



PARENT LIAISON

GENERAL

The primary role of a Parent Liaison is to act as a mediator between players and coaching staff and between parents and coaching staff. The Parent Liaison is to act in the best interest of the players and the team as a whole. Part of their role is to communicate with the coaching staff any concerns or questions brought forth by players and/or parents.

The Parent Liaison is a communication contact to bring collective concerns to the coaching staff and in reverse to collect the opinions of the parents under the directive of the Head coach.

The Liaison will attend coach meetings with players and/or parents to act as a witness and impartial mediator. If at the discretion of the Head Coach and/or Parent Liaison, it is felt that the matter cannot be resolved satisfactory to all parties at the team level, then the Liaison or Head Coach shall contact the Executive Parent Liaison Director. The Director will then discuss the issues with the applicable VP of Hockey Operations (either rep or house). Once the issue has been discussed, The Director will advise the Head Coach and team Parent Liaison of the next steps.

This contact to the Director shall be made when the Head Coach or Parent Liaison have concerns that the situation may affect the unity of the team or the welfare of any one person belonging to that team. A meeting will then be set up through the applicable Director with the Discipline Committee (if needed) as soon as possible.

Once the meeting is set up, it shall be expected that the Head Coach and Parent Liaison will provide the Director separately written details of the actions occurring to date prior to the meeting. The Director will forward the written details on to the Discipline Committee.

The Executive Parent Liaison is a voting member for MMHA and holds a vote at the

MMHA Annual General Meeting.

The Team Parent Liaison must be voted in by the parent group from the team. If there is an instance where no team member wants to become the Parent Liaison, then the Board reserves the right to appoint someone.

COMMUNICATIONS

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.

The Parent Liaison Needs separate themselves from the situation at hand, They must be completely impartial and utilize “active listening” and record Facts as well as comments during the exchanges. The Parent Liaisons Opinions are not required and must keep all information gathered Confidential. The team Parent Liaison should be able to communicate the issues if needed to The MMHA board, and record all discussions on paper for review if required.

ACTIVE LISTENING KEY POINTS

When you are 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.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All parents have the right to ask their Parent Liaison to discuss any problems with the coaches anonymously.

Letting people know they have been heard. Tell people 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.

PARAPHRASING TECHNIQUE

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.

Parent Liaison Tip:

A good paraphrase is important because you can use your paraphrase to tell a coach about a problem.

PARAPHRASING IN ACTION

An angry parent approaches a parent liaison after a game: "What is that coach's !@#%\$! problem! He short- shifted my son for the entire third period. I know the team was behind, but that's no excuse! He told us at the start of the year that shifts would be equal no matter what the score was. That guy is a !@#%\$! liar!"

THE PARENT LIAISON'S PARAPHRASE

"You're angry because you felt your son was short-shifted in the third period. You suspect it was because the team was behind, but you remember the coach making a commitment to keep the shifts equal regardless of the score. You think he broke his word."

How the parent liaison might bring this to the coach: "One of the parents raised a concern with me this afternoon. He felt that the shifts were not equal in the third period. He wanted me to bring this to your attention. Do you have a moment to hear how he saw the situation?"

PROCEDURES

You are approached by a parent with a concern.

What do you do?

First and uppermost, **USE YOUR LISTENING SKILLS.**

- Concentrate on what the parent is saying.
- Make sure that you are clear about the nature of the problem. Ask questions if you are not.
- Paraphrase, or summarize, to make sure that the parent agrees that you understand the nature of their concern.

Ask the parent:

- What is the main point, or points, that you want the coach to understand about this situation?
- How do you feel this problem could be resolved?
- What do you want me to do with your concern?

Remember the 24-HOUR COOL DOWN principle

It's simple...many of the problems we get so excited or angry about do not seem so important when we've had time to "cool down" and think matters over.

Parent liaisons may find themselves listening to angry parent's right after games or practices. In these situations, you must insist that the parent take a day to think things over and speak to you again before the issue is brought to the coach. At all times the 24 hour rule should be observed.

IF THE SITUATION CANNOT BE RESOLVED:

Direct the parent to the Conflict resolution section on this website to fill out the applicable forms.