

Dressing Room Policy: Implementation Guide

1.0 Introduction

The Hockey Northwestern Ontario Dressing Room Policy is a guiding document intended to provide the standards and guidelines necessary to ensure the safe, inclusive, and equitable participation of all players. This implementation guide, directed towards team officials, functions as a practical accompaniment to the Dressing Room Policy. The guide is divided into two main sections: proactive steps and reactive steps towards safety, equity, and inclusivity.

Important Note: new concepts and practices require an open mind, time, a willingness to ask questions, and patience. It is not about being perfect but being respectful.

2.0 Definitions

Sex/Assigned Sex: is the classification of a person as male, female or intersex based on biological characteristics, including chromosomes, hormones, external genitalia and reproductive organs. Most often, sex is assigned by a medical professional at birth and is based on a visual assessment of external genitalia.

Cisgender (*adj*): A person whose gender identity corresponds with the sex assigned to them at birth (e.g., a cisgender man is someone who identifies as a man and who was assigned male sex at birth).

Gender Diverse (*adj*): An umbrella term for gender identities and/or gender expressions that differ from cultural or societal expectations based on assigned sex.

Gender Identity: is a person's internal and individual experience of gender. This could include an internal sense of being a man, woman, both, neither, or another gender entirely. A person's gender identity may not correspond with social expectations associated with the sex they were assigned at birth. Since gender identity is internal, it is not necessarily visible to others. It is important to remember that gender identity is not the same as sex/ assigned sex.

Gender Expression: The way a person presents and communicates gender within a certain social context (environment). Gender can be expressed through clothing, speech, body language, hairstyle, voice, and/or the emphasis or de-emphasis of bodily characteristics or behaviours which are often associated with masculinity or femininity. The ways in which gender is expressed are specific to a particular culture and may change over time. May also be referred to as gender presentation or gender performance.

Transgender (*adj*): A person who does not identify either fully or in part with the gender associated with the sex assigned to them at birth—often used as an umbrella term to represent a wide range of gender identities and expressions.

Transition: Refers to a variety of social, medical, and/or legal changes that some trans people may pursue to affirm their gender identity. There is no checklist or average time for a transition process and no universal goal or end point. Each person decides what meets their needs.

Branch: not-for-profit Ontario corporation incorporated under The Corporations Act, R.S.O 1990 c.38 that has the responsibility to administer hockey within a defined portion of the Province of Ontario.

Minor Hockey Association: [self-defined by each MHA to include all staff, volunteers, and parents/guardians].

Player(s): Refers to any individual who is registered as a participant with a hockey team.

Gender-Segregated Space: any space that is grouped according to a gender binary (women/men) such that one gender has access to the space to the exclusion of the other. Examples of gender segregated spaces may include but are not limited to washrooms, showers, and dressing rooms.

Gender Segregated Team: a term that refers to a team grouped according to the gender binary. An example of a gender segregated team is a girls'/women's team or a boys'/men's team.

Sports teams are often grouped according to the gender binary which mean there are girls'/women's teams and boys'/men's teams. The criteria that should be used to group teams in this way is what gender a player self-identifies with, not the sex they were assigned at birth. "Gender-segregated teams" rather than "sex segregated teams" is therefore a more accurate way of referring to this type of team grouping system.

Multi-Gender Team: a term used to refer to a team that is not gender segregated and that welcomes members from multiple gender identities, including but not limited to men/boys and women/girls (both cisgender and trans) as well as individuals who identify outside of the gender binary, such as individuals who are, agender, gender neutral, gender queer, etc. Multi-gender team replaces the term "co-ed", as an intentional move away from non-inclusive language of the gender binary and more accurately reflects the reality of a gender spectrum.

2.0 Rights to Inclusion and Equal Treatment

All players, staff, volunteers, and the parents/guardians of players of the Minor Hockey Association have the right to be respected and equal participants of the Minor Hockey Association. This means that they have a right to define and express their gender identity without fear of discrimination, harassment or penalization within the [Minor Hockey Association]. This includes their right to request the use of and the right to be referred to by their self-identified name(s) and pronouns, as well as the right to have access to safe¹, inclusive and equitable dressing rooms and/or other gender segregated spaces, such as washrooms, that are in accord with their gender identity and/or gender expression and/or that meets any accommodation needs they may have.

Respecting the rights of players, staff, volunteers and the parents/guardians of players to inclusion and equal treatment (including the removal of any discriminatory requirement, factor or other barrier), may need no accommodation at all.

However, if a player has a code-related needs (such as requesting separate change facilities due to religious reasons or relating to their transition or gender identity), then there is a duty to accommodate, limited only by undue hardship.)

3.0 Taking proactive vs reactive steps to accommodation:

Scenario: A player on your team has requested accommodation assistance with respect to the dressing room. There are many possible reasons why someone might request dressing room accommodations:

- Gender identification
- Need for privacy
- Body image concerns
- Religious reasons
- A combination of any of these reasons

¹Unfounded concerns about safety are also sometimes used to attempt to justify discriminatory treatment relating to gender identity and gender expression. For example, trans women and girls are routinely discriminated against by being excluded from female-designated dressing rooms, washrooms and other gender segregated spaces based on the false and biased assumption that they represent a safety threat. In such a case, the bias must be addressed and the person's right to access must not be impeded based on this bias.

Knowing the reason behind an accommodation request is not necessary for providing accommodations and respect. It is up to the player’s discretion as to whether or not they choose to disclose why they require the accommodation.

Proactive	Reactive
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipate barriers to inclusion and equity and take actions to address them to the best of your ability such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Create a code of conduct for your team that includes information on the dressing room policy and the process required to seek request accommodations ○ Amend your team’s current code of conduct to include information on the dressing room policy and the process required to seek accommodations • Raise awareness about the policy by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Taking 10 minutes of a pre-season talk with parents/guardians to discuss the Dressing Room Policy ○ Taking 10 minutes of a pre-season talk with players to talk about the Dressing Room Policy when discussing respect and anti-bullying. ○ Note: Dressing Room Policy E-Module includes training and additional documents to help guide these conversations and to provide further information for parents/guardians. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responding to a request for accommodation such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inquiring about empty dressing rooms available during that timeslot. ○ Inquiring about appropriate and equivalent changing areas such as meeting rooms, all purpose rooms, etc. ○ Designing an equitable dressing schedule

3.1 Proactive

3.11 Increasing Awareness and Understanding

In order to ensure all players and parents/guardians are aware of and understand the Dressing Room Policy, it is crucial that coaches and training staff take opportunities to provide education and affirm your team's commitment to dressing room safety, inclusion, and equity.

- I have developed or adapted a pre-existing Code of Conduct that speaks to the new Dressing Room Policy and the process for seeking accommodations
- I have taken 10 minutes of a pre-season talk with parents/guardians to discuss the Dressing Room Policy and the process for seeking accommodations
- I have taken 10 minutes of a pre-season talk with players to talk about the Dressing Room Policy and the process for seeking accommodations when discussing respect and anti-bullying

3.12 Providing Information to Players and Parents/Guardians about the Process for Seeking Accommodations

- I have communicated to all players and parents/guardians that the process for requesting accommodation requires the player and only if relevant, a parent/guardian acting on their behalf to:
 - Submit an accommodation request in writing to the MHA
- I have let the players and parent/guardians know that they are entitled to:
 - A confidential day, time, and space to discuss the accommodation request
 - Bring a supportive person (parent/guardian or supportive non-relative) to the meeting

3.12 Reactive

Scenario: A player on a gender-segregated team has submitted a request for accommodation with respect to separate space for changing.

- You have called ahead to the facility to inquire about whether there are additional dressing rooms available in that timeslot
- In the event that additional dressing rooms are unavailable during that timeslot, you have inquired about whether appropriate and equivalent changing areas are available with consideration of proximity to the ice. These might include:

- Referee dressing rooms
 - Meeting rooms
 - Another teams currently unused dressing rooms
- In the event that both an additional dressing room and an appropriate and equivalent changing area is not available, you have designed an equitable dressing room schedule

3.21 Implementing an equitable dressing room schedule

- You have ensured that all players have equitable access to dressing rooms by arranging/designing a schedule such that the order reflects that all player have access to using the dressing space first and in a timely fashion
- You have ensured that all players are included in pre and post game team activities

Scenario: Gender-segregated team

	Pre-Game	Post-Game	Next Game
1 st Shift	Shared/Group	Individual/Private	Shared/Group
2 nd Shift	Individual/Private	Shared/Group	Individual/Private

Scenario: Multi-gender team

	Pre-Game	Post-Game	Next Game
1 st Shift	Girls'/Women's Shared	Boys'/Men Shared	Individual/Private
2 nd Shift	Individual/Private	Girls'/Women's Shared	Boys'/Men Shared
3 rd Shift	Boys'/Men Shared	Individual/Private	Girls'/Women's Shared

3.22 Providing Accommodations

- I have used active listening techniques by allowing the player to share their concerns and need for accommodations.
- I have taken steps to ensure I have understood the player correctly such as summarizing that they have said and asking them to confirm that I've understood
- I have confirmed with the player that accommodations will allow them to feel safe and able to participate fully
- I have brainstormed with the player to identify possible solutions
- I have ensured that the player is comfortable with the possible solutions.
- If the player is not comfortable with the possible solutions, I have worked with the player to brainstorm more appropriate options.
- I have set up a mutually agreeable time with the player to present and brainstorm options
- I have allowed the player to choose which option is more comfortable for them
- I have worked with the player to decide what other team official(s) may need to be notified of the decision, who will help to secure the changing space, etc.

3.3 Advocacy

A player may require a member of the MHA or a team official(s) to advocate for them to ensure an appropriate and equivalent accommodation request is implemented in a timely and confidential manner. Advocacy can take many forms:

- I have spoken with facility management on the player's behalf
- I have spoken with a tournament organizer to discuss the availability of additional dressing room options and/or appropriate and equivalent changing spaces
- Upon the player's request, I have disclosed private information about the player to authorized individuals, only when necessary.