

# Lady Thunderbird Parent - Coach Communication Guideline

Communication escalation:

parent → parent rep → coaches → director → WSYHA board

Good communication is critical in athletic situations. WSYHA (Lady Thunderbirds) encourages open and honest communication to prevent disagreements and reach a resolution when disagreements arise. A communication plan is in place to assist and improve communication between parents and coaches. The WSYHA volunteer coaches work hard to do the best they can for all of the players, and we ask parents to respect the fact that their jobs are difficult and time-consuming and that they are volunteers who are here for our kids and to help develop the program as a whole.

This communication plan has been designed to provide guidelines for parents and coaches to follow in order to protect the coaches and players from unproductive, distracting, and sometimes unpleasant interactions so they can focus on hockey. The goal of this plan is to provide a process that is productive and efficient, and that has minimal impact on the players, coaches, and teams.

Parents are encouraged to speak directly with the coach about certain topics that fall in a category that includes what the Board Members consider to be Green-light communications, such as their own child's behavior and ways the parents can help their own child improve. However, certain issues or problems during the season should not be expressed directly to the coach. These issues fall in a category that includes what the Board considers Red-light Communications.

**GREEN-LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS** – parents and coaches may directly communicate about

1. Philosophy of the coaches
2. Expectations the coaches have for your child as well as the team
3. Locations and times of practices and games
4. Schedule conflicts
5. Team requirements, i.e. special equipment, off-ice conditioning
6. The procedure followed should your child be injured during participation
7. Behavior or performance concerns of your own child
8. Treatment/coaching of your child by the coaches (not including disciplinary action)
9. Ways in which parents can help their own child improve

**RED-LIGHT COMMUNICATIONS** – parents and coaches may NOT directly communicate about

1. Positions of players
2. Team Strategy - ie: make-up of lines, shift changes, length of shifts, etc.
3. Practice or game plans
4. Other players and their performance

5. Disciplinary actions taken by coaches
6. On- or off-ice behavior of other players, parents or spectators
7. On- or off-ice behavior of other coaches or referees
8. Complaints or grievances concerning the WSYHA program or organization
9. Complaints or grievances concerning another program or organization
10. Policies and procedures of WSYHA.

The following must be followed to help promote a productive and efficient process toward resolution:

#### PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION GUIDELINE

For parents to register complaints or grievances relative to coaches:

1. For Red-Light Communications, parents must not attempt to voice their concerns, complaints or grievances directly with the coaches. If parents attempt to do so, coaches shall not engage and shall direct parents to follow the Parent-Coach Communication Guideline. Green-light Communications are excluded from this requirement.
2. **The "Twenty-Four Hour" Rule:** Unless the nature of the complaint or grievance requires immediate attention, parents are required to wait at least 24 hours after an event or incident before initiating these procedures. Premature complaints or grievances may be deferred until the expiration of this cooling-off period.
3. After the 24-hour period has expired, parents may submit their complaints or grievances pertaining to Red-Light Communications to parent rep(s)/team manager(s) and must do so in writing. Email communications shall be considered written. Parents should be aware that anything they submit in writing may be shared with the coaches, members of the Board, and when applicable, the Disciplinary Committee.
4. Upon receipt of a written complaint or grievance, the parent rep(s) will contact the team head coach (and assistant coaches, if applicable) to set up a meeting or phone/email discussion between them (the coach(es) and a representative from the league to discuss the concern/complaint/grievance if needed. The parents rep(s) may communicate directly with the parent(s), any players implicated (if deemed by the coaches to be necessary), to attempt to reach a resolution and may act as the primary liaison or facilitator between the parents and coaches.
5. If determined by the parent rep(s) to be necessary (ie: resolution has not been reached, OR if the complaint or grievance involves conduct subject to disciplinary action, OR if the complaint or grievance involves subject matter described in numbers 6-10 of the Red-Light Communications), the parent rep(s) and/or coach will submit a detailed report in writing to the Director, Board Members and/or the Disciplinary Committee, if applicable, for their consideration and decision-making process for resolution. The Director may make a recommendation to the Board and/or the Disciplinary Committee, if applicable, for resolution. Unless the decision involves the suspension of the player, coach, parent or other member of USA Hockey, the Board or the Disciplinary Committee

may, within its discretion, render a decision to resolve the matter with or without first communicating or meeting with the parent(s) and/or coach(es).

6. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONFRONT A COACH BEFORE, DURING OR AFTER A PRACTICE OR GAME, OR OUTSIDE OF THE RINK OR AT ANOTHER LOCATION. ALWAYS OBSERVE THE 24-HOUR COOLING OFF PERIOD.
7. DO NOT ATTEMPT TO CONFRONT A COACH WITH A RED-LIGHT COMMUNICATION COMPLAINT OR GRIEVANCE. COACHES WILL NOT ENGAGE IN SUCH DISCUSSIONS AS THOSE MUST BE SUBMITTED IN WRITING TO THE PARENT REP(S). DIRECT PARENT-COACH CONFRONTATIONS DO NOT PROMOTE RESOLUTION AND COULD ADVERSELY IMPACT YOUR CHILD, YOUR CHILD'S TEAM AND/OR THE ORGANIZATION AS A WHOLE.
8. PARENTS MUST FOLLOW THE PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE. THE BOARD OR DISCIPLINARY COMMITTEE MAY CONSIDER A VIOLATION OF THE PARENT-COACH COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE, THE GENERAL CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINARY ACTION PLAN AND THE DISPUTE RESOLUTION PROCEDURE AS GROUNDS FOR REVIEW FOR SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL FROM WSYHA, INCLUDING THEIR CHILD'S SUSPENSION OR DISMISSAL FROM HER TEAM.