

MVRHS Field Hockey 2023 Team Expectations & Code of Conduct

Dear Field Hockey Player & Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2023 Field Hockey season; we are glad you are here! As always, we aim to update our code of conduct and team expectations each year so please read each item carefully; there are important changes. We will review this document together as a team and it is always available on our website for reference throughout the season. The Athletic Handbook is essential reading for all team members as well. Please refer to the handbook, located on the MVRHS Athletics website: <https://mvrhs.org/vineyarders/>

We want this season to be an inclusive and positive space that allows all to feel valued. Please speak up to any coach if you have any questions/concerns about you or your player's experience.

A. Practice & Games

- Pre-season begins Monday, August 21st. Preseason and regular season calendar is available for details of the full schedule. Times for games will often be finalized closer to the season and all final details will be communicated to players prior to the events. Please check the Remind app for updates from coaching staff or the Arbiter Live Sports site for live game schedule changes.
- I do not foresee needing to have team cuts this year, but in the event that we do need to make cuts, we will give everyone advance notice and team selection will be made by the end of practice on Thursday, August 24th and will follow the school athletic handbook's policy for making selections.
- Practice will be almost every non-game week day after school, beginning at 3:30pm and going no later than 5:15pm. If players need to catch the late bus, they will be able to leave in time to make their transportation.
- Most weeks we will have at least one "rest day", or a day off of both practice/ games. These are usually scheduled on Sundays, when applicable, but are subject to change as well. We recommend that players actually use that day to rest!

B. Player Equipment/Attire:

Players need to provide their own personal **equipment**:

- stick* (*players may borrow a stick for a period of time, until they can confidently purchase a stick of their own)
- field hockey shinguards (they are different from soccer shinguards- we recommend the kind with a hard outer shell)
- mouthguard (purchase an extra or two—you will probably lose/forget it at least once!)
- trainers/cleats - appropriate for grass/field turf

- field hockey approved goggles (see: <https://www.longstreth.com/field-hockey/legal-field-hockey-goggles.asp> for guidance on what is legal)
- *Strongly recommended: a field-hockey glove: padded, left-handed (or both hands) for extra protection.
- Refillable water bottle
- comfortable, athletic tops & shorts/legging/skort/pants
- warm/waterproof layers for later in the season

Uniforms

Team Uniforms will be supplied to players for the season: they will be responsible for washing them regularly and taking care of them throughout the season. They will be returned to the coaches at the end of the season. If any issued uniform items are lost the player will be responsible for the cost of replacing them.

Travel Attire

Away-game travel attire will consist of team-issued warm-ups and uniforms only, or other athletic attire with school logo and colors. Clothing should be an appropriate size and style for playing and traveling in. If coaches deem clothing to be inappropriate, we will have a discreet conversation and explain our reasons. If the problem persists beyond a first warning, we will reach out to parent/guardians and the player will be asked to leave the team event if appropriate attire cannot be supplied.

D. Player Behavior & Conduct

Hazing- Hazing, in any form, is not condoned by MVRHS and its coaching staff. We, the Field Hockey coaching staff, aim to create a team atmosphere of inclusion, respect and equality. We do not expect it to happen within our team and we expect each player to do their part to ensure it does not exist. If you are unsure about any behavior that might be considered hazing, please speak to a coach or school staff member without fear of any retribution. Any conduct which can be identified as “hazing”, as outlined in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts General Law 269: 17, 18, 19 MUST be reported to a coach or administrator. Failure to do so is also a crime that can be penalized by a fine and team dismissal.

School Attendance Policy- Players are expected to be punctual and present for all classes. If marked absent or late to school (after 8:00am), the student will not be allowed to practice or play that day. Recurrent issues may result in dismissal from the team.

Tardiness & Turnout to Practice- Players are expected to arrive to the playing field in a timely manner, dressed and ready to play, unless they have an approved excuse. Please report any reasons for tardiness or absence to a coach **in advance**, if at all possible. Tardiness or absence without an approved excuse may result in losing playing time at the coach's discretion. We plan our practice sessions with the understanding that we will be starting on time and working with focus and intention throughout! Coming late or leaving early can become disruptive- please plan to be present and on time.

Academics- Student athletes should always aim to perform to the best of their ability in both areas of their school lives, but academics come first. If a player is struggling or needs remedial help in a subject, and field hockey makes this difficult, they should not hesitate to reach out to their coaches to discuss how to accommodate this. If they are struggling to balance sports and academics, we would love to help be a part of the solution. We recognize the demands of playing a high school sport but we want to help our players find ways to organize and plan for these challenges, rather than feel overwhelmed. We want to help mold dedicated, well-rounded and organized young student athletes who can arise to similar challenges beyond their high school career with success. If academics are suffering, their participation in our season may be limited or suspended.

Behavior- When a player joins this team, they become an ambassador of this team both on and off the field. Therefore we expect them to model responsible, respectful and mature behavior at all times both in and out of school. This includes decisions that they make in their social and personal lives. If behavior and team representation is disrespectful or anti-social, we will first address it with the player and their parent/guardians in an attempt to resolve the issue. We want everyone to succeed in their high school careers and being part of this team is one way that they can develop greater leadership skills and self confidence, as well as work toward a common goal as a part of a team. I hope they will take this responsibility seriously and make the most of their time on our team and in this school community.

Please feel free to ask for clarification or reach out to discuss any concerns you might have at any point. If you feel there is an issue that is happening beyond the field, or that warrants more than the coach's intervention, we encourage you to speak to a trusted school counselor or administrator. But please allow and encourage student athletes to attempt to resolve their own issues independently before stepping in to help. Often, an early, face to face conversation will be much more successful than an email from a parent to a third-party school administrator!

Use of Drugs/Alcohol/Prohibited Substances

The Athletic Handbook details its Chemical Health Policy on page 6- please read this carefully. We expect all our athletes to take this policy seriously and make informed decisions if/when they face a difficult choice. When you join this team you make the commitment to following all athletic handbook policies.

Social Media/Texting/Online communication

Occasionally, team members elect to use a form of online communication such as group text, or chat app, or to socially interact on social media with team members. Players are not required to join these platforms nor should they feel pressured by peers to do so: it is their choice to what extent they want to participate. Coaches will have no oversight over these platforms, but we encourage them to be used responsibly and with the intention of being another way to communicate when not physically together. If anyone feels that a team chat or other form of social media is being abused or used to cause any disrespect, harm or negativity, then please communicate this to a coach or trusted adult. We do not condone this behavior and we want to make sure all field hockey related spaces remain safe and welcoming.

Coach Communication

In order to pass on pertinent and changing information, the coaches use the Remind App- it allows us (coaches only) to send text messages with important information and updates throughout the season. We ask all players to sign up for the app and also at least one parent/guardian within their household.

How to contact us:

Please use the Remind App or email for non-urgent communication or for leaving a message outside of working hours. We are regular people with full time jobs and families in addition to coaching this team, so allow us a grace period in responding to you. Season is a busy time and we sometimes need to “turn off” in the evenings and on weekends/days off. Please be understanding and know that we care very much about our team and will do our best to listen and support you!

While we want to be responsive, immediately before and after a game are not good times to communicate— we are often focusing on the events ahead/past and trying to do our best to prepare and/or process with the team. Please be aware of this when considering when to reach out.

Head Coach: Becky Nutton
email: rjnutton@gmail.com
cell: 484 387 2646

Assistant Coach: Kristen Lepine
email: mvvt2013@comcast.net
cell: 802 535 9752

JV Coach: Kendall Robinson

email: krobinson@mvyps.org
cell: 508 939 0683

Team Ethos

We, as a team (coaches, players, supportive families) must have some common goals when undertaking this new season. We don't only come together to play the game of field hockey- we are here to support each other in many ways as we strive to get better, stronger, more informed, more perceptive and more embedded in a community. As we get to know our players, we can adapt our coaching and planning to reach the current team's best potential. But at the center of our mission each season are the following goals:

Goal 1: Be committed to Growth

-A growth mindset utilizes positive self-talk, setting challenging targets and finding ways to work toward them, encouraging those around you to grow and asking questions and accepting constructive feedback. Be open to making mistakes and don't give up! Practice with intention and be a student of the game!

Goal 2: Value your time on this team

-You join this group of diverse individuals and commit yourself to common goals. Whether you are on the field or off- you matter and so do your teammates. Have respect for others and for yourself. Show up on time, plan ahead, hold each other accountable, take care of your equipment, take responsibility for your actions on and off the field.

Goal 3: Be authentic to YOU

-This experience is what you make of it- find your strengths and add them to the pot! We want to hear you develop your voice and help you find your confidence in this setting. Learn at your own pace and contribute to the whole with what makes you unique. Don't hide in the crowd- fill your own space and be a part of this bigger unit. We are only as strong as the individuals that make up this team, so find your POWER and don't give it up!

By reading the team expectations and code of conduct, and continuing to commit to this team and this season, I agree to do my best to follow them in this 2023 Field Hockey Season. Let's Go Vineyard!!!