

SEATTLE JUNIOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION COVID SAFETY PLAN

October 19th, 2021

The SJHA COVID Task Force has created a multi-tiered, research-based plan to ensure the safety of the Seattle Junior Hockey community. The plan is broken up into categories that encompass the following topics: masking policies, best practices for risk mitigation, exposure/return to rink procedures, testing, travel protocol, and resources. It is an expectation that all SJHA players, coaches, and families follow the COVID Safety Plan outlined below.

Masking Policy:

Effective Monday, August 23rd, the Washington State Department of Health reinstated the statewide indoor mask mandate. This means Seattle Junior community members ages 5 and older (players, coaches, parents, spectators, staff, and directors) are required to wear masks while in our facilities, regardless of vaccination status. All visiting teams (players, coaches, parents, spectators, staff, and directors) are subject to the same mandate. This mandate is a result of a sharp increase in COVID cases in Washington state and applies to all indoor spaces open to the public.

The following is an exception to the mask mandate, per the [Department of Health](#) guideline:

- While actively playing or training for, coaching, or officiating indoor sports in a K-12, recreational, major junior hockey, part-time professional sports, collegiate, or professional sports setting. This exception does not apply while the athlete, coach, or official is not actively engaged in the sporting, coaching, or officiating activity or to indoor gyms and other fitness facilities, such as dance, yoga, and martial arts activities

To be specific, we understand the phrase “actively playing or training for, coaching, or officiating indoor sports” to only include on-ice activity. Therefore, masks must be worn at all times in the follow high risk exposure areas:

- **Locker rooms**
- **Locker room hallways**
- **Restrooms**
- **Ice level rink entrances (waiting for the Zamboni)**
- **Weight room**
- **Ballet room**
- **Classroom**
- **Lobby**
- **Pro shop**

Best Practices for Risk Mitigation:

1) Daily health screening is extremely important before coming to the rink. Please read the following breakdown of Class A and Class B symptoms:

Class A Symptoms:

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- Fever of 100.4°+
- Persistent Coughing
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- New loss of taste or smell

Class B Symptoms:

- Muscle or body aches
- Headache
- Fatigue
- Sore Throat
- Congestion or runny nose
- Nausea or vomiting
- Diarrhea

Regardless of vaccination status, best practices indicate **you should not come to the rink if you have any of the following:**

- ANY Class A symptom
- Two or more Class B symptoms
- A single, persistent (more than 24 hours) Class B symptom
- Been in close contact with anyone with suspected or confirmed COVID-19 and are not fully vaccinated

We STRONGLY urge those who fit the description above to get tested for COVID.

Be advised, the SJHA COVID Task Force and SJHA Hockey Director reserve the right to ask for Negative COVID Tests before allowing any player to return to the rink. We will only invoke this power if there is a refusal to comply with the coach or Director's request to have a negative test before returning to the rink.

2) Hockey rinks have three main areas within their infrastructure that create high risk exposure situations: locker rooms, lobbies, and ice level rink entrances. To mitigate risks in the locker rooms and lobbies, masks must be worn at all times.

A close contact is defined as anyone who has prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over 24 hours) to someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection. However, when close contact occurs, factors that can reduce risk for transmission include, but are not limited to: correct use of personal protective equipment (masks), and whether the individual with SARS-CoV-2 infection and the contact in question are fully vaccinated. All these factors should be considered when evaluating an exposure.

Due to the fact that we understand the phrase “actively playing or training for, coaching, or officiating indoor sports” to only include on-ice activity, the following best practices should be facilitated to limit exposures at rink level entrances:

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For the ice level rink entrances, players must wear their masks until the Zamboni exits the rink. We suggest players either remain in the locker rooms with masks on; or, we suggest players not strap on their helmets while waiting at the rink entrance until the Zamboni exits. At that point, players can remove their masks and put on their helmets. Ziploc bags and rubber bands will sit at the ice level rink entrances. Players may place their masks inside the plastic bags and use the rubber bands to tie the bag around their water bottles (this keeps the masks from becoming contaminated). Players may put their helmets on and step onto the ice when the Zamboni doors are closed, and a coach is on the ice. When exiting the rink after practice, players can remove their helmets and replace their masks before entering the locker room. It is acceptable for parents to collect their player's mask when the Zamboni exits the rink and help their player with buckling the helmet. In this case, parents must meet their player as they exit the rink to quickly re-apply their mask. We suggest using multiple exit doors from the ice surface.

Please consider using several different rink entrances with your teams to avoid large gatherings for exposure length time periods.

Please consider dressing in the parking lot, rink lobby, or rink bench to avoid using locker rooms.

3) Consistently check infection rates and hospitalization rates in the counties you visit for hockey purposes. Read up on the rink, association, local, and state guidelines for masking and other COVID protocols or safety measures when you play away games (even here in the Seattle area). Create plans about behavior, masking, and testing with your teams proactively to avoid confusion and frustration while on a trip.

4) Consistently sanitize your equipment after each ice session and practice proper hygiene such as hand washing with soap and hot water for at least 20 seconds.

5) Maintain open, honest, and respectful dialogue with coaches, managers, teammates, and parents about the reasons why following the SJHA policies are integral to keeping our community safe and our kids on the ice. Create a culture on your team where everyone agrees on the COVID policies and invests in their team's health and safety at large.

6) Coaches should keep players moving on the ice with at least a 2:1 or 3:1 work to rest ratio. Coaches should design practice plans that keep players moving and do not incorporate long, static lines. Coaches should teach their practice plans ahead of time so that they do not need to spend several minutes at the wipe board.

7) The Lynnwood Ice Center and Olympic View Arena are both best practices unto themselves in terms of proper air ventilation and mitigating risk of transmission based on square footage. The HVAC systems in both rinks cycle completely new air into the entirety of the rink buildings every 8 minutes. This keeps the air flowing at all times, especially while vigorous exercise is taking place. Also, LIC is 45,000+ sq. ft. and OVA is 60,000+ sq. ft. for reference.

8) SJHA COVID Task Force urges all people over 12 years old who are eligible for the vaccine to get vaccinated to stop the spread of the virus.

9) Should a player, coach, or spectator from an opposite team appear to be out of compliance with the SJHA Safety Plan (e.g. not wearing masks in the building), it is not your responsibility to confront them nor is it the responsibility of on-ice officials or rink staff. If you feel comfortable, give them a kind reminder of the SJHA COVID Safety Plan or point them to the signs around the rink. If you do not feel comfortable, please take care of yourself or your team and inform Hockey Director, Marty Rubin, of the incident. SJHA will take care of compliance issues.

Exposure/Return to Rink Procedures:

Should you or your player receive a positive test or learn that you have been in close contact with a positive test, please email covidconsultant@sjha.com with as much information as possible. Again, a close contact is defined as anyone who has prolonged close contact (within 6 feet for a cumulative total of 15 minutes over 24 hours) to someone with SARS-CoV-2 infection. However, when close contact occurs, factors that can reduce risk for transmission include, but are not limited to: correct use of personal protective equipment (masks), and whether the individual with SARS-CoV-2 infection and the contact in question are fully vaccinated. All these factors should be considered when evaluating an exposure.

Please DO NOT notify any of the following until the SJHA COVID Task Force has reviewed the information: coaches, managers, parents, directors, or players. We must work to protect the anonymity of those who test positive for COVID or come in close contact with others who have tested positive.

The SJHA COVID Task Force will follow the SJHA Return To Hockey Flow Chart (located on the [SJHA COVID](#) page) to determine a player or team's eligibility to return to the rink after a positive case or an exposure. These will happen throughout the year, so please familiarize yourself with the flow chart.

Testing:

The CDC recommends that if you are vaccinated and have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, [you should get tested 5-7 days after your exposure](#), even if you don't have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative.

The CDC recommends that if you are unvaccinated and have had close contact with someone who has COVID-19, you should get tested 3-5 days after your exposure, even if you don't have symptoms. You should also wear a mask indoors in public for 14 days following exposure or until your test result is negative.

When testing, please DO NOT use home testing kits or pharmacy DIY tests. We cannot assure the swabbing is correctly administered. Instead, please use the following official testing sites to get the most accurate and quickest results (these are all free testing sites):

King County:

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[University of Washington Medicine Testing Centers](#) (multiple test sites throughout Seattle)

[The Polyclinic](#) (multiple test sites throughout Seattle with drive-thru and walk-thru sites)

Snohomish County:

[Snohomish County Health District Drive-Thru Testing](#) (sites in Lynnwood and Everett)

Travel Protocol:

For domestic travel outside the state of Washington, teams must follow the following protocol to ensure safety of their teams as well as the teams with whom they share ice:

- Vaccinated players must monitor their health and get tested if they have any Class A symptoms or two or more class B symptoms
- Unvaccinated players must get tested 3-5 days after returning. Unvaccinated players may join their teams for their standard ice times but must always wear their masks (even on the ice) until they receive a negative test.
- SJHA COVID Task Force highly recommends everyone who travels out of state to get tested days after their return (3-5 days for unvaccinated; 5-7 days for vaccinated).

Resources and References:

The SJHA COVID Task Force uses the following resources and references to devise our Safety Plan:

[Washington State Department of Health Mask Mandate](#)

[Center For Disease Control and Prevention Guidelines for domestic travel](#)

[Hockey specific study on COVID protocol efficacy](#)

[Hand Washing Instructions](#)

[What do I do if I feel sick?](#)

[Proper Masking Practices- Well-fitting masks](#)

[When and how to use masks when exercising- World Health Organization](#)

[Masking Efficacy](#)

[Wet Mask? Read this.](#)

Final note:

We want nothing more than for our community to be safe and to keep playing hockey. The pandemic is an ever-changing crisis and requires consistent navigation, research, and adjustment. We ask for the SJHA community's trust and patience as we work hard to create and change plans according to updates of the status of our county and state. Thank you very much for sticking with us, pulling the rope together, and following the policies set forth to keep our community safe.