



PARENT HANDBOOK

2023/2024 SEASON

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Message from the President

Welcome to the 2023/2024 Meadow Lake Minor Hockey season. We have a lot of new Board members this season bringing forward new ideas for new programs. We are constantly striving to improve the experience for all involved. We ask for your understanding and patience, and we encourage your constructive feedback as we proceed in our new directions. Let's all work together to make this a great year for the kids!

General Information

Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association (MLMHA) is dedicated to promoting the game of hockey for the enjoyment of all players, regardless of skill level. It is our goal to promote amateur hockey, sportsmanship, and good citizenship among the players, parents, and fans. We hope that every player will graduate from minor hockey with a love for the game and a desire to continue playing or coaching for the rest of their lives.

We do not operate as a separate unit in the hockey world. You will see the following Associations on various documents. The rules of our senior organizations form part of our policies and take precedent over local rules.

1. Hockey Canada (HC) - www.hockeycanada.ca
2. Hockey Saskatchewan (HS) - www.hockeysask.ca
3. Meadow Lake Minor Hockey Association (MLMHA) www.meadowlakeminorhockey.com

If there is any conflict between information in the MLMHA Parent Handbook and information produced by Hockey Saskatchewan and/or Hockey Canada then the information supplied by Hockey Saskatchewan or Hockey Canada will be deemed correct.

2023-2024 MLMHA Board of Directors

President: Trevor Digneau
Vice-President: Kim Kozlowski
Treasurer: Amanda Gutek
Secretary: Jill Cheze
Director of Hockey Development: Mike Siklenka
Director of Policies and Procedures: Eric Adams
Referee Coordinator: Colton Ethier
Ice Scheduler: Gordon Whittle
Registrar: Victoria Lajeunesse
Communications Officer: Shalyn Gorst

U7 Commissioner: Cara Washbrook
U9 Commissioner: Gordon Whittle
U11 Commissioner: Layne Bremner
U13 Commissioner: Mike Siklenka
U15 Commissioner: Dana Lauinger
U18 Commissioner: Rick Dallyn
Female Commissioner: Lisa Buffin

Please refer to the MLMHA Constitution and Policy and Procedures Manual for detailed descriptions of each position.

Parent and Minor Hockey Association Relationship

The mandate of the local minor hockey association (MLMHA) is to administer and promote the game of hockey within its local community. The responsibility includes ensuring that all levels of competition and player ability are addressed. MLMHA is also responsible for ensuring that a Board of Directors is in place to administer the day-to-day functions of the Association during the hockey season. MLMHA operates with the Constitution and playing rules adopted locally, by Hockey Saskatchewan and Hockey Canada.

A parent's first contact with MLMHA usually comes when they register their child to play hockey. This is the entry point for both your child's involvement in the sport and yours.

Levels offered by MLMHA are as follows:

- U7 - 4, 5 and 6 years of age
- U9 - 7 and 8 years of age
- U11 - 9 and 10 years of age
- U13 - 11 and 12 years of age
- U15 - 13 and 14 years of age
- U18 - 15, 16 and 17 years of age

Female age divisions may be different from the above age groups depending on number of participants and the league in which the teams are playing. More information on female groupings will be communicated to the parents once it is known. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the female division Commissioner.

Parents are encouraged to attend the general meetings (held in the spring and fall) and the monthly meetings (held the third Wednesday of the month) of MLMHA to become aware of how the Association operates and the many opportunities available to support the players and their hockey development. MLMHA offers many options, on-ice and off-ice, for parents to become involved with their child.

Off-ice - Parents can be involved as team managers, team treasurer, sweater keeper, phone parent, team travel coordinator, team social convener, scorekeepers, timekeepers, tournament organizers and other positions as set out in the Manager's Manual.

Parents may also consider participating in the MLMHA on an executive level. These are all important support positions where volunteers are needed. The MLMHA will provide you with a job description and training for your position.

On-ice - Parents can be involved as coaches, assistant coaches and officials. The MLMHA will arrange clinics so you can become familiar with Hockey Canada's U7 Program, Coaching Programs, Safety Programs and Officiating Programs. These clinics will teach you the fundamentals to be an effective leader for the players. They will provide you with the tools to succeed in your volunteer position to enhance the experience that the players will have under your supervision.

Through volunteering you will meet and become friends with the parents and the players on your child's team, parents across the MLMHA and make many contacts throughout the community.

It is mandatory that one parent in a player household successfully complete the Respect in Sport – Parent course. Documentation of successful completion will be required to register your child in hockey. These documents should be given to your Commissioner by the start of hockey and no later than September 15, 2023. Please note that U7 parents will have until October 31, 2023 to complete the course and provide your Commissioner with proof of completion. This course can be found at www.sha.respectgroupinc.com.

Both you and your child will grow and develop skills through your involvement with hockey that will assist you in other aspects of your life.

Tips to make the hockey experience more enjoyable

Car and Home

Some parents not only spoil the fun for their kids at the ice rink, but also in the car, believing that this is the perfect place for instruction. Parents should try to keep things in perspective. There's more to life than hockey, and the car and home are not places to coach. Parents are responsible for supporting and respecting the coach's decisions and abilities. It is unfair to put children in a position of having to decide who to listen to -- their parents or the coach.

At the Rink

Parents should remember that if a child wants to improve, they must practice - not just play. Even if a child is not the "star" player for a team, practice stresses the importance of teamwork, establishing goals, discipline and learning to control your emotions, all of which are important lessons children can use both in and away from sports.

Have your child and equipment at the arena on time for games and practices. Find out from the coach when he expects players to arrive. It won't be 5 minutes before game time! Ice time is expensive -- don't waste it. If your child can't make a practice or game, be courteous and call the coach or team manager to explain. Please pick up your children on time!

Tell your coach about any medical concerns that your child might have. If the player is injured in a game or practice, make sure you see a coach. If your child is under a doctor's care, whether hockey related or not, you must provide the coach with a note from the doctor verifying that the player is fit before going back on the ice. Failure to do so could cancel your hockey insurance.

Support Your Child

There are many benefits that are derived from playing minor hockey. Children learn good sportsmanship and self-discipline. They learn to work together, how to sacrifice for the good of the team, how to enjoy winning and how to handle defeat. In the process, they also learn important lessons about physical fitness and personal health. The degree to which your child benefits from his or her minor hockey experience is as much your responsibility as it is theirs. For your child to get the most out of a minor hockey program, it is important for you to show support and offer encouragement while maintaining a genuine interest in the team.

Always Be Positive

Parents serve as role models for their children, who often look to adults for advice, direction, and approval. Never lose sight of the fact that you are a role model and you should strive to be a positive influence on your child. As a parent, one of the most important things you can do is show good sportsmanship at all times to coaches, referees, opponents, and teammates. Remember that your children are PLAYING hockey. It is important to allow them to establish their own goals and play the game for themselves. Be careful not to impose your own standards or objectives.

Be an involved parent, not a drop off one. That is YOUR child out there on the ice -- enjoy!

Go into the stands and watch the practices and games whenever possible. **(Unless you are a registered member of your teams' staff, please do not go on the player's bench).**

Let The Coach Coach

Avoid placing an exaggerated emphasis on winning. The most important aspect of your child's minor hockey experience is for them to develop skills that will serve them in game situations. Also, a risk-free environment that emphasizes the importance of fair play, sportsmanship, discipline, respect, and most importantly, fun will be invaluable for your child as he or she continues to develop and make friends.

Let the Ref's Ref

It is difficult to recruit referees, so it is important that we create a positive and enjoyable environment for them. Many of the referees are young members of our communities and should not have to endure abuse from adults! Would you like it if YOUR child was subjected to this kind of treatment? As adults, we have a responsibility to set a positive example and demonstrate leadership and appropriate behavior. Please be respectful towards our refs and keep your opinions on their performance to yourself.

Other

Read the MLMHA Policy and Procedures Manual, including the Fair Play Code for Parents and Spectators.

Board members expect these codes to be adhered to and will enforce them when necessary to make the hockey experience pleasant for everyone.

Got a problem with a coach or another parent? Please wait 24 hours before discussing the issue with the team Manager/Coach and do so in a private and constructive manner. We'd like the arena to be a happy place for children. Board members are always ready to help solve problems that will affect the children we represent.

HELP!

MLMHA is an organization with unpaid volunteers doing the work. Paying the registration was only your first responsibility. Now VOLUNTEER to be scorekeeper, timekeeper, sweater keeper, PR person, team manager, tournament helper, team trainer or any other positions that might arise. If you don't know how, we will teach you. **Every parent can and should volunteer in some way.**

Your child will be held responsible for their conduct in the arena (on and off ice) as well as while they are playing out of town. Remember we are representing Meadow Lake so let's be on our best behavior. Encourage your child to play by the rules, even if the opponents don't seem to be doing so. If your child is part of an incident involving a severe infraction, the Coach will fill out a report with the cooperation of the involved parties. The report will then be given to the Board for action.

Players are responsible for their own equipment and personal property. MLMHA accepts no responsibility for lost, damaged or stolen items.

Finally, don't forget to honor your volunteer commitment. The money raised here helps to keep your registration fees low and ensures hockey is affordable to all.

Financial Obligations

All try-out, registration and fundraising fees must be paid by the appropriate deadlines or your child will not be allowed on the ice. Registration deadline for the 2023/2024 season is June 30, 2023. All registration and fundraising fees must accompany the registration form. If wanting to pay in two installments, postdated cheques (June 30 and August 15) must accompany the registration as well. Any registrations and fees received after this date (except those new to MLMHA) will be charged a late fee as follows:

- After June 30 - \$100.00
- After August 15 - \$150.00
- After August 31 - \$200.00

Refunds of fees will be issued as follows:

- July 1 to August 31 - 100% of fees

- October 1 to October 31 - Fees less \$100
- November 1 to December 31 - 50% of fees
- After December 31 – No refund

Injury cases will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

Each team will set a team fee at the beginning of the year to pay for tournaments that the team will attend and other costs associated with that team. Team fees will vary by team depending on the number of tournaments and other events that the team is planning on attending. Teams can fundraise to help cover these costs by way of selling Minor Hockey fundraising cards. Players and their families will be required to cover any team fees and/or costs associated with the selling of the Minor Hockey fundraising cards. No team will be able to do any other fundraiser without prior approval of the Board with the exception of carded teams.

Select teams (ie. carded, tournament, or provincial teams) may have additional try-out fees associated with them.

Team Fund Uses

Money fundraised through the team must be used to benefit the players in the following ways:

- Tournament entry fees
- Approved logo clothing & items
- Year-end events
- Travel fees as approved by MLMHA

If there is excess money in the account at the end of the year the balance remaining less \$40 (float) can be paid out to the parents as a refund of their team fees. The amount returned to parents cannot exceed the amount of the team fee. If no team fee was paid then no refunds can occur.

League Play

U9 through U18 teams will be playing in the STEP league which will involve travel to communities such as, but not limited to, Goodsoil, Big River, Debden, Pierceland, Leoville, Spiritwood, Paradise Hill, Hillmond, Turtleford, Lashburn, Edam, Onion Lake, St. Walburg, and Maidstone. Players in all divisions will be divided into equal teams.

There is the ability to create a tournament team at the U11 through U15 levels with those interested in playing strictly tournaments and exhibition games at an 'A' level. This team will be travelling to various places in the province. Please let your Commissioner know if interested and try-outs may be necessary.

The U13 through U18 age divisions are also eligible to compete in Provincials. Please contact your Commissioner for more information if interested.

Evaluations

An evaluation team consisting of volunteers, parents, and non-parents, depending on the age group will assess the players through a series of drills and scrimmages to identify strengths and weaknesses, with results to be used as a basis of determining team selection. The evaluations will follow the procedures outlined in Appendix A of the MLMHA Policy and Procedures Manual.

If you have any questions on the evaluation process please discuss these with either your Commissioner, Director of Hockey Development, Director of Policy and Procedures or the President.

Fair Play Codes

Players

- * I will play hockey because I want to, not just because others or coaches want me to.
- * I will play by the rules of hockey, and in the spirit of the game.
- * I will control my temper - fighting and "mouthing off" can spoil the activity for everybody.
- * I will respect my opponents.
- * I will do my best to be a true team player.
- * I will remember that winning isn't everything - that having fun, improving skills, making friends and doing my best is also important.
- * I will acknowledge all good plays/performance - those of my team and of my opponents.
- * I will remember that coaches and officials are there to help me. I will accept their decisions and show them respect.

Parents/Guardians

- * I will not force my child to participate in hockey.
- * I will remember that my child plays hockey for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
- * I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- * I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of the game.
- * I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
- * I will not ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a game.
- * I will remember that children learn best by example. I will applaud good plays/performance by both my child's team and their opponents.
- * I will never question the official's judgment or honesty in public.
- * I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's hockey games.
- * I will keep any negative comments about players, volunteers, coaches, managers, officials, etc. to myself or discuss them in a rational manner with a board member, manager or coach as needed.
- * I will respect and show appreciation for the volunteer Coaches who give their time to coach hockey for my child.

Spectators

- * I will remember that participants play hockey for their enjoyment. They are not playing to entertain me.
- * I will not have unrealistic expectations. I will remember that players are not professionals and cannot be judged by professional's standards.
- * I will respect the officials' decisions and I will encourage participants to do the same.
- * I will never ridicule a player for making a mistake during a game. I will give positive comments that motivate and encourage continued effort.
- * I will condemn the use of violence in any form and will express my disapproval in an appropriate manner to coaches and league officials.
- * I will show respect to my team's opponents, because without them there would be no game.
- * I will not use bad language, nor will I harass players, coaches, officials or other spectators.

Coaches

- * I will be reasonable when scheduling games and practices, remembering that players have other interests and obligations.
- * I will teach my players to play fairly and to respect the rules, officials and opponents.
- * I will ensure that all players get equal instruction, support and playing time.
- * I will not ridicule or yell at my players for making mistakes or for performing poorly. I will remember that players play to have fun and must be encouraged to have confidence in themselves.

- * I will make sure that equipment and facilities are safe and match the players' ages and abilities.
- * I will remember that participants need a coach they can respect. I will be generous with praise and set a good example
- * I will obtain proper training and continue to upgrade my coaching skills.
- * I will work in cooperation with officials for the benefit of the game.

Equipment

Hockey is a collision sport and injuries do occur. With certified, quality, well-fitting equipment, the frequency and severity of these injuries can be decreased. Penny-pinching is not wise when it comes to buying good protection. If you are buying used equipment, check it out carefully, try it on and make sure it fits properly. Injuries occur when loose-fitting equipment slides out of position. Check it often for signs of wear and tear. Keep your gear in a well-ventilated, dry area.

"Take care of your equipment and it will take care of you!"

What you need...

Hockey Helmet: Important to choose for protection, comfort & fit. It must have a full cage. Adjust to ensure a snug fit.

Mouth guard (optional): An essential piece of equipment which should never be overlooked. Not only does it significantly reduce the incidence and severity of injuries to the teeth and mouth, but also acts as a shock absorber against jaw fractures and concussions.

Elbow Pads: Easy to fit... your elbows should fit comfortably into the center of the cup. A good elbow pad will provide forearm protection by extending down to the cuff of your hockey glove.

Shoulder Pads: Properly fitted pads will provide protection for the collar bone, chest, ribs, back and upper arms. They should achieve this while still allowing a full range of motion. For example, lifting the arms above the head should not push the shoulder pads uncomfortably high around the player's neck.

Hockey Gloves: One of the primary concerns is to ensure that the gap between the glove and the elbow pad is minimal. Tightness is personal preference, although the finger tips should not go right to the end. The back of the glove should be lined with both foam and hard plastic. It is recommended that the gloves have a "lock thumb" which will protect the thumb from being bent backwards.

Shin Pads: The importance of quality shin pads cannot be overstated as the lower leg is an extremely high contact area. They are measured by the distance in inches between the center of the kneecap and the edge of the skate, just above the top eyelet. Protective foam which wraps around the back of the calf is recommended.

Hockey Pants: Should be loose and comfortable but secured firmly around the waist. 90% of players can use their waist size as a guide for fitting. The bottoms of the pants need to overlap the top of the shin pad kneecaps by 1 – 2 inches to ensure proper protection even when in a kneeling position.

Hockey Skates: Except for Mission and Nike, skates normally fit (1) size smaller than your shoe size. For sizing purposes take the insole out of the skate and have your child place their foot on the insole while standing. Look to see that their foot fits the insole correctly. For performance, this is the most important piece of equipment, so it is recommended to get them professionally fitted and molded. Lace them up at home and wear skate guards to break them in.

Other Equipment: It is mandatory to wear an approved neck guard at all times. You will also need a Jock or a Jill and either a garter or Velcro shorts to hold up your hockey socks.

Hockey Stick: The best way to measure is to stand in your stocking feet, without your skates, on a flat surface. Place the bottom of your stick on the ground between your feet. Lean the stick straight up-and-down so that the handle touches the tip of your nose. Mark the stick at this point and cut the handle on your mark. A defenseman may want to use a longer stick for more reach for poke checking and a forward may want shorter for stick handling purposes.

Concerns

All parents are encouraged to attend the scheduled General Meetings and bring their issues for discussion. There are two general parent meetings held each season; one in the Fall and one in the Spring (March/April). Watch for advertisements listing dates and times. At other times, your concerns should be directed to the appropriate volunteers that can reach a resolution. The key individuals to communicate with are:

- Your child's Coach; remember he or she is a volunteer!
- Your Commissioner; remember he or she is a volunteer!
- Your child's Manager; remember he or she is a volunteer!

If further action is needed, address the issue to the Director of Policies and Procedures or the Vice President. The President will only become directly involved if all others have been unable to resolve the issue. Any concerns/complaints that are submitted to the Board must be in writing and SIGNED by the person and are taken seriously and privately by your Board. Emails are not a good way of communication for complaints as they can be sent to the wrong person outside of the Board and are key in breaking confidentiality for what are usually sensitive issues. Concerns can also be submitted on-line through the website under printable forms.

24 Hour Rule

If you have an issue regarding an incident, **it is with due respect that we ask all parents/guardians to use the 24-hour rule before attempting to engage in conversation with the coaching staff or volunteer. This allotted time frame allows all parties involved to gather their thoughts and not turn a potential disagreement into something other than a differing point of view and allows cooler heads to prevail.**

Please keep this rule in mind when wanting to discuss your child's playing time or other on ice issues that may have happened during the game.

Please read the Policy and Procedures Manual for more information on grievances.

Miscellaneous team & Association information

- All parents are expected to help with their child's home tournament, even if they are already filling a volunteer position with the association.
- NO COMMUNAL WATER BOTTLES – Every player must provide their own water bottle for practice. It is recommended that you sanitize your water bottle after each use.
- Skates should be sharpened approximately after every five (5) skates.
- Our website is developing and changing all the time, check it often for information for practice times and dates.
- Feedback and ideas are always welcome, send an email to any of the Board members by finding the Contacts tab on the website.

- Remember that everyone views things in a different way, communication rather than criticism is the key to a productive association.
- We are all in this for the kids!