

AAGHA Parent Liaison Handbook



2016 – 2017

What is a Parent Liaison?



Parent liaisons provide a communication link between parents and coaches during the hockey season. Parent liaisons are listeners. They are available to parents to hear their concerns and bring these forward to coaches accurately and in a calm, clear manner. By doing this, parent liaisons can help resolve conflicts and problems. Depending upon their interests, abilities, time, and the support they receive from parents and coaches, a parent liaison may also help out with finding solutions to issues, mediating conflicts, and improving general team communications.



AAGHA Complaint Process

As Taken from Section 14 Complaints in the AAGHA Constitution Please refer to the links provided for full access to the AAGHA Constitution:

14.2 Members wishing to discuss a complaint or grievance must observe a 24 hour “cooling off” period to prevent further escalation and poor communication. Members who do not observe this cooling period may be brought before the Disciplinary Committee and may face suspension or expulsion from AAGHA.

14.3 Any decision by the AAGHA Board of Directors on an issue will be made with regard to the policies of the AAGHA (which comply with OWHA and LLFHL guidelines). Where the policies of AAGHA do not cover the issue, reference will be made to OWHA and LLFHL Regulations and Policies.

14.4 All decisions made by the AAGHA Board of Directors are considered final. There is no appeal process to this decision, except for any situations where a member of the AAGHA is in real, immediate danger or is being subjected to actions contrary to the OWHA Harassment/Abuse Policies as stipulated in the most recent version of the OWHA Handbook.

14.5 Any association member that circumvents the following procedures or disregards this policy, may be suspended and dealt with in accordance with the AAGHA Disciplinary Process.

14.6 Parents and other members of the Association who have a complaint of any nature must:

14.6.1 Speak first to the team manager. The team manager is the liaison between the coaching staff and parents;

14.6.2 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved, speak to the coach;

14.6.3 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved, the issue may be forwarded to the Division Convenor;

14.6.4 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved it may be forwarded, in writing, to the Disciplinary Committee. Issues forwarded to the Disciplinary Committee that are not in writing may not be addressed;

14.6.5 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved, the issue may then be forwarded in writing to the AAGHA President who will make a final resolution of the matter.

14.7 Teams or team officials who have a complaint of any nature must:

14.7.1 Discuss the matter with the Division Convenor;

14.7.2 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved, the complainant may forward the issue, in writing, to the Disciplinary Committee;

14.7.3 If the issue is unsatisfactorily resolved it may then be forwarded in writing to the President for final resolution.

THE CONCERN/COMPLAINT PROCESS



Rules for Effective Communication

Message must be clear

Sender must deliver message clearly and concisely

Receiver must be able to hear and receive the message

Receiver must be able to understand the message

Interruption or distractions must be avoided

Addendum: During the 2016-2017 Hockey Season, Parent Liaison Reps will act as liaison between parents/players and coaches/bench staff instead of team managers.

What is Listening?

Active Listening

A parent liaison's most important duty is to be a good listener. What does it mean to be a good listener? We are listening when we are interpreting, assessing, understanding and responding. We can certainly hear things when we are not paying attention, but we are never really listening unless we give the speaker our full attention. Active listening is hard work. It takes concentration and attention.

Key points for Active Listening

- Resist distractions and give the speaker your full attention.
- Concentrate, put other thoughts temporarily aside in order to understand what is being said.
- Listen to all that the other person has to say rather than tuning-out half way to plan a response.
- Avoid making judgements about what the speaker is telling you. Listen to what that person is really saying.
- Let people know you've heard them. Tell them that you have listened and understood by paraphrasing. Paraphrasing is not merely repeating. A paraphrase is a summary that includes the speaker's main points and feelings.

How to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is not merely repeating. A paraphrase is a summary that includes the speaker's main points and feelings. A good paraphrase will:

- Focus on what was said
- Reflect only the essentials
- Include a description of the speaker's emotions, but NOT the more "descriptive" words that they used. For example, you do not have to use profanity in your paraphrase.

Good Communication Skills

1. Making eye contact while communicating with people is important because it shows you are listening to them.
2. Do not swear and shout because it can be intimidating
3. Do not chew gum while having a conversation with someone
4. Do not text while speaking to someone
5. Always try to speak clearly and use words everyone can understand
6. Make positive facial expressions
7. Listen to the person you are speaking to
8. Have relaxed body language
9. Don't speak over other people
10. Do keep to the point when explaining something

What are the characteristics of good communication?

Listen to what people say

Invite questions and encourage interaction

Be aware of people's concerns

Understand words and concepts that people commonly use and use the appropriate language

Share ideas and information in ways that help people understand and correct misunderstanding

Build on what people already know

Stick to the important points

Be specific about what action to take

Motivate people

What do you do if a parent approaches you with a concern?

1. First and foremost, USE YOUR LISTENING SKILLS and find a private location to speak so as to ensure confidentiality.
2. Allow the parent an opportunity to identify that they have a concern.
3. Suggest scheduling a meeting to discuss the concerns at length before the issue is brought to the coach.

Please remember that this may be a situation of heightened emotions. Use your listening skills, validate that you will listen to their concerns and schedule a time/place to meet that complies with the 24 hour rule. Please know that failure to comply with the 24 hour rule can result in disciplinary action (section 14.2 of the AAGHA constitution).

Remember the 24-hour Cool Down Rule

After the scheduled meeting with parents, if concerns need to be brought to the coach/bench staff, schedule a meeting to discuss concerns with the coach. Should the situation not reach an resolution that is satisfactory to all, then proceed to the next step in the Concern/Conflict process: Contact the Rep Convenor

repconvenor@ancastergirlshockey.ca

The Parent Liaison plays an important role in ensuring that players and families have a voice in our Association. All feedback and concerns expressed by members of our Association are valued and should be given adequate attention. Your role as Parent Liaison for your team will involve communicating between parents and coaches any concerns brought forth by members of your team. Following protocol is very important in ensuring that concerns are properly addressed.

Please remember that any concerns brought forth by a parent/player are to remain anonymous (unless otherwise indicated by the parent(s)/player). Your communication with the coach should ensure the family's anonymity at all times. Should you be concerned about your ability to remain objective and impartial in this role AT ANY TIME, please contact the Volunteer Director at volunteers@ancastergirlshockey.ca so that appropriate action can be taken and a new Parent Liaison can be named.



Discussing Concerns with your Coach

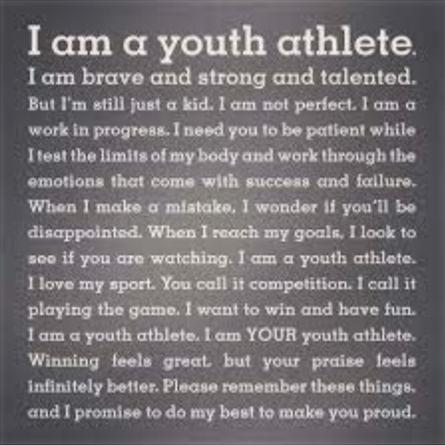
No one likes hearing criticism. A common response to criticism is to dig in and defend our actions. Such a response almost never leads to a situation where problems can be resolved. As a parent liaison, your role is to bring coaches problems in a way that they can look at the problem productively. One of the ways a parent liaison can help with this is to bring parents concerns to coaches without the emotion and anger they may have originally expressed to you. Remind coaches and parents that the common concern is for the well being of the child/player.

Parent liaison tip: Don't talk to your coach only about problems. Take every opportunity to pass on good comments you may hear about the team as well.

Key Points

- When approached by a parent, try to avoid discussions in public areas. Ask to speak in a private location, perhaps set up a time to meet while acknowledging that you understand their need to discuss their concerns. This allows for a “cooling down” period as well as ensures confidentiality and anonymity are maintained. Arena lobbies, change rooms, backs of hockey rinks do not make for good locations to discuss concerns.
- Treat each concern as unique and individual. Please refrain from using terms such as “disgruntled parents” and avoid passing judgement on concerns brought forth by parents. Your role is to listen and communicate parents’ concerns to coaches/bench staff.

The AAGHA appreciates your commitment to this role, and if you require any guidance, assistance or clarification on any matters that may arise in your role as Parent Liaison, please do not hesitate to contact the Volunteer Director at volunteers@ancastergirlshockey.ca and help will be provided.



I am a youth athlete.
I am brave and strong and talented.
But I'm still just a kid. I am not perfect. I am a
work in progress. I need you to be patient while
I test the limits of my body and work through the
emotions that come with success and failure.
When I make a mistake, I wonder if you'll be
disappointed. When I reach my goals, I look to
see if you are watching. I am a youth athlete.
I love my sport. You call it competition. I call it
playing the game. I want to win and have fun.
I am a youth athlete. I am YOUR youth athlete.
Winning feels great, but your praise feels
infinitely better. Please remember these things,
and I promise to do my best to make you proud.



THANK YOU
FOR VOLUNTEERING