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Purpose

Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association, VSAHA, has devoted a considerable number of hours monitoring the youth sports world throughout Vermont. In conjunction with our member associations, leaders in state government and partners in New England Hockey, we are happy to share the following information in regards to the 2020-2021 youth hockey season. Our intent is to help our members provide a safe and practical hockey experience that can still be feasible given the state restrictions and guidelines that are in place. It is imperative that our members follow these guidelines and rules in order to keep our rinks open, keep our kids on the ice and to keep our communities safe.

Note: This is a living document and will be updated as necessary.

Vermont ACCD and Government Guidelines

All guidance and regulations implemented by the State of Vermont may supersede any rules or guidelines offered by Vermont State Amateur Hockey Association. This document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. Associations must adhere to guidelines set by the CDC, VT ACCD, and VDH. The knowledge and circumstances around COVID-19 are changing constantly and, as such, Vermont State Amateur Hockey encourages all programs engaging in activities to stay up-to-date on future developments. Below are some additional resources for programs to reference.

Documents & Guidelines VSAHA Members need to follow:

- [VT ACCD - 9.1 Sports/Organized Sports Including Youth Leagues, Adult Leagues, Practices, Games, and Tournaments](#)
- [VT ACCD - Restart Plan: Recreational Sports Programs and Leagues](#)
- [VOSHA Training](#)
- [Vermont Department of Health COVID-19 page](#)
- [Vermont Agency of Education School Guidance](#)

Last updated 8/19/2020



Other Resources:

- CDC Considerations for Youth Sports - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports.html>
- CDC Youth Sport Program FAQs - <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/community/schools-childcare/youth-sports-faq.html>

Facility's Expectations

- All teams must adhere to guidelines of the host arena and host association.
- Host association is responsible for sharing guidelines and making sure visiting teams are aware of them.

Association Guidelines for Managing Confirmed COVID-19 Cases

- *Each association should have its own plan in place for returning to the rink and be prepared for the possibility of positive cases occurring within participants or their families. Local rinks and associations need to follow the guidelines set forth by the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), the Vermont Department of Health (VDH) and local government or health officials in returning to the rinks and managing confirmed cases of COVID-19.*
- *Association Plans should be posted on your association website and emailed to the VSAHA Player Safety Coordinator.*
- *The information in this document is not intended or implied to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. These guidelines are designed to assist associations in creating their own emergency and alert plans for confirmed positive cases.*
- **Family**
 - Inform your team and/or association COVID-19 contact of a player testing positive, someone in their household testing positive or have been exposed to someone confirmed to have COVID-19.
 - Stay home for a minimum of 10 days since symptoms first appeared and until there is no fever for at least three days without medication AND improvement of other symptoms.
 - Siblings and household members should also stay home for 14 days and follow the [VDH Quarantine Guidance](#) on when to return.



- **Team**
 - Designate a player Safety Coordinator for your team. This could be a coach, manager, or volunteer position who will be responsible for responding to COVID-19 concerns and will help coordinate with local health authorities, and hockey administrators regarding positive COVID-19 cases. All team coaches, players and parents should know who this person is and how to contact them.
 - Coordinate with your association Safety Coordinator to notify all team members if a positive test is confirmed, while maintaining that person's confidentiality in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal HIPPA law.
 - Notify any opponents or teams that practiced with the infected player over the previous 14 days.
 - Notify any opponents or teams scheduled to practice with the player's team over the upcoming 14 days.
 - Pause team activities until your association Player Safety coordinator can consult with local health officials and/or the Vermont Department of Health on additional testing or requirements before returning to play
 - Teams should not be penalized for forfeiting games due to COVID-19 concerns.
- **Association**
 - Designate a Player Safety Coordinator within the association who will be responsible for responding to COVID- 19 concerns and will help coordinate with association members and local health authorities regarding positive COVID-19 cases. All association members should know who this person is and how to contact them.
 - Send communications to members and post signage at the arena requesting that people who have been symptomatic not enter the building and should not participate in any hockey-related event.
 - Establish and maintain appropriate contact tracing protocols for your association as specified by the VDH.
 - Have a plan in place and an established area for people who become symptomatic while at the arena.
 - Consult with VDH and local health officials and be prepared to communicate to any players, coaches, officials and volunteers who had close contact with that player notifying them of a positive test. Maintain the confidentiality of anyone with a positive test in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and Federal Hippa law.
 - Notify the arena of the positive test and close off areas used by the sick person within the last 24 hours and do not use these areas until after cleaning and disinfecting them.
 - Any positive cases should be logged and tracked in accordance with Vermont Health Department guidelines.



2020-2021 Season Outline

Expectations for all associations and teams.

- Follow the [Vermont Recreational Sport Guidelines in section 9.1](#) and the [restart plan](#) previously mentioned. The guidance includes the following but is not limited to:
 - No jamborees or tournaments.
 - No checking at all ages during practice and games.
 - Follow masking guidelines
 - Occupancy guidelines
 - Additional guidelines required of host rink
- Travel is up to each organization and teams are encouraged to plan what's best for their kids and families regarding distance, quantity of games, balance of other winter activities.
- Travel to out of state approved counties only (refer to the [VT Cross State travel guidance](#)) and eligibility must be confirmed no earlier than Friday at 4 pm.
- Visiting teams must be from approved counties only (refer to the [VT Cross State travel guidance](#)) and eligibility must be confirmed by the host team no earlier than Friday at 4pm.
- There will be no expectation of tiers, brackets, home and home, pressure to play a certain number of games and we highly encourage and support balanced teams for in-state play.
- VT Player Safety Coordinator and your association Player Safety Coordinator will assist in the event that COVID contact tracing is required, more information above.
- Teams must be rostered in accordance with VSAHA, NED, and USA Hockey rules and regulations.
- Scheduling: Expected number of teams and schedulers contact information will be shared on the state website after compiled by VSAHA State Tournament Director.

All 6U & Initiation programs

- Local ice times only
- Travel is discouraged

8U Youth & Girls Programs

- Cross-Ice games
- Limited travel

10U and older Youth & Girls, Disabled Hockey

- Encourage a larger portion of in-state play than previous seasons
- Encourage keeping "teams" consistent and small throughout the season.



Post Season

- State Tournament
 - There will be no traditional state tournament for 2020-21
 - In early January VSAHA will evaluate the possibility of an end of season event for each age group during playdown weekends.
- Regional & National Tournaments
 - 14U, 16U & 19U Teams wishing to qualify for Nationals will need to contact the VSAHA State Tournament Director by December 1.
 - Only teams advancing to Nationals would compete in a Regionals tournament.
 - Regionals tournament eligibility must follow VSAHA, NED and USA Hockey guidelines and format for advancing will be determined at a later date.
- Development Camps will be evaluated by the district and updates will be communicated when available. Currently no tryouts are scheduled.