



# CANSkate & PreCANSkate

## Parent Handbook

PRESENTING  
PARTNER



**ONLY THE BEST**  
can bring out their best



Available on our Club Website: [www.ancasterskatingclub.ca](http://www.ancasterskatingclub.ca)



## **Welcome to the Ancaster Skating Club 2015 – 2016 season!**

We are proud to be a Skate Canada Member Club, delivering quality Learn to Skate programs for the past 25+ years in the Ancaster Community. Please be sure to visit our club website for information about schedules, registration, monthly calendar and other important updates: [www.ancasterskatingclub.ca](http://www.ancasterskatingclub.ca)

### **Our Board, Club Administrator & Info Desk in the Lobby**

Our Board members are made up of dedicated Volunteers from the Community. They are elected at the Annual General Meeting. All registered Club members (or their legal guardian) have a right to vote at that meeting. The Front desk in the lobby is manned by Volunteer parent/skater members, or our Club Administrator. We take this time to thank our Board and Club Administrator for their tireless efforts to maintain and improve the quality of this skating Club.

### **Our Coaches**

Our Coaches are Professional Coaches trained by Skate Canada. These Coaches must have personally achieved specific levels of Skate Canada tests before applying to train as a Coach. Coaches are required to register to Skate Canada every year as a Coach, must have valid First Aid certification and undergo an in depth security check on a regular basis that is administered through Skate Canada. There are several levels of certification that Coaches may take, depending on their desires and the types of skaters they teach.

### **Program Coordinators & Head Coaches**

Each session has a Head Coach for CANSKATE and a Head Coach for PRECANSKATE. These Coaches manage the session, communicate with parents, assist with the skaters and are your first line of communication if you have questions or concerns. They also help getting your child back to you to go to the washroom, etc. There is also the CANSKATE/PRECAN Coordinator who is available as well to answer your questions either during or after the session, but please speak to the Head Coach first.

### **Program Assistants**

Our Program Assistant Volunteers wear red vests on the ice. They give their time to help the Coaches on and off the ice. They assist with warm up and cool down, help the younger skaters where needed, can be a buddy to a nervous skater, help with set up by bringing out the teaching aids and toys and help put them away again.

A Program Assistant can be any age, over the age of 10 years. They must be registered with our Skating Club and meet the requirements set by the Skating Club.

High school students are welcome to apply and can earn their Mandatory Volunteer hours thorough volunteering with the Club. We respect that it is not always possible to offer your volunteer services every week. If you can offer part time volunteer hours, please email our club administrator at: [info@ancasterskatingclub.ca](mailto:info@ancasterskatingclub.ca) or inquire at the Front desk in the lobby.

# What to Expect on a CANSkate/PreCan Skating session?

## First Day

First Day is always a bit chaotic. Your skater will arrive at the arena and **check in to the Front desk**. Please pick up and attach your skaters **Name Tag** to their outer clothing where is easily visible. The Name Tag may have a color sticker on it, or it may not. Returning skaters may be pre grouped into colors. Not to worry, by the end of first day, all skaters will have color stickers on their Name Tags to show what group they are in. At the end of the session, name tags are removed and we keep them for you to pick up each week.

Please then proceed to the **designated dressing room or benches in the arena area to put skates on, not** in the arena lobby.

**Skaters must then wait at the rink doors, until the Coaches invite them to take the ice.**

At the end of Warm Up (see next page), all skaters will move to centre ice. Pre grouped skaters will move into their groups, new skaters will be assessed and moved into a color group suitable to their skating level.

You will see some skaters being moved around throughout the first few weeks as we find the best balance of skaters for each group. Throughout the season, skaters also move to different groups as they achieve Stage badges and progress to a new level.

## What happens if I think my child is in the wrong group or I have questions during the session?

There are people that you can talk to on session: The Head Coach and the CanSkate/PreCan Coordinator. We will assess that child and provide an explanation as to placement or move the skater as needed. Skaters are grouped by ability. A reminder that some groups have more than one stage of skater in that group.

## What do I do when my child keeps wanting to come off the ice?

We need to establish why your child wants to keep leaving the ice. With your assistance, we will work on a plan to keep your child comfortable and on the ice for longer periods.

## Where Do Parents Sit?

Please use the warm viewing area or the stadium seating. Please do not use the hockey player seating or penalty boxes (it is our secure area for first aid) or come on to the ice, only skaters are insured in the event of injury.

## What happens if I need to leave the arena?

A parent or guardian must be present in the arena or lobby at all times when their child is on the ice for emergencies, toileting, reassuring hugs, etc.

In the rare event that you cannot stay for your child's session and do not have a substitute parent who can look out for your child, please let the Front Desk know and provide them with a number where you can be reached should there be an emergency.

## Can I take Pictures?

We appreciate the importance of photo opportunities. When taking pictures of your child, please be respectful of the privacy concerns of others. We also request that you do not use flash photography.



## How Does A CanSkate Session Run?

All Ancaster Skating Club CANSKATE skating sessions are broken up into 5 segments, each lasting about 10 minutes:

### 1. Warm up

Skaters arrive on the ice and immediately begin skating around the perimeter of the ice, following the Coach leading the warm up. Help is available for unsure skaters.

Skaters skate around the perimeter of the rink. Music is played from the overhead speakers and there are choreographed movements for the skaters to follow. This year, skaters will be listening to the voice directions embedded in the music tracks to know what to do with their feet. As an example: “skate forward” or “glide on your right foot “. They will still need to watch the Coach leading the warm up to know what to do with their arms.

At times, the Coach will change the direction, or the skaters may need to follow the Coach on a path through the centre of the ice or around the circles. Skaters need to be watching the Coach leading the warm up for these cues.

At the end of warm up, skaters may be called into the centre if there are messages to relay, or they may be sent directly to their color groups.

### 2. Lesson time

There are 3 lessons of about 10 minutes each. Each lesson addresses a Skate Canada Fundamental Skill.

**Balance, Control & Agility are the 3 Fundamental Skills.** Each Fundamental skill has increasingly more complex requirements as the skater progresses through the 6 Stages.

Skate Canada has trained all Coaches on the desired requirements to pass each individual skill.

Coaches will stay in their Fundamental Skill area for 4 week rotations. Skaters will have a lesson based on their ability level with each of the 3 Coaches that day.

Assessment is weekly and ongoing for all skaters. Every 4 weeks, Coaches also do a mini assessment to check progress. Twice a year, before Christmas break and at year end, Skate Canada report cards are given to your skater.

### 3. Circuits

Circuits are the way that Skate Canada requires Coaches to teach their lessons. A circuit is a series of skills joined together without a break in skating. Skaters can start anywhere on the circuit and not miss doing a skill as they will skate on a repeating pattern.

The benefit is that there is over 90% movement on the part of the skater, allowing for greater practice time in each lesson through repetition. The Coach can more easily assess and give feedback to a skater as there are more opportunities for the Coach to see the skill being practiced.

### **Rotation between lessons**

At the end of a lesson, skaters will take a short break by skating around the perimeter before returning to their group for a new lesson. At this item, the skater will go to a different Coach on a different part of the ice.

### ***How does the skater know where to go for the next lesson?***

Skaters have a color sticker on their name badges after first day. This sticker corresponds to a color flag on the ice. Skaters look for and follow their color flag to their new teaching area.

### **4. Fun Zone**

Each week, **Skate Canada Fun Zone** activities are embedded in a Fundamental Skill class. Your skater still receives a lesson on that Fundamental skill, but will learn in a different way. They may still skate on a circuit, but may not. You may see them practicing with toys in that class. Each set of toys can have a different purpose. As an example, throwing a bean bag into a ring requires the skater to use concentration to manage hand eye coordination while maintaining their balance while shifting back to forward to throw, all at the same time. It is just another way to learn to balance skills. That same set of bean bags can be used when skating in the Control Fundamental by putting them on the skater's hands to help the skater control their back while skating backward and better feel the side to side motion.

### **5. Cool Down and Group Activity**

Skaters move to the middle for group activity and cool down activity. Each week, these activities will vary. This time gives the skater time to practice what they have learned that day in new and fun ways before they go home.



# How Does a PRECanSkate Session Run?

Every PreCanSkate ASC session runs for 40 minutes. Sessions begin at the same time as the CanSkate sessions, but end 10 minutes earlier.

## The First 10 Minutes – Off the Ice

Skaters meet on the pad for **Off Ice Warm Up**. Tuesday and Saturdays skaters meet at the far end of the ice surface. Thursday skaters meet just inside the rink doors. Off Ice Warm Up is dedicated to gently warming up the muscles while practicing the moves they will be doing on the ice, such as “ Fall Down, Get Up “ and Marching steps.

## On Ice Session

Skaters then move onto the ice surface. Each day is different as your child grows and learns new skills.

At the beginning of the season, emphasis is placed on learning to stand on their own and to learn to get up on their own. Once your child can stand, they will learn to walk forward and backward and learn to stop, jump and turn.

As your child begins to acquire these skills, you will see your child following a path drawn on the ice for that week. This path is called a circuit. Along the path, your child will practice different skills. These skills are a part of the Skate Canada Fundamental Skills called Balance ( forward skating and balancing on one foot ), Control ( backward skating and stops ) and Agility ( jumps and turns).

The final few minutes is dedicated to Cool Down Activities. This may be participation in things like Action Songs, fun moves, or gentle stretching.

## Things that can happen:

Your child may get moved from one group to another group to keep skaters of similar ability together. You will see this more often in the first few weeks as each child finds their own skill level.

Your child may cry and be less than happy. Encourage and “talk up“ skating at home. Often, this is your child’s first time alone. Remind them that you are right there off the ice and can see them. Sometimes the Coaches will give you back your child for a few minutes, for them to settle down and reset. Encourage your child to return to the ice and try again.

**Bathroom Break:** Yes, you just got the gear on and they have to go! Sometimes it is a real need and sometimes it is a way to take a break. Parents or guardians are asked to stay in the arena and be available at all times for bathroom breaks, hugs, reassurance and emergencies.

**Food and Hydration:** we recommend that young children be fed and hydrated before and after the session.

# EQUIPMENT



**Skates**



- **Skates with a single blade** (not bob skates or plastic assists on the blade ).
- Types of skates: figure skates, hockey skates or SofTec skates are good choices.
- Molded plastic skates, usually with a ratchet type binding are not recommended for 2 reasons. Often, there is only a single ratchet binding across the foot, so the foot is not properly supported inside the skate and can shift around. As well, the molded boot does not allow for the skater to bend their knees easily due to their inflexible boot design.
- Skates are generally one size smaller than the skater's shoes size, except for SofTecs. They are the same as the skaters shoe size.
- Skates need to be fairly snug fitting, with good ankle support. The sign of a "broken at the ankle" skate is one where there are creases in the boot just under or at the ankle. It is recommended not to buy a used skate if it has creases when the skater puts it on.
- Skates should have a bit of "grow room", about 3/8" at the end of the skate. Skates that are either too large or too small will make balance and skating more difficult to master.

***Please speak to one of the Coaches if you need a sizing check or other concerns.***

## **Skate Fitting:**

### ***Option 1***

- Skates should be fitted and worn with a pair of fairly thin socks or tights, the same pair that will be worn skating
- Pull the laces very loose from the bottom to the top of the skate to get the skate on
- Without tightening the laces, slide the foot forward to the front of the boots so that the toes touch the end but are not cramped ( they should not curl under )
- Have the skater stand with the weight evenly distributed over both feet
- Bend knees, but do not lift the heels
- The space at the back should be no more than a pencils width.

### ***Option 2***

- Another option: pull out the insert in the skate. Have the skater stand down on the insert, leaving about 1/4" of room at the back of the insert. There should be about 3/8" between the end of the toes and the end of the insert.

## Lacing Skates

- Skates need to be laced snugly for the best foot control inside the boot
- Cotton laces are much easier to lace up than waxed laces☺
- Start at the bottom set of laces and pull outward ( not upward ) with each set of laces
- You know they are tight enough when you can't get your fingers under the laces after they are tightened
- Remember to lace through all the holes and around all the hooks
- Do not tie extra laces around the back of the ankle or underneath the boot. Tuck extra lacing inside the skaters pants or cut down the laces and tie a knot in the end, so the laces can't come out of holes

## Sharpening

- Blades should be sharpened before first day and after about every 40 hours of skating, or if the skater has walked on concrete.
- On figure skates, **do not remove the bottom pick**. It is part of the design of the skate and essential for proper balance.

## Care of the blades and skates

- Blades should be dried with an (old) cotton terry towel or similar at the end of every session.
- Soaker cotton blade covers should be put on the blades to cover them and soak up any extra moisture to prevent rusting. Or, store the skates in clean old towels made into a bag big enough for the skates to fit into.
- Skates should be stored in the house (not the garage or trunk of the car) to prevent the blades rusting from the changes in temperature. Ideally, they should be open to the air and not left in a closed bag all week. (They smell better that way too!)
- What to do with stinky skates: open them to the air as much as possible, Lysol antibacterial spray or similar and/or a good running shoe deodorizer are good choices.



## Skate Guards – **are a must!**

- **Should** be worn as protection of the blades when walking to and from the ice surface
- **Should not** be left on the blades when the skates are being stored
- **Need to be** available with the parents. If there is a Fire Alarm or other emergency, such as electrical failure, skaters must leave the ice and may be required to leave the premises promptly. Walking on concrete surfaces will make the blades unfit to skate on, possibly permanently.

**Immediate application of skate guards will enable you to safely evacuate your child from an unsafe situation in a safe and prompt manner.**





## Helmets

- **CSA approved hockey helmet.** A face mask is a **requirement for the PreCanSkate** program , and is *optional* for the CANSKATE (A/B) program. It is recommended that the helmet be a proper fit for your child's head for maximum protection. A reminder that the chin strap must be done up properly, even when wearing a face mask.
- CSA approved hockey helmets are mandatory for skaters participating in Stages 1 – 5. Once Stage 5 has been achieved, the helmet may be removed at the discretion of the parent.

## Clothing

- **Gloves or mittens** - Almost all are fine choices except not the ones that look like fuzzy chenille. Those are super cute, but *really* stick to the ice and have to be peeled off the ice when your child falls! When your child falls, the natural instinct is to put out the hands and open the fingers wide to break the fall. Gloves that restrict that movement or no gloves will cause the skater to fall awkwardly or try not to fall, increasing the risk of injury.
- **A warm jacket** and/or layering on top are always good choices. A jacket must be at least partially zipped up, instead of being totally unzipped. This is to avoid a child falling and catching his/her hands in the material.
- **Hoodies** are fine, but the hood must remain off the helmet so that there is clear peripheral vision for the skater
- **Scarves** around the neck must be tucked into the jacket. Again, to avoid the child catching his/her hands in them when falling.
- **Pants** Snowpants may be too constricting for skaters to be able to get up easily off the ice. A layered jogging type pant and a wind pant is a good choice. Tights or thermal underwear are also good choices as a base layer. Jeans can be cold, absorb water when wet and do not like to dry out quickly.
- **Layering works best** Jogging pants or similar with a wind pant over top works well. A winter jacket on top will keep your child warm. Scarves must be tucked into the jacket. Hoods and hats over top of the helmet are not recommended for safety reasons.
- If your child has ear problems, and you can't get ear protection on underneath the helmet, please let us know so we can advise how to get the most peripheral vision possible.

## Injuries

All Skate Canada Coaches have First Aid Training, as specified by Skate Canada.

- If your child is injured, wait☺. The Coaches will assess the child on the ice and determine whether it is safe to move the child. **Please be aware, you are not allowed to come onto the ice surface in your street shoes. You do not have insurance through Skate Canada in case of injury.**
- If it is safe, we will move a child to either the First Aid bench area or the Parents side of the rink for continued treatment and then call for you to come to your child. Your love, comfort and encouragement at this time is greatly appreciated.

In consultation with you, you will decide whether it is in the child's best interest to go to the hospital, seek further treatment or call 911.

- If the child is unable to be moved, we will speak to you immediately.

## RINK EMERGENCIES, INCLEMENT WEATHER & CLUB COMMUNICATION

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If there is loss of electricity, all skaters must immediately leave the ice surface until power and lighting is restored.

If there is a Fire Alarm, all skaters, parents and ASC personnel **must immediately evacuate the building** as directed by the City of Hamilton Arena Staff and Fire Department.

Immediate application of **skate guards** will enable you to safely evacuate your child from an unsafe situation in a safe and prompt manner.

Put on your child's skate guards or carry your child out of the building as directed by Personnel. Do not stop to remove equipment. The safety of our parents, skaters and ASC team is our primary concern. Equipment can be replaced – you cannot.

**Rink closures due to power outages or inclement weather** (especially in the winter):

We will try our best to post updates on the club website and send you an email via our club "eBlast communication" in advance, be sure to check our website before heading to the rink!

As per our club's terms of agreement, classes will **not** be rescheduled.



## QUESTIONS

Please direct questions to the Front Desk in the lobby or email our club administrative coordinator directly at: [info@ancasterskatingclub.ca](mailto:info@ancasterskatingclub.ca)