



CanSkate & PreCanSkate

Parent Handbook



Available on our Club Website:

flamboroskatingclub.com



Welcome to the Flamboro Skating Club 2023-2024 season!

We are proud to be a Skate Canada Member Club, delivering quality Learn to Skate programs for the past 40+ years in the Flamborough Community. Please be sure to visit our club website www.flamboroskatingclub.com for information about schedules, registration, monthly calendar, and other important updates.

Our Club

The Flamboro Skating Club is committed to growing, developing, and encouraging skaters of all levels and abilities to strive for success in a positive, supportive environment. We are a non-profit organization, directed solely by dedicated volunteers from our community. We provide a wide variety of programs including PreCanSkate, CanSkate and Adult CanSkate programs, the City of Hamilton's Start-to-Skate program, GroupSTAR, and STAR Skate. We have a program for everyone!

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 with 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.

CanSkate Director

Our Canskate Director oversees our PreCanSkate, CanSkate, Adult CanSkate, Start-to-Skate, and GroupSTAR programs.

Program Assistants

These volunteers give their time to help the Coaches on and off the ice. They assist with warm up and cool down, provide support for the younger skaters where needed, can be a buddy to a nervous skater, and help with setting up and tidying up teaching aids and toys.

What to Expect on a CanSkate/PreCan Skating session?

First Day

The first day is always a bit chaotic. Please make sure you arrive 15 minutes prior to your scheduled time. You and your skater will arrive at the arena and pick up and attach your skater's **Name Tag** to their outer clothing where it is easily visible. The Name Tag may have a color sticker on it, or it may not. By the second week, 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 rooms or benches in the arena area to put skates on, not** in the arena lobby.

Skaters must then wait at the on-ice 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?

If you have any questions, please direct them to the CanSkate Director. 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 (these areas are reserved for coach supplies or to assist a skater should one become injured). Please DO NOT come onto 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 CanSkate Director 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 Flamboro Skating Club CANSKATE skating sessions are broken up into the following:

1. Warm Up – 10 min

Skaters arrive on the ice and immediately begin skating around the perimeter of the ice, following the Coaches and Program Assistants 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.

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 colour groups.

2. Lesson time – 30 min

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.

Skaters will have a lesson based on their ability level at each Fundamental Skill section of the ice.

Assessment is weekly and ongoing for all skaters. Twice a year, before December break and at the end of March, Skate Canada report cards will be digitally distributed to your skater as a pdf copy via Uplifter.

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. They are drawn on the ice for skaters to follow. Skaters can start anywhere on the circuit and not miss any skill as they will skate on a repeating pattern.

The benefit of circuits 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 practised.

Rotation between lessons

At the end of a lesson, skaters will take a short break by skating around the perimeter (fast track) in a clockwise direction before returning to their group for a new lesson. Skaters will be cued to switch stations via a music cue.

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

Skaters have a colour sticker on their name badges. This sticker corresponds to a colour sign on the ice. Skaters look for and follow their colour sign to their new teaching area. Coaches and Program Assistants will guide any skaters who need assistance finding their group.

4. Challenge Zone

Skate Canada Challenge 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 or may not skate on a circuit. 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, all the while maintaining their balance (shifting back and forward) to throw, 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 placing them on the skater's head to help the skater control their backward skating.

5. Cool Down and Group Activity – 5 min

Skaters move to the middle for group activity and cool down activity. This time gives the skaters time to practice what they have learned that day in new and fun ways before they go home.

Circuit



Challenge Zone



How Does a PreCanSkate and START TO SKATE Session Run?

Every PreCanSkate and Start-to-Skate session runs for 30 minutes.

The First 5 Minutes – Off Ice

Off Ice Warm Up is dedicated to gently warming up the muscles while practicing the skills they will be doing on the ice, such as “Fall Down, Stand 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 balance on their own and to learning to stand up on their own. Once your child can stand, they will learn to walk forward and backward, 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:

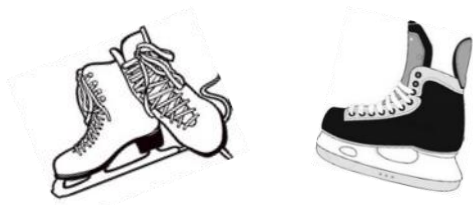
Your child may get moved from one group to another group to keep skaters of similar ability together. You will see this more often in the first few weeks as each child finds their own skill level.

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. It is Flamboro Skating Club policy to remove the skater from the ice when their emotional escalation cannot be settled by a coach alone. 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

- 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 two reasons. 1) The foot is not properly supported inside the skate and can shift around. 2) 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 skater’s 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 only 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 CanSkate Director or 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 and place it on the ground. 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 skater's pants or cut down the laces and tie a knot in the end, so the laces can't come out of holes
- Be sure to listen to your skater! Some skater's prefer skates slightly tighter or looser.

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 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! Gloves absolutely must be worn at all times to prevent injury. Extra gloves are kept in the players box for anyone to borrow if needed.
- **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 their 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** are not recommended, but if worn, they must be around the neck and tucked into the jacket. Again, to avoid the child catching their hands in them when falling.
- **Pants** Snow pants may be too constricting for skaters to be able to get up easily off the ice. Skaters must be able to bend their knees to reach their toes to ensure they can stand up independently. 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.

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 to 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.

RINK EMERGENCIES, INCLEMENT WEATHER & CLUB COMMUNICATION

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 FSC 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 FSC 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, social media, and send you an email 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 CanSkate Director
fscanskatedirector@gmail.com