

MN Hockey Locker Room Policy

The presence of adults in the locker rooms is critical to maintaining a safe and positive environment. **More than half of all SafeSport incidents reported each year occur in locker rooms.** In all but a few cases, there was no locker room monitor present.

Whenever players are present in the locker room, there must be at least one screened and SafeSport- trained adult present either in the locker room or near the door (within arm's length and so the monitor can sufficiently hear inside the locker room), **frequently checking and communicating with the players so they understand they are being monitored.** Coaches are often the best choice for locker room monitors, but parents who complete the requirements above can also fill the role.

The prevention of hazing, bullying, harassment, or other inappropriate behaviors in addition to physical harm caused by horseplay, can be lessened by following some fundamental strategies outlined below.

Hold a team meeting focused on locker room monitoring and behavior expectations:

- Include players, parents, coaches, team managers, and locker room monitors.
- Clearly explain the rules and expectations for players.
- Clearly explain the rules and expectations of the locker room monitor.....including the corrective action that will be taken if necessary (player could be benched, suspended, or worse).
- Ensure players and parents understand the locker room monitor is there to help ensure there is a safe environment for all members of the team.

Opening and use of the locker room:

- Ideally, the designated locker room should not be opened until a locker room monitor can accompany any players who have arrived.
- If a single player is present, the locker room should be monitored by at least two adults until additional players arrive.
- If there is only one adult present, whether a coach or volunteer parent, they should wait for multiple players to arrive before allowing access to the locker room.
- The same strategies should be applied after practice with a monitor staying until the last player leaves, and at no time should one adult be alone in the locker room with one player, unless the player is their own child.

Location of Monitor:

- It is preferable to have the monitor/supervisor actually inside the locker room whenever possible.

- The physical presence of an adult(s) is far more effective in deterring and stopping misbehavior, and also enables the adult(s) to visually monitor the behavior of the individual players and to intercede prior to an incident getting out of hand. Additionally, it affords the opportunity to ensure that players are not using their electronic devices inappropriately.

Co-Ed Locker Rooms:

- Most youth hockey teams are co-ed and should be proactive on communicating their approach to having players of different gender in the same locker room.
- The best policy is to require all players to have a minimum attire, such as a base layer of shorts and t-shirt, before using the locker room. This ensures no player of any gender will be in a state of dress/undress in the locker room and provides all players with the same locker room experience.
- A second option is to have boys and girls dress in separate, supervised locker rooms. Then, approximately 10-15 minutes before each game or practice everyone is to be gather in one locker room so the coach can address the team.
- Another option is the alternate use of a single locker room. Players of one gender dress in the locker room while players of the opposite gender wait outside. When the one group is ready, then the players switch places and the players in gear wait for players of opposite gender to get dressed. No group should be favored, and no coaching should occur until all players are together.

When an issue arises:

- Speaking quietly and calmly to a player, to help avoid embarrassment, may be best. However, it may be appropriate and necessary to use a strong verbal command to stop misbehavior.
- If the attempt to intercede is ignored, or the problem persists, and there is no immediate threat of potential harm, the monitor/supervisor should seek assistance from another adult to remove the misbehaving player from the locker room and address the issue separate from the rest of the team. If the player's parent(s) are present, they should be engaged immediately.
- Situations where misbehavior could lead to the threat of immediate harm are very rare (especially with monitors present); however, if a situation arises, it may become necessary to intercede to stop the problem (examples include fighting, wrestling, hitting with sticks, throwing items, dangerous use of skates, etc.). If you are uncomfortable directly engaging to separate players in these circumstances, send someone for help and continue to calmly attempt to de-escalate the situation until it can be resolved. However, with an adult in the locker room, none of these potential scenarios should occur.
- Immediately report any misbehavior occurring in a locker room to your local SafeSport coordinator or any other official. Identify as best you can both the participants as well as anyone who closely witnessed the incident and the actions of those involved.

- Report any incidents of unmonitored or inadequately monitored locker rooms to your local or Affiliate SafeSport Coordinator.