

Harwood Youth Hockey Association PARENT - COACH COMMUNICATION PLAN and COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

Good communication is critical in athletic situations and HYHA encourages open and honest communication to prevent disagreements and to reach resolution when disagreements arise. A communication plan is in place to assist and to improve communication between parents and coaches. The HYHA volunteer coaches work hard to do the best they can for all of the players, and we ask parents to respect the fact that their jobs are difficult, time-consuming and that they are volunteers who are here for our kids and to help develop the program as a whole.

This communication plan has been designed to provide guidelines for parents and coaches to follow in order to protect the coaches and players from unproductive, distracting and sometimes unpleasant interactions so they can focus on hockey. The goal of this plan is to provide a process that is productive and efficient, and that has minimal impact on the players, coaches and teams.

Parents are encouraged to speak directly with the coach about certain topics which fall in a category that includes what the Board of Directors considers to be Green-light Communications, such as their own child's behavior and ways the parents can help their own child improve. However, certain issues or problems that arise during the season should not be expressed directly to the coach. These issues fall in a category that includes what the Board considers to be Red-light Communications. The two categories are described in more detail as:

GREEN-LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS – parents and coaches may directly communicate about:

- 1) Philosophy of the coaches
- 2) Expectations the coaches have for your child as well as the team
- 3) Locations and times of practices and games
- 4) Schedule conflicts
- 5) Team requirements, i.e. special equipment, off-ice conditioning
- 6) Procedure followed should your child be injured during participation
- 7) Behavior or performance concerns of your own child
- 8) Treatment/coaching of your child by the coaches (not including disciplinary action)
- 9) Ways in which parents can help their own child improve

RED-LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS – parents and coaches may NOT directly communicate about:

- 1) Positions of players
- 2) Team Strategy - ie: make-up of lines, shift changes, length of shifts, etc.
- 3) Practice or game plans

- 4) Other players and their performance
- 5) Disciplinary actions taken by coaches
- 6) On- or off-ice behavior of other players, parents or spectators
- 7) On- or off-ice behavior of other coaches or referees
- 8) Complaints or grievances concerning the HYHA program or organization
- 9) Complaints or grievances concerning another program or organization
- 10) Policies and procedures of HYHA

Red-light communications arise out of situations that require third party, Disciplinary Committee or Board involvement to be properly addressed through the Parent-Coach Complaint Procedure, Disciplinary Action Plan, or the broader Dispute Resolution Procedure. The following must be followed to help promote a productive and efficient process toward resolution:

PARENT-COACH COMPLAINT PROCEDURE

For parents to register complaints or grievances relative to coaches:

- 1) For Red-Light Communications, parents must not attempt to voice their concerns, complaints or grievances directly with the coaches. If parents attempt to do so, coaches shall not engage and shall direct parents to follow the Parent-Coach Complaint Procedure. Green-light Communications are excluded from this requirement.
- 2) The "Twenty-Four Hour" Rule: Unless the nature of the complaint or grievance requires immediate attention, parents are required to wait at least 24 hours after an event or incident before initiating these procedures. Premature complaints or grievances may be deferred until expiration of this cooling-off period.
- 3) After the 24-hour period has expired, parents may submit their complaints or grievances pertaining to Red-Light Communications to the HYHA Coaching Director and must do so **in writing**. Email communications shall be considered written. Parents should be aware that anything they submit in writing may be shared with the coaches, members of the Board of Directors, and when applicable, the Disciplinary Committee.
- 4) Upon receipt of a written complaint or grievance, the Coaching Director will contact the team head coach (and assistant coaches, if applicable) to set up a meeting or phone/email discussion between them (the coach(es) and the Coaching Director) to discuss the concern/complaint/grievance. The Coaching Director may communicate directly with the parent(s), any players implicated (if deemed by the Coaching Director to be necessary) and the coach(es) to attempt to reach a resolution and may act as the primary liaison or facilitator between the parents and coaches. Or, when deemed appropriate by the Coaching Director, the matter may be delegated to the coaches to resolve without further assistance from the Coaching Director.
- 5) If determined by the Coaching Director to be necessary (ie: resolution has not been reached, OR if the complaint or grievance involves conduct subject to disciplinary action,

OR if the complaint or grievance involves subject matter described in numbers 6-10 of the Red-Light Communications), in accordance with the HYHA Disciplinary Action Plan or Dispute Resolution Procedure the Coaching Director will submit a detailed report in writing to the Board of Directors and/or the Disciplinary Committee, if applicable (See HYHA General Conduct and Disciplinary Action Plan and HYHA Dispute Resolution Procedure), for their consideration and decision-making process for resolution. The Coaching Director may make a recommendation to the Board and/or the Disciplinary Committee, if applicable, for resolution. Unless the decision involves suspension of the player, coach, parent or other member of USA Hockey, the Board or the Disciplinary Committee may, within its discretion, render a decision to resolve the matter with or without first communicating or meeting with the parent(s) and/or coach(es). In all matters involving conduct subject to disciplinary action, the General Conduct and Disciplinary Action Plan shall be invoked. In all matters involving ongoing misconduct or conduct involving league officials, members or coaches of teams from other organizations, or continuing circumstances between members of different HYHA teams, the Dispute Resolution Procedure shall be invoked.

- 6) DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONFRONT A COACH BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER A PRACTICE OR GAME, OR OUTSIDE OF THE RINK OR AT ANOTHER LOCATION. ALWAYS OBSERVE THE 24-HOUR COOLING OFF PERIOD.**
- 7) DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONFRONT A COACH WITH A RED-LIGHT COMMUNICATION COMPLAINT OR GREIVANCE. COACHES WILL NOT ENGAGE IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS AS THOSE MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE COACHING DIRECTOR. DIRECT PARENT-COACH CONFRONTATIONS DO NOT PROMOTE RESOLUTION AND COULD ADVERSELY IMPACT YOUR CHILD, YOUR CHILD’S TEAM AND/OR THE ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE.**
- 8) PARENTS MUST FOLLOW THE PARENT-COACH COMPLAINT PROCEDURE AND THE GENERAL CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN AND THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE, AS APPLICABLE. THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS OR DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER A VIOLATION OF THE PARENT-COACH COMPLAINT PROCEDURE, THE GENERAL CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN AND THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE AS GROUNDS FOR REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL FROM HYHA, INCLUDING THEIR CHILD’S SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL FROM HIS/HER TEAM.**