

# **Eastern Connecticut Hockey Organization Locker Room Policy**

## **ECHO's Locker Room Policy (Generally)**

While the development of our hockey players and our players' enjoyment of the sport of hockey are very important facets of our program, the safety and protection of our players are paramount and cannot be under emphasized. ECHO adheres to USA Hockey's Safe Sport Program as a means to protect its players from physical, emotional and sexual abuse, including, but not limited to, bullying, threats, harassment and hazing. To help prevent abuse or misconduct from occurring in our locker rooms or changing areas (hereinafter, "locker rooms"), ECHO has adopted the following locker room policy. This policy is designed to maintain personal privacy and to reduce the risk of misconduct in locker rooms.

## **Locker Room Monitoring**

ECHO has predictable and limited use of locker rooms (e.g., generally 30 to 45 minutes before and following practices and games). This allows for direct and regular monitoring of locker room areas. Although constant monitoring inside of locker rooms might be the most effective way to prevent problems, we understand that this would likely make some players uncomfortable and may even place our coaches and volunteers at risk for unwarranted suspicion.

Designated persons (coaches or volunteer locker room monitors) should conduct a sweep of the designated locker room before players arrive, and if one or more coaches or volunteers are not inside the locker room, one or more coaches or volunteers (each of which has been screened) must be posted directly outside the locker room during periods of use and will leave the door(s) open only when adequate privacy is still possible, so that only participants (coaches and players), approved team personnel and family members are permitted in the locker room. Team personnel will also secure the locker room appropriately during times when the team is on the ice.

## **Parents in Locker Rooms**

Except for players in the younger age groups (Mites, Squirts, and in limited circumstances, Pee Wees), we discourage parents from entering locker rooms unless it is truly necessary. If a player needs assistance with his or her uniform or gear, if, for example, a player is or may be injured, or a player's disability warrants assistance from a parent, we ask that a parent inform the coach beforehand that he or she will be helping the player. Naturally, with our younger age groups, it is necessary for parents to assist players with their uniforms or gear. We encourage parents to teach their children at the earliest possible age how to dress and put on their gear independently. In circumstances in which parents are permitted in the locker room, coaches can ask parents to leave for a reasonable period of time before a game, and for reasonable period of time after a game, so that a coach or coaches may address the players. With the older age groups, including but not limited to Bantams, a head coach, in his or her discretion, may prohibit parents from entering the locker room.

### **Co-ed Teams and Locker Rooms**

Some of our teams consist of both male and female players. It is important that the privacy rights of all of our players are preserved and that appropriate arrangements are made. ECHO's co-ed locker room policy attempts to balance the social integration and camaraderie of a team sport while providing a safe and respectful environment for all participants.

If players are sharing one locker room, the team must have minimum attire policy, that is, all players must arrive at the rink wearing their hockey base layers or shorts and t-shirts (in good condition – no holes or tears in clothing) under their street clothes. All team members must have this minimum attire before entering a co-ed locker room so that no player of one gender has the opportunity to see a player of the opposite gender in a state of undress.

Another option is to have boys and girls dress or change in separate, supervised locker rooms. Approximately 10 to 15 minutes before each game (or practice if applicable), every player is to be dressed and present in one designated locker room so that the coach or coaches may address the entire team. If a player (whether boy or girl) is not fully dressed before the coach or coaches are ready to address the team, then that player must go to a separate locker room to finish dressing. The onus is on the players to be dressed and ready before the coach or coaches are ready to address the team.

After a game (or practice if applicable), every player is to be present in the one designated locker room where the coach or coaches will again address the team. Thereafter, each gender will proceed to their separate, supervised locker rooms where they can remove their hockey gear and change into their street clothes.

A third 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 of the opposite gender switch and get dressed. No addressing of the team shall take place until all players are fully dressed. Taking turns is a means of reasonable accommodation; neither gender group should be favored.

### **Cell Phones and Other Mobile Recording Devices**

Cell phones and other mobile devices with recording capabilities, including but not limited to those devices capable of voice recording, still cameras and video cameras, are not permitted to be used in locker rooms. If cell phones or other mobile devices must be used, they should be taken outside of the locker room. In rare circumstances, it may be acceptable to take photographs or recordings in a locker room, such as for a victory celebration, but only when all persons in the locker room are appropriately dressed and have been informed that photographs or recordings are being taken. This should be done only under the supervision of a coach or volunteer locker room monitor.

### **Prohibited Conduct and Reporting**

ECHO has a zero tolerance for all types of physical abuse, sexual abuse, emotional abuse, including bullying, threats, harassment and hazing. ECHO players, coaches, board members and volunteers, among others, may be subject to disciplinary action for violation of this locker room policy or for engaging in any conduct that violates USA Hockey Safe Sport policies, the ECHO Code of Conduct, or any applicable law. Reports of any actual or suspected violations may be directed to the ECHO Safe Sport Representative, the ECHO Board of Directors, the Connecticut Hockey Conference USA Hockey Safe Sport Administrator, or USA Hockey.