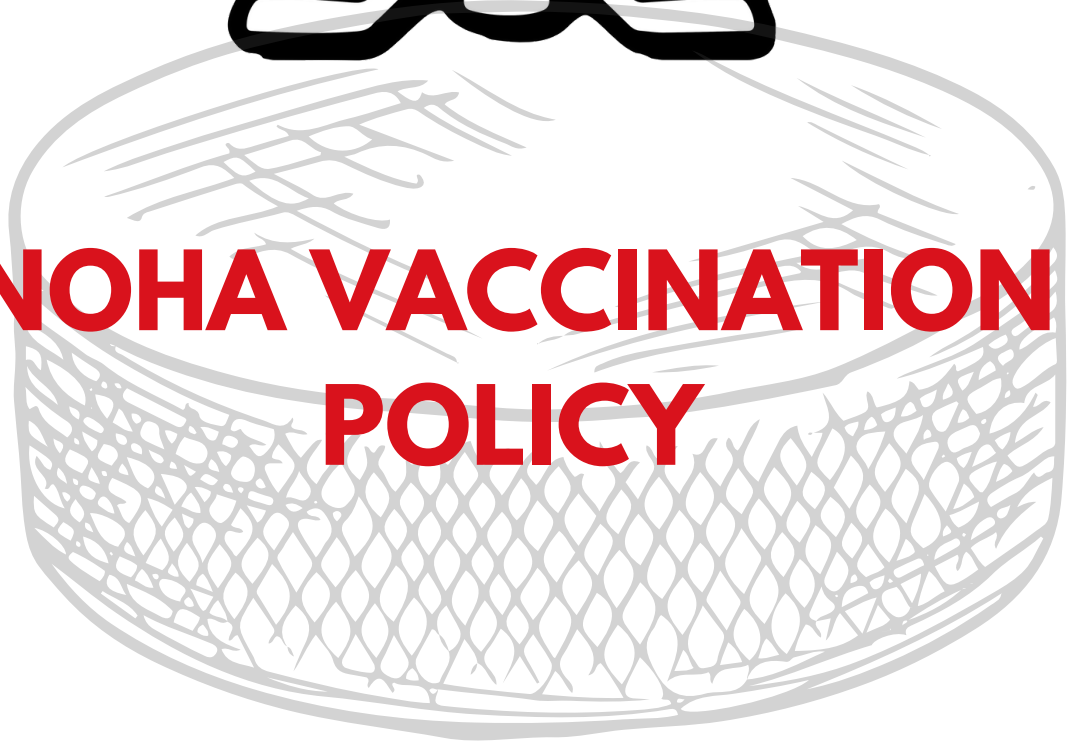

NOHA VACCINATION POLICY

2021-2022

VERSION 3 - AS OF OCTOBER 5, 2021

TABLE OF CONTENTS

0 - DEFINITIONS

1 - POLICY STATEMENT

2 - REASON FOR THIS POLICY

3 - AFFECTED PERSONS

4 - VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS & RECORDS

5 - ACCEPTABLE VACCINES

6 - ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

7 - ACCOMMODATION

8 - REPORTING & RECORD KEEPING

9 - UNVACCINATED AFFECTED PERSONS

10 - PLAYERS BORN IN 2010 OR LATER

11 - SPECTATORS

12 - LOCAL REGULATIONS

DEFINITIONS

PURPOSE: To continue to protect the health and safety of all NOHA Participants by requiring that certain individuals be fully vaccinated as a condition of participating in NOHA Sanctioned Activities in accordance with the defined timelines.

DEFINITIONS:

"Accepted COVID-19 Vaccine" means a COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved for use by Health Canada.

"Affected Persons" means Vaccine-Eligible Players, Game Officials, NOHA Officials, Instructors, Association Officials, Team Officials and Volunteers .

"Association" means any Minor Hockey Association, League, or Single Entry Team.

"Association Officials" means any member of the Board of Directors, Officers, Executive and Staff (including interns) of an Association.

"Fully Vaccinated" means fourteen (14) days after an individual has received a complete series of an accepted COVID-19 vaccine.

"Game Officials" means any Referee, Linesperson, Timekeeper, or other person engaged in officiating a hockey game as may be designated by the NOHA.

"Instructor" means any person engaged by an Association or Team to provide specialized instruction (i.e. power skating, goaltending coaching) to Players, who is not registered with the Association.

"NOHA" means the Northern Ontario Hockey Association.

DEFINITIONS

“NOHA Official” means any member of the Board of Directors, Officers, Executive and Staff (including interns) of the NOHA.

“Participant” or **“participant”** means any person registered to the NOHA through any Association or Team, including the parents or legal guardians of any minor aged Participant.

“Sanctioned Activity” means any game, tournament, on-ice practice, off-ice training, or any other activity involving hockey players and Team Officials that is approved by the NOHA or any Association, the Ontario Hockey Federation (or any of its Member organizations), or Hockey Canada (or any of its Member organizations).

“Team” means any group of certified Team Officials and rostered hockey players, who are qualified in a division and category under the NOHA Regulations, who have gathered for a Sanctioned Activity, including any Instructors, Volunteers or Associations Officials.

“Team Official” means any person involved in the management of a Team, and includes the coach, trainer, manager, on-ice volunteer, and any assistant coach or assistant trainer.

“Vaccine-Eligible Player” means any player born in 2009 or earlier.

“Volunteer” means any person registered by the NOHA or Association as a volunteer.

1 - POLICY STATEMENT

The NOHA requires that all Affected Persons be Fully Vaccinated against COVID-19, in accordance with the remainder of this policy, as a condition of participating in any Sanctioned Activities during the 2021-2022 hockey season. At the present time, this policy does not apply to hockey players born after 2009 or hockey spectators.

Public health guidance on measures for fully vaccinated, partially vaccinated, and unvaccinated individuals continue to evolve and may affect this policy in the future. The NOHA reserves the right to amend this policy in response to any new guidance received from or regulations passed by federal, provincial, and local public health and governmental authorities in respect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Additionally, this policy only applies to Associations, Teams, and Participants who are members of, or who are registered with the NOHA. It is not intended to apply to Teams or Participants of any Minor Hockey Associations operating outside of the NOHA, even if they are participating in any NOHA Sanctioned Activity (i.e. tournaments, exhibition games). This policy is also not intended to limit any NOHA Teams from participating in sanctioned hockey events and activities in any other hockey jurisdiction outside the NOHA that may be governed by a different vaccination policy.

This policy is effective immediately, with due regard for the availability of Accepted COVID-19 vaccines.

2 - REASON FOR THIS POLICY

The health and safety of all Participants is the top priority of the NOHA. The purpose of this policy is to protect the health and safety of all Participants by reducing the risk of exposure to and transmission of COVID-19, an infectious communicable disease, among all persons involved in the NOHA, and to promote the health and safety of all Members of the NOHA community through vaccinations against COVID-19.

This policy is necessary to prevent, respond to, and alleviate any outbreak of COVID-19 in the NOHA because of the significant risk factors for COVID-19 infection that are present while participating in an organized hockey setting as a player and non-player, both on and off the ice. These risk factors include close contact in predominantly indoors closed-space environments (i.e. arenas, dressing rooms, etc.).

The close contact nature of organized hockey makes compliance with social distancing impossible in certain circumstances and reduces the effectiveness of other infectious disease transmission protocols such as masking.

3 - AFFECTED PERSONS

This policy applies to the following Affected Persons:

- Players born in 2009 or earlier.
- Team Officials (Coaches, Trainers, Managers, On-Ice Volunteers, etc.)
- Game Officials (Referees, Linespersons, Timekeepers, etc.)
- Association Officials (Association/Single Entry Team Directors, Officers, Executive, and Staff)
- NOHA Officials (Directors, Officers, Executive, and Staff,, including hockey development personnel)
- Volunteers
- Instructors (third parties engaged by Associations or Teams to provide specialized instruction {i.e. power skating, goaltending coaching}).

At the present time, the NOHA policy does not apply to hockey players born in 2010 or later, or to hockey spectators.

Note: On Wednesday, September 29, 2021 the five (5) Public Health Units in the NOHA territory announced that effective October 14, 2021, those who are aged 12 or older who coach, officiate, or volunteer at indoor organized sports will be required to show proof of vaccination. This requirement – and any requirement implemented by a community or facility that is more stringent than the NOHA's requirements – will supersede the NOHA policy.

4 - VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS & RECORDS

All Affected Persons are required to be Fully Vaccinated (i.e.: including the 14-day period after receiving their completed dose) by **November 22, 2021 or earlier**. All Affected Persons must present to their Association designate, as applicable, evidence satisfactory to the NOHA demonstrating that they have received the completed series of an Accepted COVID-19 Vaccine.

5 - ACCEPTABLE VACCINES

The NOHA recognizes all vaccines approved by Health Canada. All Affected Person will be required to confirm they are vaccinated regardless of which approved vaccine they receive.

6 - ACCEPTABLE DOCUMENTATION

Acceptable documents serving as evidence of COVID-19 vaccination include:

- A digital or physical Dose Administration Receipt.
- Medical records signed by a licensed health care provider indicating vaccine name and date(s) of administration.
- Government verification/language (i.e. Government-issued vaccine passport or card).

7 - ACCOMMODATION

The NOHA will comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code (OHRC) and provide an accommodation to any Affected Person who is unable to be vaccinated for substantiated medical reasons and/or on such other grounds protected under the OHRC, unless such an accommodation cannot be made without inflicting undue hardship on other Affected Persons.

If an Affected Person cannot provide the NOHA or their Association with satisfactory evidence of vaccination, the following will be taken into consideration by the NOHA:

- The Affected Person's reason for not being vaccinated; and
- Documentation to substantiate a medical or protected ground reason for not being vaccinated.

Any Affected Person requiring accommodation must provide the NOHA with documentation to substantiate their reason for not being vaccinated. Where accommodation is not possible without undue hardship to other Affected Persons, the Affected Person will not be permitted to be involved in any Sanctioned Activity for the duration of the pandemic or until such time that COVID-19 no longer poses a significant public health risk.

The NOHA reserves the right to have accommodation medical documentation reviewed by an NOHA designated medical specialist and to make appropriate inquiries to verify the authenticity of any creed/religion-based claim for accommodation.

Any Affected Person who is granted accommodation must undergo regular COVID-19 testing and must provide evidence to their Association, as applicable, of a negative test taken not more than 72 hours prior to each Sanctioned Activity.

To begin the accommodation request process, please complete the application by visiting the following link: NOHA Vaccination Accommodation Request Form

8 - REPORTING & RECORD KEEPING

All Affected Persons need to provide proof to their Association designate who will record proof of vaccination. However, the Association will not be required to keep any medical records or vaccination receipts on file. The Association designate will simply be required to confirm that proof has been provided and record and maintain on file a list of all Affected Persons who have provided such proof. All applications requesting an accommodation under this policy shall be filed directly with the NOHA, as provided above.

All documentary records about COVID-19 accommodations for will only be collected, used, retained, or disclosed by the NOHA as may be necessary for legitimate operational purposes or as directed or requested by governmental authorities or as may be required by law.

Until no longer required, all records retained under this policy must be kept in a secure location to which access is provided to only a limited number of designated persons who are involved in administering this policy, and no others. Once an Affected Person's accommodation status has been verified and it is determined that there is no further need for the retention of such records, they shall be immediately destroyed in a secure manner.

9 - UNVACCINATED AFFECTED PERSONS

On **November 23, 2021**, any Affected Person not Fully Vaccinated (i.e.: including the 14-day period after receiving their completed dose) or has not been granted an accommodation in accordance with Section 7, will no longer be eligible to participate in any Sanctioned Activities until such time as they have presented satisfactory evidence that they have been Fully Vaccinated or been granted an accommodation.

10 - PLAYERS BORN IN 2010 OR LATER

At the present time, no COVID-19 vaccine that has been approved for use by Health Canada for children born in 2010 or later. However, once a COVID-19 vaccine has been approved for such persons, the NOHA will re-evaluate this policy and consider extending the definition of Vaccine-Eligible Players to include players born in those years.

11 - SPECTATORS

This policy does not presently apply to hockey spectators, including the parents or guardians of players. However, taking into consideration the severity of COVID-19 cases within the NOHA's jurisdiction and any new guidance received, or regulations passed by federal, provincial and local public health and governmental authorities, Hockey Canada and the Ontario Hockey Federation, the NOHA reserves the right to extend this policy to encompass spectators attending Sanctioned Activities.

The provincial Vaccine Passport regulations, along with other local regulations, will provide direction for Spectators. The current regulations require that spectators aged 12 and up be fully vaccinated to enter a facility. Visit the Ontario Ministry of Health website for additional details (Proof of Vaccination Guidance for Businesses and Organizations under the Reopening Ontario Act (gov.on.ca))

12 - LOCAL REGULATIONS

It should also be noted that individual owners/operators of arenas and facilities used by the NOHA or any Association or Team, may impose their own vaccination requirements for Participants that are stronger than the Provincial Regulations and the NOHA Vaccination Policy.