

# **MSHL Eastern Conference Policies & Procedures**

## **Locker Room Policy**

In addition to following all USA Hockey policies and guidance, the development of our hockey players and enjoyment of the sport, the safety and protection of our participants is central to the MSHL Eastern Conference. The MSHL Eastern Conference will adhere to USA Hockey's SafeSport Program to help protect its participants from physical abuse, sexual abuse, and any other types of misconduct, including emotional abuse, bullying threats, harassment and hazing. To help prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring in our locker rooms, the MSHL Eastern Conference has adopted the following locker room policy. This policy is designed to maintain personal privacy and reduce the risk of misconduct in all locker rooms. Our teams travel to play games and/or practice at various arenas with different sets of accommodations in each. MSHL Eastern Conference officials (coaches, managers & volunteers) will attempt to provide information on the locker room facilities before all home and away games as well as for practices. At arenas for which anyone is unfamiliar, those individuals should plan to take extra time and get familiar.

## **Locker Room Monitoring**

The MSHL Eastern Conference has predictable and limited use of locker rooms and changing areas (generally 30 minutes before and following practices and games). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. While constant monitoring inside of locker rooms and changing areas might be the most effective way to prevent problems, this would likely make some players uncomfortable and may even place team staff at risk for unwarranted suspicion. Team staff must conduct a sweep of the locker rooms and changing areas before players arrive, and if the coaches are not inside the locker rooms, either a coach, team manager or volunteer will monitor directly outside the locker rooms and changing areas during periods of use. Doors to locker rooms should be left open only when adequate privacy is still possible, so that only approved team personnel/staff are permitted in the locker room.

Team personnel will also secure the locker room appropriately during times when the team is on the ice. We discourage parents/guardians in the locker rooms unless it is necessary. If a player needs assistance with his/her uniform or gear, if the player is or may be injured, or a player's disability warrants assistance, team officials must ask the parents/guardians to let them know beforehand that they will be helping the player. In circumstances where parents/guardians are permitted in the locker room, coaches are permitted to ask the parents/guardians to leave for a short period of time before the game and for a short period of time after the game so that coaches may address the players.

## **Cell Phones, Cameras and Other Mobile Recording Devices**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including voice recording and video recording and video cameras, are NOT permitted to be used in the locker rooms. Any pictures have to be taken outside the locker room. The basis for this policy is to prevent any accidental pictures of any half-dressed players and/or inappropriate behavior that are recorded directly or in the background that could result in embarrassment to player(s). If phones or other mobile devices must be used, they will be taken outside the locker room. If players are found by team officials to be using such devices in the locker room, they will be confiscated by the coaches or team manager and withheld from the player until after the completion of the practice session, or game.

## **Co-Ed Locker Rooms**

The Co-Ed locker room policy attempts to balance the social integration and camaraderie of a team sport while providing a safe and respectful environment for all our participants. We have teams that consist of both male and female players. It is important that the privacy rights of all of our players are given consideration and appropriate arrangements are made. Wherever possible, the MSHL Eastern Conference will have the male and female players dress and undress in separate locker rooms. Further, teams can congregate together in one locker room before or after practices and/or games but only when fully dressed. If separate locker rooms are not available, then the players will take turns using the locker room to change. It is understood that these arrangements may require that players arrive earlier or leave later to dress. Again, this is to respect the privacy of both or female and male players. Note: Remember that both locker rooms are to be monitored by SafeSport certified team officials.

## **SafeSport Coordinator**

All MSHL Eastern Conference teams will have a SafeSport coordinator that is certified in USA Hockey SafeSport. The SafeSport coordinator for all teams will be listed on the MSHL's S1 team roster.

## **Travel Policy**

The MSHL Eastern Conference Travel Policy involves teams that travel regularly to play individual games, or tournaments. Travel is generally limited to within the state of Maryland, and some teams where there is no travel other than local travel to and from a team's own arena. The MSHL Eastern Conference has established policies to guide our travel, minimize one-on-one interactions and reduce

the risk of abuse or misconduct. Adherence to these travel guidelines will increase player safety and improve the player's experience while keeping travel a fun and enjoyable experience. We distinguish between travel to training, practice and local games or practices ("local travel"), and team travel involving a coordinated overnight stay ("team travel").

Local travel occurs when the MSHL Eastern Conference team does not sponsor, coordinate, or arrange for travel.

- Players and/or their parents/guardians are responsible for making all arrangements for local travel. The team and its coaches, managers or administrators should avoid responsibility for arranging or coordinating local travel. It is the responsibility of the parents/guardians to ensure the person transporting the minor player maintains proper safety and legal requirements, including, but not limited to, a valid driver's license, automobile liability insurance, a vehicle is in safe working order, and compliance with applicable state laws.
- The managers, coaches, and/or volunteers of MSHL Eastern Conference teams, who are not also acting as a parent, should not drive alone with an unrelated minor player and should only always drive with at least two players or another adult, unless otherwise agreed to in writing by the minor player's parent.
- Where a manager, coach and/or volunteer is involved in an unrelated minor player's local travel, efforts should be made to ensure that the adult personnel are not alone with the unrelated player, by, e.g., picking up or dropping off the players in groups. In any case where a manager, coach and/or volunteer is involved in the player's local travel, a parental release should be obtained in advance.
- Managers, coaches, and volunteers who are also a player's parent or guardian may provide shared transportation for any player(s) if they pick up their player first and drop off their player last in any shared or carpool travel arrangement.
- It is recognized that in some limited instances it will be unavoidable for a manager, coach or volunteer of the MSHL Eastern Conference to drive alone with an unrelated minor player. However, efforts should be made to minimize these occurrences and to mitigate any circumstances that could lead to allegations of abuse or misconduct.

Team travel is overnight travel that occurs when one of the MSHL Eastern Conference teams sponsors, coordinates or arranges for travel so that our teams can compete locally, regionally, nationally or internationally. Because of the greater distances, coaches, managers, staff, volunteers and chaperones will often travel with the players.

- When possible, the MSHL Eastern Conference team will provide reasonable advance notice before team travel. Travel notice will also include designated team hotels for overnight stays as well as a contact person within the MSHL Eastern Conference or the team. This individual will be the point of contact to confirm your intention to travel and to help with travel details.

- The MSHL Eastern Conference team will post specific travel itineraries when they become available. These will include a more detailed schedule as well as contact information for team travel chaperones. The MSHL Eastern Conference team will make efforts to provide adequate supervision through coaches and other adult chaperones. The MSHL Eastern Conference team will make efforts so that there is at least one coach or adult chaperone for each five to eight players. If a team is composed of both male and female players, then we will attempt to arrange chaperones for both genders. However, we will rely on parents/guardians to serve as chaperones and may be limited in providing this match.
- Regardless of gender, a coach shall not share a hotel room or other sleeping arrangement with a minor player (unless the coach is the parent, guardian or sibling of the player).
- Because of the greater distances, coaches, managers, staff, volunteers, and chaperones will often travel with the players. No manager, coach, or volunteer will engage in team travel without the proper safety requirements in place and on record, including valid drivers' licenses, automobile liability insurance as required by applicable state law, a vehicle in safe working order, and compliance with all state laws. All chaperones shall have been screened in compliance with the USA Hockey Screening Policy, and all team drivers shall have been screened and the screen shall include a check of appropriate Department of Motor Vehicle records. A parent/guardian that has not been screened may participate in team activities and assist with supervision/monitoring of the players but will not be permitted to have any one-on-one interactions with players.
- Players should share rooms with other players of the same gender, with the appropriate number of players assigned per room depending on the accommodations.
- The Head Coach will establish a curfew by when all players must be in their hotel rooms or in a supervised location. Regular monitoring and curfew checks will be done in each room by at least two properly screened adults.
- The team personnel shall ask hotels to block adult pay per view channels.
- Individual meetings between a player and coach may not occur in hotel sleeping rooms and must be held in public settings or with additional adults present.
- All players will be permitted to make regular check-in phone calls to parents/guardians. Team personnel shall allow for any unscheduled check-in phone calls initiated by either the player or parents/guardians.
- Family members who wish to stay in the team hotel are permitted and encouraged to do so.
- The team will make every effort to accommodate reasonable parental/guardian requests when a child is away from home without a parent. If any special arrangements are necessary for your child, please contact the team personnel who can either make or assist with making those arrangements.
- Meetings do not occur in hotel rooms, but the team may reserve a separate space for adults and athletes to socialize.

- If disciplinary action against a player is required while the player is traveling without his/her parents/guardians, then except where immediate action is necessary, parents/guardians will be notified before any action is taken or immediately after the action.
- No coach, manager, volunteer or chaperone shall at any time be under the influence of alcohol or drugs while performing their coaching, managing, volunteering and/or chaperoning duties.
- In all cases involving travel, parents/guardians have the right to transport their minor player and have the minor player stay in their hotel room.
- During team travel, coaches, managers, volunteers and chaperones will help players, fellow coaches and team personnel adhere to policy guidelines, including, without limitation, the Travel Policy, Locker Room Policy and Reporting Policy.
- Prior to any travel, coaches will endeavor to make players and parents aware of all expectations and rules. Coaches will also support managers, volunteers, chaperones and/or participate in the monitoring of the players for adherence to curfew restrictions and other travel rules.

## **Prohibited Conduct and Reporting**

MSHL Eastern Conference prohibits all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing, all as described in the USA Hockey SafeSport Handbook. Participants, coaches, managers, or volunteers in the MSHL Eastern Conference may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of the Travel Policies or for engaging in any misconduct or abuse or that violates the USA Hockey SafeSport Policies. Reports of any actual or suspected violations, you may email USA Hockey at [SafeSport@usahockey.org](mailto:SafeSport@usahockey.org) or may call 1-800-888-4656.