming season Mites Registration Opens Tournament Dates Announced Summer Hockey Registration	July Summer Programming Tournament Registration Open + Advertised Handbook Updated
August Mites Registration	September Pre-season Coaches + Team Managers + Parents Meeting	October Kick-off Weekend	November Travel Teams: Practice, Games + Tournaments Team Pictures
December Travel Teams: Practice, Games + Tournaments	January Travel Teams: Practice, Games + Tournaments Tryouts: Format + Timing Determined	February Travel Teams: Practice, Games + Tournaments Playdowns for State Tournament Pricing Set for Next Season	March Season Ends Board Elections League + State Championships Annual Membership Meeting

MEMBERSHIP MEETINGS

Preseason (Fall) Parents' Meeting

A pre-season meeting is usually held in September by each team to discuss the upcoming season – programs, policies and volunteer expectations. Members of the board, coaches, and key volunteers will be introduced and time will be provided for questions. We strongly encourage parents/guardians to attend.

Annual Meeting

An annual membership meeting is held each March, to coincide with the election of board members and the conclusion of the organization's fiscal year. Topics for the annual meeting include but are not limited to: election results, member comments and feedback, board updates on current organization activities, the fiscal health of the organization, and expected offseason initiatives.

COMMUNICATIONS

SYHI Email Distribution List

Important information from SYHI will be communicated via email using email addresses provided during registration. Email address changes should be done through the SYHI website (Crossbar).

Monthly you will receive our "[Knightly News](#)", a key source of information for current and upcoming activities. This is a primary way the organization will keep members up to date. The Knightly News can also be found on our [website](#).

Website & Social Media

SYHI's organizational website - www.saratogahockey.org - is a key source of communication between the organization and its members. The website contains the latest information on teams and programs, forms, and many other items of interest. SYHI operates [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) accounts which also serve to expand our communication reach within the community and membership. These posts are a reflection of our organization, we request that your engagement on our social media channels be positive and constructive.

Team Managers

Throughout the season, team managers will communicate with their specific parent groups via emails and in-person meetings.

Members are expected to check their email for communication from the organization, and from coaches and team managers. All email addresses/contacts entered in Crossbar will be used for communications. Please check the website and your team calendar on a regular basis to stay apprised of schedules and engage with these communication channels to stay informed throughout the season.

VOLUNTEERISM

SYHI is a 100% member-run, non-profit, volunteer organization. The organization is dependent on YOU to run it and sustain its growth for future families. Thank you to all our parents who volunteer their time. You are excellent examples of the power and benefits of teamwork for our skaters.

The purpose of the SYHI volunteer program is three-fold:

1. Ensure SYHI has proper governance (eg Board, Coaching, Managers, Fundraising, Volunteers, Growth).
2. Have enough support for our home tournaments.
3. Promote the recruitment and retention of skaters in the organization.

The most significant need for volunteers is for our SYHI-hosted tournaments (which will be available for sign-up through your team manager), team home games, Try Hockey for Free events, and operating the snack bar during Skidmore College and Saratoga High School games.

Upcoming volunteer opportunities will be listed in the Knightly News, and communicated via email and or your team manager. Please contact info@saratogahockey.org with any questions.

SPONSORSHIP

SYHI, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt charitable organization and has also been granted sales tax exemption by the State of New York. Contributions to SYHI are tax deductible. Your employer may match your charitable contribution.

Please contact the [President](#) of the organization if you are interested in helping with sponsorship activities or know a company or individual who would like to sponsor the organization and skaters.

TOURNAMENTS

Home tournaments: SYHI will typically host USA Hockey-sanctioned tournaments each season and occasionally additional state or regional league tournaments. Tournaments are a fundraising opportunity and also provide an opportunity for competition for our travel teams. Home [tournament dates](#) are listed on the SYHI website.

The expectation is that you are present for your skater's home tournament, and filling volunteer positions during that time.

State Tournament Play Downs: Only one team from each NYSAHA region is invited to the State Championship tournament in March. SYHI plays in NYSAHA [Northern Division](#). [Southern Conference](#).

HOCKEY AFFILIATION

SYHI is affiliated with [USA Hockey](#), the national governing body of ice hockey, and the [New York State Amateur Hockey Organization \(NYSAHA\)](#). SYHI plays in NYSAHA Northern Division, Southern Conference.

SYHI abides by and acts in accordance with articles of incorporation, bylaws, rules and regulations, and playing rules of USA Hockey and NYSAHA. Member coaches and players must be registered with USA Hockey, and teams shall be registered with USA Hockey and NYSAHA.

COACHING

Vice President of Hockey Operations (ACE Coordinator)

The Vice President of Hockey Operations (VPHO), serves as the organization's ACE Coordinator, overseeing coaches and providing guidance on the planning and execution of player development programs. The VPHO also serves to help parents understand their local organization and the larger body of USA Hockey and is an important link between the members, coaches, and players. The VPHO responsibilities include:

- Develop SYHI progression for hockey systems and skill development, in accordance with USA Hockey's American Development Model (ADM).
- Coordinate team selection tryouts.
- Serve as a liaison for coaches.
- Provide guidance and feedback to the coaching staff.
- Network with state hockey organizations.
- Oversee coaching education programs.

Coaching Selection Process

SYHI's coaching staff is composed of unpaid volunteers and occasionally paid coaches.

Qualifications are consistent for both and include:

- Register as a member of [USA Hockey](#).
- Complete the [background screening](#).
- Complete the [USA Hockey Safe Sport Training](#). (Required every year and cannot be added to a roster until completed).
- Complete the online age-specific module(s) for the age level of play you are coaching. (Age-relevant modules must be completed before participating in any team activities and coaches cannot be added to a roster until completed). Coaching Education Program Certification Clinic Requirements (Must be completed by Dec. 31 each season).
- Find, register, and attend the required certification clinic. You can only attend one clinic per season and all coaches start at Level 1. You can take clinics from April 1-Dec. 31 each season.
- Must have hockey knowledge, skills, and relevant experience.
- Must have the ability to work effectively with children and other SYHI volunteers.
- Must have the ability to put in the time and effort required throughout the season.
- Must have the ability to create a positive experience for the team.

The Coaching and Player Development Committee will select from available candidates the most qualified coaches for each team. Coaches for 12u-16U Tournament Bound (TB) teams will be selected and announced prior to season tryouts. Coaches for all other teams will be named after the team player selection process is completed. Coaching assignment is at the Committee's sole discretion. Individuals interested in coaching should contact the [Vice President of Hockey](#)

[Operations](#). Coaches are required to sign a Coaches Code of Conduct setting forth coaching performance standards. A background check is required through USA Hockey. Coaches must register via the [Saratoga Youth Hockey | Coaching Requirements \(saratogahockey.org\)](https://saratogahockey.org).

Coaching Expectations

Coaches have the primary responsibility for creating an educational and supportive experience for all skaters. Coaches should be clear and consistent with their expectations for player behavior on and off the ice. Coaches should provide a positive learning environment in which players can ask questions and learn from both their mistakes and successes. SYHI supports the American Development Model (ADM), which is a nationwide model for successfully developing American hockey players. It is a tool that will ensure every kid will have a great chance to succeed.

SYHI expects coaches to evaluate and make judgments regarding players' behavior and, when appropriate, take corrective action, including benching a player. If players or parents wish to discuss the reasons for a coach's corrective action, they should have a conversation with the coach. If resolution is not achievable the parties may discuss the matter with the [Vice President of Hockey Operations](#) and may choose to file a grievance following the [grievance procedure](#).

HOCKEY PROGRAM REGISTRATION, FEES + SCHOLARSHIPS

Registration

Registration will be held online [via the SYHI Website](#). Registration is typically open during the month of April and runs through October 1st. Per USA Hockey guidelines, skaters must be registered with their forms signed and returned to the organization prior to being allowed on-ice (USA Hockey insurance regulations). Players who seek to register outside of the registration window will be registered in accordance with the [policy below](#). Questions regarding registration should be directed to the [SYHA Registrar](#).

All players are required to be members of USA Hockey, which provides insurance coverage while participating in SYHI activities ([once USA Hockey registration has been paid in full](#)). There are several coverage exclusions, including travel to and from practices, fighting, intentional acts, etc. To obtain more information, please refer to the [USA Hockey website](#).

Late Registration Policy for Travel Team Players

Any players registering after tryouts will be placed on the lowest level team in that given age group. If the lowest level team has been assigned the maximum number of skaters & goalies, said player will be assigned to our development team, provided the organization is fielding a development team that season. The Coaching and Player Development Committee shall review and evaluate player placement in conjunction with the coaching staff of the skaters' age level. After a period of observation, the player will only be placed on a team if there is a spot on the team for which they are evaluated for. The circumstances leading to the late registration shall also be considered as part of any placement.

Once tryouts have concluded, any late registrations must be approved by the Coaching & Player Development Committee.

Fees

Fees for the season are posted in advance on the [organization's website](#). Families will have the ability to pay the season fee all at once or pay in monthly installments.

Scholarships

SYHI is committed to providing the opportunity for young athletes to participate in youth hockey at all levels. To achieve that vision, the Board of Directors has created a scholarship program in honor of Mark Woodcock, to celebrate Mark's passion and commitment to hockey. The Woodcock Scholarship is for dedicated Saratoga families that demonstrate the need for financial assistance, have a positive membership standing within the organization, and a solid commitment to SYHI.

If awarded a player scholarship, you will receive a full or partial reduction of your family's SYHI registration fees. The Finance Committee will keep all applications confidential. Registered players awarded scholarships will remain anonymous. The standard scholarship process requires that you complete [this form](#) for your player(s). If you have more than one player, you may apply for a scholarship for each player via [this form](#).

The scholarship committee will consider scholarships for 25%, 50%, 75% or 100% of the (each) player's season fee. Applications will be accepted on a rolling basis through December, but ideally are submitted by September 1st, to enable determinations prior to the initiation of season payment on September 15th. Families will be informed if their scholarship application was approved and the amount of the scholarship prior to the start of the season.

Refund Policy

All requests for refunds (with or without release requests) must be made in writing to and approved by the SYHI Executive Committee and will be considered on a case-by-case basis. After pre-registration (but without having attended tryouts) where a player fails to attend the tryout or requests a refund prior to trying out or registering for a team, a refund will be issued.

After registration, the Board will consider a prorated refund on a case-by-case basis if the request is received prior to December 1st and is based on one or more of the following:

1. Season-ending injury to the player prior to December 1st. A written opinion of a medical doctor stating the specific injury, limitations, and length of time injury prohibits play will be required for the Board to consider a prorated refund.
2. Player leaving area; The player and family are moving from the Saratoga area (over 75 miles) during the hockey season.

3. The player is a “resigning player” and decides they no longer want to play hockey and is not departing to play for another organization. NO releases will be granted for this situation until the season is over.

The amount of the pro-rated refund shall be calculated based on how many weeks of the hockey season have passed at the time of the request. For purposes of this calculation, all team seasons shall be considered a 20-week season.

In any case, as much as possible, refunds will be made within thirty (30) days of Board approval.

AGE-LEVEL PROGRAM DESCRIPTIONS

SYHI is a model [USA Hockey ADM](#) organization. Our programs place emphasis on the development of hockey skills through the practice of repetitive drills. It is the belief of SYHI that skaters must first strengthen their skating skills, prior to entering into game situations. SYHI structures programming to instruct and enhance the skills needed to ultimately play competitively in a game situation. Our programs include initiation, recreational, and competitive levels.

Learn to Play: This program is designed to meet the skating and hockey needs of a beginning player ages 4-12. The program runs weekly for 14 sessions from December through March.

Mites House: Consists of skaters ages 4-8 who have some level of skating experience. Mites House will practice twice a week and have inter-organizational scrimmages once a week.

Mites Travel (Red, White & Blue): These teams can consist of skaters ages 6-8 who based on an assessment at the beginning of the season, will travel during the season. Mites RWB will practice twice a week and play home and away games on the weekends. Additional fees may apply if teams select to participate in away tournaments.

House Program (10-16): This is a developmental program for new skaters, or those who are looking to grow their hockey skills without the requirement of travel. House players will have two practices a week and seek scrimmage opportunities with other area house programs.

Travel Program (10-16): SYHI offers travel opportunities for youth ages 10-16. Skaters try out and are placed on teams based on skill. The number of teams for each level is determined by the number of skaters who try out for the program. Travel teams practice twice a week and will attend a range of games and tournaments during the season as determined by the coaching staff.

USA Hockey determines player classification by birth year as outlined below:

Division	Age	Birth Year
8U	5 - 8-year-olds	2017 - 2020
10U / Squirt	9 & 10-year-olds	2015 & 2016
12U / Peewee	11 & 12-year-olds	2013 & 2014
14U / Bantam	13 & 14-year-olds	2011 & 2012
16U / Midget	15 & 16-year-olds	2009 & 2010

Player development priorities are good sportsmanship, skill development, team play and hockey strategy.

SYHI joins [USA Hockey](#) in its commitment to growing the number of girls in the sport. We offer opportunities year-round for girls in our program to have fun and grow their hockey skills together on the ice. This includes but is not limited to girls skills sessions, and when possible, games with other girl programs.

TEAM TRYOUTS

SYHI will field teams in each age division based on enrollment numbers. Tryouts for 10U-16U teams are typically held in April. Skaters will be evaluated on the following: Skating skills; puck handling; hockey/game knowledge, athletic ability, coachability, player commitment, player attitude and/or behavior.

Tryouts are optional – skaters who do not try out will be placed on the lowest-level team within their age division upon registration, if there is an available spot on that team.

If you have questions about the process – ASK! Please contact the [Vice President of Hockey Operations](#). Details for tryouts - including the [Tryout Policy](#) and [FAQ](#) - will be updated and posted on the organization's website no later than one month before scheduled tryouts.

There are no tryouts for Mites (ages 8 and under). At the beginning of the season, there will be an assessment that places a subset of mite skaters on travel teams based on skill.

Post Tryout - New Player Policy

SYHI welcomes players of all abilities throughout the year. That said the organization is not obligated to accept the player. When adding a new player mid-season, SYHI and coaches are sensitive to pre-established team dynamics, the skaters' coaching needs, and the safety of the new player on the ice. Players who wish to join SYHI after the season has begun will be subject to the following guidelines:

- The new player will be evaluated by the coaching director and team coaches to determine which team will be the most appropriate for the new player.
- A fee will be determined based on the date of joining SYHI and the estimated number of games to be played.

SKATER EQUIPMENT

General Equipment Guidelines

For your skater's safety, it is important that your skater has well-fitting equipment and a certified, unexpired helmet which they are required to wear on the ice at all times. Effective August 1st, 2024, USA Hockey will require that neck guards are worn for practice and games. Mouthguards are required for skaters on 12U and older teams and are strongly recommended for younger skaters.

Jerseys

All skaters will be required to have jerseys for use during games. Only jerseys purchased through or issued by the organization are allowed to be worn during SYHI games and tournaments. SYHI's virtual store will be open in advance of and at points during the season, to purchase jerseys and other SYHI merchandise. Notice will be provided via email, social media, and the Knightly News when the store is open.

Goalie Equipment

SYHI has goalie equipment available for use at 10U and below. This equipment must be well maintained and returned at the end of the season. Equipment for additional goalies is provided on an "as available" basis. All players are given opportunities (and encouraged) to try the goalie position in practice and/or in games through the Squirt (10U) age level.

Interested players are encouraged to take advantage of additional goalie practices, typically held about once per week.

TEAM RULES + STRUCTURE

Each head coach will establish individual team rules. Individual team rules must be in writing and submitted to the Coaches & Player Development Committee for prior review and approval. Before the first game of the season, head coaches will hold a team meeting with players and parents to discuss and explain team rules. Coaches are encouraged to have team meetings with players and parents on a regular basis throughout the season to provide information, resolve concerns, and answer questions. Team rules may vary from team to team and it is the responsibility of the head coach and team manager to communicate with parents.

Number of Practices + Games

Each team generally will have a minimum of two practices per week, either shared or full ice. Practices are scheduled to be fairly consistent throughout the season (as possible, typically the same nights per team/division each week). Home ice availability by team is assigned by the

organization's scheduler. Team managers should confer with the head coach and decide on scheduling away games. Team managers are responsible for coordinating with the scheduler and for confirming all games (both home and away) with the opposing team.

Practice + Game Attendance

Hockey is a team sport and players are expected to attend practice and participate in games and tournaments. At the Head Coach's discretion, failure to attend one or more practices during the week prior to any game may affect game participation. Players must arrive at the rink in time to dress, attend team meetings, and be on the ice on time. Each Head Coach will establish team rules regarding tardiness and absences. If a child has school, religious, or other sports obligations that overlap with hockey, a discussion with the head coach is mandatory so that all parties are aware of participation requirements. Coaches shall not sanction or penalize players for missing any team functions including games, tournaments, or practices due to prior communicated commitments.

CONDUCT + SAFETY

The following guidelines are intended to broadly address the expectations around conduct and safety for skaters, coaches, and families participating in SYHI programming.

General Rink Safety

Ensure your and your child's safety by following basic common-sense rules of safety.

- Exercise caution in and around the rink.
- Walk carefully in the parking lot, avoiding potholes and icy patches.
- Stay off of and away from machinery including the Zamboni.
- Skaters must be fully off the ice before the Zamboni enters the rink to resurface the ice and stay completely on the other side of the wall the entire time the Zamboni is out.
- Stay out of areas not designated for use by rink management.
- Do not run in the lobby. Do not play hockey in the lobby.
- Be aware of the odd puck flying out of play while in the stands or on the bench.
- If you leave the rink during practice, make sure another parent on your team knows that you have left and when you'll be back.
- Be respectful of others.
- Pick up after yourself in the lobby, locker room, and in the stands.
- Any individual under the age of 18, must wear a helmet when on the bench.
- All skaters are required to get dressed in one of the rink locker rooms.

[USA Hockey Codes of Conduct](#) are applicable to administrators, coaches, officials, parents, players, and spectators. All players, parents, coaches, and managers are required to sign the SYHI Codes of Conduct, thereby agreeing to abide by standards of conduct based on USA Hockey, NYSAHA, and SYHI guidelines. The Codes of Conduct outline in general terms a minimum standard of behavior. Players, parents, coaches, and managers are expected to have an understanding of their obligations. If they are unsure, they should discuss any questions with

their coach or their team manager.

Parents/family members, players, and coaching staff should keep in mind that they represent their club and community at all times and should act accordingly. Failure to conform to the standards of the applicable Code of Conduct will be a cause for disciplinary action.

Expectations for Player Conduct/Behavior:

USA Hockey Players Code of Conduct requires the following:

- Play for fun and work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player; get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship, and discipline.
- Be on time for practices and games.
- Have appropriate equipment.
- Learn the rules and play by them.
- Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, your opponents and the officials, never argue with the officials.

SYHI has the following expectations as it relates to the conduct of players:

- No swearing or abusive language on the bench, in the rink, or at any team function.
- No lashing out at any official no matter what the call is. The coaching staff will handle all matters pertaining to officiating.
- If you receive a penalty, skate directly to the penalty box - no questions asked.
- Have good sportsmanship on and off the ice. Poor sportsmanship may result in disciplinary action by the coach.
- No behavior that could injure another player, coach, official or bystander on or off the ice.
- Fighting on or off the ice will not be tolerated.
- Do not take anything that doesn't belong to you.
- Do not use, transport, or sell drugs or alcohol.

Conduct that is deemed unacceptable by these standards and repeated conduct violations will result in disciplinary action. These actions may include but are not limited to, benching during practice or a game, short-term suspension of activities, and season suspension.

Player Discipline

Learning to abide by training, practice, and game rules teaches discipline. A good rule for a coach to follow is to be fair but firm. Coaches are ultimately responsible for ensuring that players engage in safe and appropriate conduct in both practice and game situations. Additionally, coaches are responsible, along with parents to enforce the rules established by SYHI.

Disciplinary action may be anticipated when players violate any Code of Conduct rules as established by SYHI, USA Hockey, or NYSAHA rules. Discipline of a player or players may be

anticipated, up to and including suspension of play, for those players violating rules including but not limited to the following:

- Demonstration of a lack of respect for coaches, parents, teammates, opponents, spectators, and officials.
- Use of vulgar, obscene, and inappropriate language (including swearing) and the use of obscene and inappropriate gestures directed at anyone.
- Failure to abide by the express wishes and directions of the coach including failure to pay attention and accept constructive advice and instruction directly leading to the alteration of the player's behavior either on or off the ice.
- Failure to play as a team player.
- Failure to respect the belongings of others.
- Failure to follow rink rules.
- Failure to follow rules governing behavior in hotels.
- Failure to adhere to a coach's imposed curfew or rules.
- Consistent failure to be on time for practices or games without a valid excuse.
- Failure to attend practices and games without notification of the coach or a designee and without a valid excuse.
- Failure to follow the SYHI uniform and equipment policy.

Player's Rights

- Be treated with respect by coaches, teammates, rink staff, and organization members.
- Be aware of organization rules, regulations, and expectations, and the degrees of enforcement.
- To communicate directly with the coaching staff, team manager, age director, or a board member.

Expectations for Parent-Spectator Conduct/Behavior

Your child's participation in the organization's hockey program requires a significant, but rewarding, contribution of your time and effort. At minimum you are expected to support your child's development, your child's team, and the organization. You are an important role model for your hockey player. Verbal abuse of referees, ridicule of opposing hockey teams, public criticism of coaches, or arguments with other fans is not acceptable conduct. If you have a criticism, please feel free to discuss it with your player's coach or a member of the Board of Directors.

SYHI Parent/Spectator Code of Conduct

- Observe USA Hockey Zero Tolerance Policy (see below).
- Always respect players, coaches, and officials, maintain control, and display good sportsmanship.

- Do not openly criticize officials, coaches, other parents or skaters; keep negative comments to yourself.
- Do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Act appropriately on and off the ice: Remember that you as well as your team represent the organization and community.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- Communicate respectfully with your team manager and coach (24-hour rule applies - see below).
- Remember that the locker room is for skaters, coaches, and team managers (locker room policy below applies).

Parent conduct that is deemed unacceptable by these standards and repeated conduct violations will result in disciplinary action. These actions may include, but are not limited to, short-term suspension of the parent from team activities, and season suspension of the parent or spectator.

We encourage all families to engage in the following best practices:

- Leave the “coaching” to the coaches. Compliment and encourage the coaches, your child, and other skaters (let the Coach handle corrections/feedback when required).
- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat and enforce the positive points of the game. Work toward removing the negative behavior in youth sports.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. Get your child to all practices; communicate with your coach if your child cannot make it to practice.
- De-emphasize games and competition in the youngest age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game.
- Teach your child to have fun and enjoy competition. Do not tell your child that winning does not matter because it does and your child knows it. Instead, help your child and other skaters on the team develop a healthy competitive attitude towards winning and losing.
- DO NOT compare your child with other players (it is not fair to your child, remember each child develops at their own pace and skills will usually even out over time). Be honest with your expectations and assessment of your child’s capabilities.
- Be responsible for your own safety – be alert to prevent accidents on and off the ice.
- Be involved with the organization and your child’s team.
- Refrain from setting incentives (monetary or otherwise) that could be counterproductive to the coaches plans/expectations (i.e. paying for goals or penalties).

Zero Tolerance Policy

To make ice hockey a rewarding experience for all participants, USA Hockey has instructed officials to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. The [Zero Tolerance Policy](#) is designed to require all players, coaches, officials, parents/spectators and team officials and administrators to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after all USA Hockey sanctioned games. Examples of unsportsmanlike behavior:

- Openly disputes or argues any decision by an official.
 - Uses obscene or inappropriate language or gestures at any time.
 - Visually demonstrates any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's call.
- Taunting of players, coaches, officials or spectators.
- Throwing of objects in the viewing areas, player's area or on ice surface.

[USA Hockey's Zero Tolerance Policy](#) must be adhered to at all times. Officials have the right, with no warning, to require the removal of the offending person, assess penalties during the game to the team representing the offending person, as well as run the clock if it is not an advantage to that team. For more details see the [USA Hockey website](#). Parents, players or coaches who violate the Zero-Tolerance Policy may face club sanctions, including, but not limited to suspension or removal from SYHI.

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 are central to SYHI's goals. SYHI 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, SYHI 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.

Use of the rink and the locker rooms is a privilege, not a right. City of Saratoga Springs management and SYHI will not tolerate behavior in violation of SafeSport policies, excessive noise, rough-housing, physical abuse of locker rooms, inappropriate language and other displays of poor judgment. Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, are not permitted to be used in the locker rooms. If phones or other mobile devices must be used, they should be taken outside of the locker room. Stickhandling is not allowed in the hallways and locker rooms. Players are expected to use the stick racks provided outside each locker room. It is expected that all players respect one another no matter what level of play or team. All travel teams (U8, U10, U12, U14 and U16) must have an assigned locker room monitor. The coaches and team manager are eligible to be locker room monitors, as is any volunteer who has completed [SafeSport training](#) and had a background check through USA Hockey. Please see the locker room policy below for additional information.

Our youngest age groups often require assistance from parents/family members to get dressed. We encourage parents/family members to teach their players as young as possible how to get dressed independently. In circumstances where parents/family members are permitted in the locker room, coaches may ask that they leave for a short time before the game and wait to enter the locker room after the game so that the coaches may address the players. As players get older, the coach may at their discretion prohibit parents/family members from a locker room.

PROHIBITED CONDUCT + REPORTING

USA Hockey has long had systems in place to protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse and other types of abuse and misconduct that can be harmful to youth hockey players and other participants. These include without limitation sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment, and hazing.

The [USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook](#) is posted on the SYHI website. The handbook contains USA Hockey's various policies to protect its participants from all types of misconduct and abuse. All board members, Coaches, and Team Managers are [SafeSport](#) trained. Any USA Hockey participant or parent of a participant who engages in abusive behavior or misconduct is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities. SYHI is deeply committed to providing all participants with an environment that is safe, supportive of their wellbeing and conducive to the enjoyment of hockey. All types of bullying, harassing or threatening behavior among participants are regarded as unacceptable and subject to immediate disciplinary action. It is a violation of this USA Hockey Policy if a coach or other responsible adult knows or should know of the bullying, harassing or threatening behavior but takes no action to intervene on behalf of the targeted participant(s). Any conduct that is an actual or suspected violation of SafeSport policies or raises concerns about the general safety and well-being of players must be immediately reported to [SafeSport](#) and the [VP of Hockey Operations](#).

Recruiting

USA Hockey and New York State Amateur Hockey Association (NYSAHA) rules forbid any of our members, including parents, players, and coaches, to recruit members from any other organization. Recruitment by any of our member participants will result in SYHI being sanctioned by these governing bodies and the loss of our tournament-bound status. SYHI and its members are forbidden to recruit players from any other hockey organization.

NYSAHA Guidelines E.4.e: "Recruitment - organizations, through their Participant Members or other component persons (whether or not affiliated with the organization), are prohibited from soliciting or otherwise contacting youth, girls or high school players from another organization, such as by offering contracts, holding tryouts, development camps, programs or other activities, or otherwise engage in conduct that would appear to suggest that such a player who has not been released change his or her affiliation with their current organization (such activities to be

known as “Recruitment”). It shall be evidence of Recruitment if after such player and organization have executed a commitment and the player has not been released by obtaining a Player/Financial Release, the player is contacted by another organization in the above-prohibited manner. Any written and signed complaint regarding Recruitment shall be directed to the respective Section President, who will investigate and make a full report to the NYS Hockey Board of Directors, which will take action as deemed necessary and appropriate.”

Violations of this policy will be investigated by the SYHI Executive Committee.

24-HOUR RULE

A member/parent/guardian is not to approach a coach to discuss a game, a game incident, or a situation that occurred during the game that may provoke an adverse emotional response or a hostile situation, until at least 24 hours after the fact.

Coaches should not discuss a game, a game incident, or a situation that occurred during the game that may provoke an adverse emotional response or create a hostile situation, until at least 24 hours after the fact. An exception to this is physical or sexual indiscretion or any situation that compromises the immediate safety of the children.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION

SYHI encourages parents/guardians to take the initiative in resolving conflicts that they or their child may have with other team members, parents, and/or coaches, via respectful communication directly with those involved. If the issue cannot be resolved amicably, it should be referred to the Director of the CPDC for resolution. As a last resort in resolving an issue, or as the first step in the appeal of a disciplinary action, the parent may file a formal grievance.

PROTOCOL FOR ISSUING FORMAL GRIEVANCE

SYHI recognizes the fact that over the course of a season, certain issues may arise that need to be addressed by the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will investigate allegations from members or other hockey officials that show a violation of a Code or Procedure of SYHI or the USA Hockey Code of Conduct and come to a conclusion that may involve consequences and penalties for all parties involved. Following review, the Executive Committee will issue a determination and will notify the Board. i Such determinations are considered final pending appeal to USA Hockey.

The following steps are required to issue a formal grievance:

- NO complaint may be addressed before the “24 Hour Rule” (the exception being any situation that compromises the immediate safety or wellbeing of the children, including but not limited to SafeSport violations).
- Use the [Grievance Form](#) to submit a complaint. This will go directly to the organization's ACE Coordinator, who is also the SafeSport Coordinator, and on to the Executive Committee. Care should be taken on the form to clearly outline the type of misconduct

alleged, the name(s) of the individual(s) alleged to have committed the misconduct, the approximate dates the misconduct was committed, the names of other individuals who might have information regarding the alleged misconduct, and the reasons to believe that misconduct has occurred.

- An investigation of the complaint will follow. The Executive Committee, at its discretion, will collect factual evidence, including but not limited to interviewing witnesses which affirms or denies the allegations. After reviewing all pertinent information, the Executive Committee may determine that a violation has occurred or has not occurred.
- If a SafeSport violation has occurred a report will be submitted to USA Hockey by the ACE Coordinator.
- If a violation of a Code, Penalty, Procedure or behavioral expectation of SYHI is determined, the Committee shall issue a written finding of fact and penalty within seven days of its determination. The parties to the action are bound by the determination of the Committee, and there will be no appeal to SYHI for any of the issues determined.

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

Disciplinary actions that are not appropriate/unable to be addressed at the team level are handled by the Executive Committee or a code of conduct committee assembled by the Board of Directors, which will investigate any policy violations and impose disciplinary actions. The Board will review and discuss any actions taken by the Executive Committee at their next Board meeting. Any member of the Executive Committee should recuse themselves based on any perceived or actual conflicts of interest.

At the request of the Board, an independent Disciplinary Committee may be formed whenever the need arises.

When an allegation of sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment, hazing is made against a player, employee, volunteer, referee, guardian or independent contractor, SYHI may immediately suspend the accused individual and/or immediately remove that individual from contact with any children in the program until the allegation has been investigated. This shall apply whether or not the allegation involves an incident during a hockey program or event.

PLAYER RELEASE

All requests for releases must be submitted to the Board using the New York State Amateur Hockey Association ["Player Release" form](#). No waivers will be considered unless the family has met all financial obligations. Once all financial obligations have been met, SYHI will execute releases per the USA Hockey guidelines. SYHI members have the right to appeal a denied release request. Appeals must be in writing and addressed to USA Hockey. A minimum of 7-days will be required to process a player release.

SCHOLASTIC GUIDELINES

SYHI strongly believes that scholastic achievement is of greater long-term value than participation in youth sports. Parents should monitor their child's academic performance and their developing ability to successfully balance the demands of school and sports. If a player is having academic difficulty, parents are encouraged to discuss with the Head Coach and address the situation appropriately. Middle School and High School students are expected to maintain the academic eligibility standards established by their schools.