

WATERTOWN YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

WATERTOWN, CONNECTICUT

WATERTOWN YOUTH HOCKEY ASSOCIATION'S (WYHA) COVID-19 POLICY

As of 10/1/2020, the Watertown Youth Hockey Association Board of Directors has approved the following Covid-19 Policy for the 2020-2021 season. Please review the contents of this policy with your family prior to the next practice or game.

Respect and strictly adhere to all rink restrictions for all games (home and away), all rules of hosting programs, and all additional on-ice and locker room health and safety precautions requested by your head coach. If a game or practice is at a facility with no existing Covid policy, this policy shall preside.

Should you have any questions about this policy, please contact wtownhockey@gmail.com. A copy of this statement is available on www.watertownredwings.com.

DISCLOSURE

The information in this policy is NOT intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment. All content and information are provided for general informational purposes only. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, WYHA makes no representation and assumes no responsibility for the completeness of this information. Further, you should seek advice from medical professionals and/or public health officials in your area if you have specific questions. These guidelines address only the early phases of return-to-play (Phase 2 in Connecticut) and additional guidelines may, or may not, follow as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to evolve.

RELEASE OF LIABILITY

As outlined in the Policy, we are taking numerous health and safety precautions this season, however, players and parents should understand the following:

- Your child may be exposed to Covid-19 through playing hockey. The State of Connecticut has classified hockey as a “higher risk” sport for the spread of Covid-19.
- Your child and you, if you are a coach, may be required to quarantine due to a positive case of Covid-19 on your child’s team, or on another Watertown team you practiced with or on an outside team you played a game against.
- In the event of a positive case of Covid-19 in the program or opposing team, **the local health department (LHD) will decide whether any individuals or teams must quarantine.** WYHA does not make the decision but, for contact tracing purposes, we will provide your name, contact information and the team’s hockey schedule to the LHD in the event your team may be impacted.
- In the event of a quarantine, your child will not be able to attend school and other activities in person for an extended period of time as determined by the LHD (currently 10-14 days). Coaches who are quarantined will not be able to go to work in person.

- Your child and their teammates and coaches may miss hockey due to a quarantine originating outside of hockey through school, another activity or work. If there are not enough players, games may be canceled. Eligibility for CHC state tournaments is not guaranteed.
- Anyone who demonstrates a disregard for any WYHA, state or local Covid-19 protocols may be suspended from hockey activities temporarily or for the season.

Parent Assumption of Risk, Release and Hold Harmless

PARTICIPATION IN A WYHA ON-ICE ACTIVITY BY YOU OR YOUR CHILD OR REGISTRATION FOR A PROGRAM AFTER THE DATE OF THIS STATEMENT CONSTITUTES YOUR AGREEMENT, ON BEHALF OF YOURSELF, YOUR CHILD AND YOUR FAMILY UNIT, TO (1) COMPLY WITH THE COVID-19 POLICY, (2) ASSUME ALL RISKS OF TRANSMISSION AND COMPLICATIONS OF COVID-19 AND (3) RELEASE AND HOLD HARMLESS WYHA AND ITS HOME ICE FACILITIES FROM ALL LIABILITY AND LOSSES ARISING FROM YOUR PARTICIPATION AND YOUR CHILD'S PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES ORGANIZED, HOSTED, SPONSORED OR PARTICIPATED IN BY WYHA.

OBJECTIVE OF POLICY

To return our players and coaches to the ice, allowing them to play and enjoy the sport, while, most importantly, trying to mitigate exposure risk as much as feasibly possible to ensure the safety of our athletes, coaches, and families.

GENERAL RISK MITIGATION STRATEGIES

Screening

- STAY HOME if you are sick
- STAY HOME if you have been exposed to or in close contact (i.e. within 6 feet for greater than 15 minutes) with a Covid-19 infected individual. A player or coach who has been exposed to a Covid-19 infected person should not attend a WYHA hockey event for 14 days.
- Perform mandatory daily health check by monitoring for symptoms of illness and taking the temperature of you and your child prior to coming to the rink (home or away).
- Do not come to a practice or game if you or anyone in your household has:
 - A temperature of 100.4° Fahrenheit or higher, even if you are not sick.
 - Chills
 - A new uncontrolled cough
 - Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - Sudden loss of sense of taste or smell in the last 14 days
 - A pending test for COVID-19
- Any individual who meets the above criteria should follow their healthcare provider's recommendations for when it is safe to return to activity.

Reporting of Illness

- Promptly report to your head coach if you or a household member tests positive for COVID-19.
- Promptly report to your head coach if you are subject to a quarantine for any reason, even if you are not sick. You may not participate in WYHA activities until such quarantine expires.

- Quarantines may be required due to travel or exposure at school, another sports team or work, or due to a household member.
- You will not be penalized for missing hockey for these reasons; and your commitment will not be questioned so long as you communicated promptly, openly, and honestly.

Return to Play

- If a player or coach tests positive for Covid-19, that person will be required to have approval from his/her medical provider prior to returning to the team.

Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands frequently, for at least 20 seconds with soap and water or use hand sanitizer with at least 60% alcohol.
- Do not touch your face.
- Cough or sneeze into a tissue or the bend of your elbow, dispose of the tissue and wash/sanitize hands immediately.
- Do not share water bottles, towels or other equipment. Mark all items clearly.
- Clean/disinfect equipment after each use.

Social Distancing

- Maintain social distancing measures (6 ft. apart) whenever possible off the ice.
- Consider dressing at home as much as possible to avoid locker rooms; only use locker rooms if social distancing can be maintained.
- Limit the amount of time spent in the locker room
 - Arrive no earlier than 20 minutes for a practice or game
 - Leave no later than 10 minutes after a practice or game
 - Remember, each home rink may have its own policy regarding timing and should be followed. If no policy exists at any given rink, this policy governs.
- Limit group discussions so players are not in close proximity for extended periods of time.
- Coaches, parents and spectators should follow social distancing measures.
- There will be a maximum of three coaches on the bench.
- Coaches will be required to wear masks throughout practices and games.
- All spectators must wear masks at all times and exercise social distancing in the facility. Masks should fully cover mouth and nose.
- Discourage unnecessary physical contact, such as high fives, handshakes, fist bumps, or hugs (i.e. Handshake lines after the game will not be permitted).

Personal Travel

- Use reasonable judgment in avoiding discretionary travel to a “hot spot” or “restricted state.” State quarantine requirements due to travel must be strictly followed.

Team Socializing

- Use reasonable judgment if engaging in activities with your team outside of the rink. Team dinners and team get-togethers are discouraged.

- State restrictions (current limit for indoor gatherings is 25 people) and best practices for health and safety should be followed at all times for any team socializing, including social distancing, masking, cleaning, no sharing of food, staying outdoors if possible, etc.

Personal Protective Equipment

- Your helmet facemask is a personal choice, but a full, clear polycarbonate shield or clear shield cage combination may provide a higher level of protection.
 - Wear a face covering/mask when entering/exiting the facility and within the facility when not on the ice.
 - Coaches, parents and spectators should all wear a face covering/mask while indoors.
 - Wearing a face covering/mask during on-ice practice or games is a personal choice. However, participants must wear a face covering/mask for on-ice practices and games where they are required by local and state government order and/or your ice rink facility. There are some potential disadvantages of wearing a face covering/mask during high intensity exercise:
 - The CDC recognizes that face coverings/masks may be uncomfortable to wear during activity and may hinder breathing especially during strenuous activity or when they become wet:
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
 - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prevent-getting-sick/cloth-face-cover-guidance.html>
 - The WHO does not recommend that face coverings/masks be worn during strenuous physical activity:
 - <https://www.who.int/emergencies/diseases/novel-coronavirus-2019/advice-for-public/myth-busters>
 - Preliminary evidence shows that wearing a face covering/mask can decrease oxygen intake and increase carbon dioxide retention during exercise with a mask:
 - <https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S2666506920300250?via%3Dihub>
 - If you choose to wear a face covering/mask or your local orders require them, please note that there are many types, styles and materials used for face coverings/masks:
 - Do not wear filtering facepiece respirators (N95, FFP1, FFP2) during exercise. These masks are reserved for frontline healthcare workers.
 - Choose a face covering/mask that fits comfortably and allows you to breathe during exercise. You may have to experiment with different options, but the material type can affect viral control. Two layers of material are considered sufficient.
 - Have multiple face coverings/masks available so you can change them when they become saturated. A wet face covering/mask can impair breathing and possibly increase viral transmission.
 - Wash your hands before putting on and taking off your face covering/mask.
 - Avoid touching the front of your face covering/mask or your face beneath it.
 - Wash your face coverings/masks after each use.
- <https://blogs.bmj.com/bjism/2020/06/12/should-people-wear-a-face-mask-during-exercise-what-should-clinicians-advise/>



As together we make our way through the COVID-19 pandemic, USA Hockey has been asked if wearing a helmet with a full clear shield is better than a visor (half shield) or cage. In addition, many are asking about players wearing a face mask to cover their mouth/nose while practicing or in games. Below is information that we hope is helpful.

HELMETS -- FULL CLEAR SHIELD vs. HALF SHIELD OR CAGE

There is no scientific proof that a full clear shield on a hockey helmet provides better protection against infectious diseases compared to a visor (half shield) or cage.

That said, a full clear shield is *likely* better than a visor (half shield) or cage:

1. Can act as a barrier in case someone in close proximity coughs or sneezes
2. May be a deterrent to decrease touch of the face (vs. cages where players stick their fingers through the cage)
3. Likely to prevent spitting on the ice/bench (should be enforced regardless)

It should be noted that a full clear shield *will not* prevent the inhalation of aerosolized droplets.

And it is important that regardless of what kind of mask a player wears that it be cleaned thoroughly after each use.



Examples of facemasks on hockey helmets above from left to right: visor/half shield; cage; full clear shield

MASKS TO COVER MOUTH/NOSE

A cloth mask protects the wearer's nose and mouth from contact with droplets and may protect others by reducing exposure to the saliva and respiratory secretions of the mask wearer. This is especially important if someone is infected but does not have symptoms.

Players should wear cloth masks at all times, except while playing. Coaches and other support personnel should wear cloth masks at all times.

Wearing a cloth mask during high intensity aerobic activity is not recommended by the CDC and WHO.

HELPFUL LINKS

<https://www.cdc.gov/publichealthgateway/healthdirectories/index.html>

<https://portal.ct.gov/Coronavirus/Covid-19-Knowledge-Base/Latest-Guidance>

QUESTIONS

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