

Melrose Youth Hockey COVID-19 Rules and Guidelines

Updated September 1, 2021

Introduction

The COVID-19 pandemic has changed our lives in many ways over the recent past. Last season, Melrose Youth Hockey developed a comprehensive prevention plan to protect our players, coaches and their families as we played hockey through a pandemic. We are now dealing with another phase of the pandemic – the spread of the “Delta variant”. According to the CDC and the experts who track the virus this variant is more easily spread and seems to be targeting young people – primarily children ages 12 and under. This presents a challenge for any youth program. For this reason, the MYH Board of Directors has modified and updated our COVID-19 prevention plan which was put in place last year. We are hoping these modifications will bring our plan more in line with the nature and direction of the virus at this point in time. Please know – while these rules and guidelines may seem too restrictive and unnecessary to some they are being put in place to ensure the safety and good health of our players, their families, our coaching staff (and their families) during these still uncertain times.

Several of the following rules and guidelines are part of the Flynn Rink COVID-19 policy. The rink’s COVID-19 policy can be viewed at <http://www.flynnrink.com/>. Additionally, patrons of the Flynn Rink are subject to the guidelines set forth by the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the local health departments. Like last year, the MYH Board of Directors is supplementing, enhancing and/or superseding the state and rink guidelines to add another layer of protection to further protect our players and coaches as another hockey season is set to begin.

It is important to note - the requirements and guidelines presented below apply to Flynn Rink and our practice nights only. MYH teams who travel to other rink facilities for league games will be required to adhere to the requirements and guidelines of that specific facility.

Program Rules and Guidelines

-All players should be checked before leaving for a practice or game for the presence of illness like fever, cough or other symptoms generally believed to be associated with COVID-19 and/or the seasonal flu. Should any of these symptoms be present we require you keep your skater home and away from the rink. Similarly, any player with a family member exhibiting illness or symptoms must remain at home and away from their team and the rink. Players who show symptoms of illness should notify the head coach of their team immediately.

-Players should come to the rink fully dressed for practice...skates with skate guards are recommended for all Mite and Squirt age players.

-Locker room access during MYH practice times will be prohibited...the locker rooms during our practice hours will continue to be locked and unavailable.

-Players should not arrive any more than 15-20 minutes before their assigned ice time. Conversely, players should strive to leave the rink within 10-15 minutes after the conclusion of their assigned practice time. **This means only the players practicing at a particular hour should be in the facility.**

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-Face coverings are required for all individuals at all times while in the rink. This includes players and coaches while on the ice during practice. The facial mask requirement is part of the Flynn Rink COVID rules/guidelines and is fully supported by Melrose Youth Hockey. The use of facial coverings for participation in indoor sports and activities is also required or strongly recommended by the CDC, the Massachusetts Interscholastic Athletic Association (MIAA) and the local school department.

-Social distancing guidelines should be practiced and employed as much as possible...

-Everyone is encouraged to use the hand sanitizer which will be provided by the rink management throughout the facility...

-There is NO limit on the number of parents/guardians/spectators per player at any level. However, we encourage families to employ a “drop off” format for the older age groups (Pee Wee and Bantam age players) whenever possible. This will limit the number of individuals in the rink each hour which will allow for proper social distancing and other safety measures.

-Every player should bring their own water bottle to practice and games...water will NOT be provided by the coaching staff or program during practice or games. Each player’s water bottle should be clearly marked with the player’s name and/or team...

Finally, please be mindful of the CDC guidelines for stopping the spread of the virus: wear a face covering, wash your hands thoroughly and frequently, practice social distancing whenever possible, avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth and if you are feeling ill stay home.

Summary

The good health and safety of our players and coaches has always been the primary objective of our program. The threat of COVID-19 has made us all step back and think more carefully about our everyday activities. We understand some of these rules and guidelines will continue to complicate your daily participation in our program and make it more challenging and difficult. However, the Board of Directors believes these steps are absolutely necessary in order to reduce the risk of exposure in a sport that has been deemed “high risk” by most experts. In addition, reports seem to indicate the Delta variant is targeting our young people – especially those 12 years of age and under. Considering this, the Board of Directors believes we still need to take the steps outlined in this document to continue to protect our players, coaches and their families.

The Board of Directors respectfully and sincerely requests your understanding and cooperation with the rules and guidelines set forth by the CDC, the Commonwealth, Flynn Rink and our program. They will be strictly enforced.

Thank you for your support of our program. Please stay well...