

HOCKEY ACADEMY



GRIMSHAW PUBLIC SCHOOL

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Dan Archer

The announcement for Holy Family Hockey Academy in the 2024-2025 school year first came on May 15, after the Holy Family Catholic Regional Division Board of Trustees voted to support the initiative. The day after, Grimshaw Public School announced their hockey academy for the 2024-2025 season on May 16 through social media.

Both academies were for students from grades 7-9, and they each had spaces for 25 participants.

Attention to Holy Family Hockey Academy developed after Principal Terry Hogan and teacher Carson Ewing went to a council meeting held by Town of Grimshaw on May 22. They requested to use the Grimshaw Huskies change room at the arena in the Mile Zero Regional Multiplex for the first run of the academy from September 2024 to March 2025. Their request is contingent on the Huskies not returning to play in the NPHL this year.

Kyle Weaver is heading Grimshaw Public School Hockey Academy. Weaver teaches physical education and English Language Arts at the PRSD school. He expressed enthusiasm for PRSD's hockey academy, which will be open to hockey players at different levels. "I think it's going to be a nice split of kids who've already played minor hockey. It will be like extra ice time for them to develop their skills. The other half will be kids who've never played before and want to learn to play and build their skills."

Weaver stressed that the timing for each announcement of both academies at the Grimshaw Shared School Facility was accidental. "The academy has been in the works for a while now. This is my second year here. One of the first things I said last year was that it would be so awesome to have a hockey academy. We have this beautiful space with a school attached to a rink; it just makes sense."

Weaver was asked if PRSD might consider working with HFCRD's hockey academy.

"It's a hard thing to collaborate on, because they're a different division with a different timetable. It would be awesome to collaborate in the future, especially for next year," replied Weaver.

Both programs from HFCRD and PRSD are in their pioneering stages at present.

Weaver is passionate about hockey. He was involved with Peace River Minor Hockey in his youth. Weaver played hockey when he attended Northwestern Polytechnic and the University of Alberta.

"I'm still playing in rec leagues. This is my main sport—the sport I care about the most. I'm very passionate about hockey," Weaver said.

Weaver described what his students will learn at Grimshaw Public School Hockey Academy.

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DAN ARCHER

Kyle Weaver is teaching future hockey stars at Grimshaw Public School Hockey Academy in the 2024-2025 school year.

"They're going to be learning anything from fundamental skills like skating, puck handling and shooting and we'll do specific skill sessions."

In addition, the students will build up their skills and use them for offensive game strategies. They'll be involved in fitness training related to hockey skills. Students at Grimshaw Public School Hockey Academy will focus on balance, not just strength and cardio training.

"There's a lot of hockey-specific workouts too that we can teach the kids that are in minor hockey that maybe they haven't been exposed to yet," Weaver said.

When hockey academy students can no longer use the ice after March, they'll be involved in dryland

training to continue improving their agility and balance. Weaver referred to agility and balance as "two things that apply to hockey that aren't usual features in regular workouts."

After March, when the ice is gone, academy students will also continue strategy building as it relates to hockey. They may also play ball hockey. The choice will be up to the students if they continue to choose the hockey academy as one of their option courses.

"Last year, Grimshaw had zero hockey academies, and now we have two. It is very exciting. Kids who have never had the opportunity to build their skills up the way they wanted to and were too intimidated to get

into minor hockey right away are committing to it. This is a way to introduce new kids to hockey," Weaver said.

Students with all levels of capabilities in hockey were invited to join the academy, even if they had no previous experience with the sport, as Weaver confirmed. "If you've never laced up skates before, you're welcome to join. We'll work on building your skills."

Kids will be divided into groups from day one to day two. Each group will play at the rink for two days a week, from 8:15 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. "Ideally, they'll get on the ice twice a week. They'll have three to four hours of ice time," Weaver said.