



*Dear Parents of 2016/2017 born players;*

*Thank you for a great start to the hockey season. As you are aware, Nanaimo Minor Hockey is making some changes to the format of the U8 and U9 divisions this year. NMHA has chosen to field four U9 Division 1 teams and six U9 Division 2 teams. These teams will include players from the 2016 and 2017 birth years. This format has been widely adopted throughout Hockey Canada and is aimed to have players grouped with other players of similar skill. This results in all players spending more time engaged in the game, having the opportunity to make plays, and will result in better skill development and more fun for players of all skill levels.*

*We are currently working through the process of placing players in the proper division, and once that is complete, we will begin to form teams. With a record number of players registered in the U9 division this year this is a complex process, and Nanaimo Minor Hockey has developed a criteria for rating and placing players. Teams will then be formed with a strong focus on balanced skill levels, balancing coaching and management support, and ensuring inclusivity.*

*As we begin to form teams, please note that we are unable to take requests for placement. We ask that you trust the process Nanaimo Minor Hockey has established as it prioritizes the success of all involved. This may mean that your player is on a team with a new coach or is away from friends they have played with before. This is an important part of these young players' development, and we are confident that they will be placed on a team that will allow them to be successful.*

*We are fortunate to have the support of a great group of coaches, managers, and administrators and while the changes this year may take some getting used to we are confident that the outcome will be best for all involved.*

*More communication will follow later this week once teams are formed. Looking forward to seeing you all around the rink.*

*Brad Knight, U6-U9 Director*