

# Houston Homeschool Athletics

## Cross Country & Off-Season Track

### Athlete & Parent Handbook

#### **Introduction**

Houston Homeschool Athletics (HHA) is a non-profit 501(c)3 organization formed to provide competitive amateur sports for homeschooled children, ages 8 to 18. HHA will provide, under Christian leadership and guidelines, competition with teams from other types of programs--homeschool, private school, and public school.

HHA's mission is to compete in amateur sports at the highest level and be a witness for our Lord Jesus Christ. We are a parent-run, family-oriented organization that wants to encourage and develop all kids, of all levels, not only in their athletic endeavors, but in their overall development as young men and women.

#### **Eligibility**

- To participate in Houston Homeschool Athletics, you agree that your athlete's education is parent-directed (**not attending a private, public, or charter school**). The parent(s) or legal guardian shall be directly involved in the student's education, fulfilling the role of headmaster by (a) Selecting the curriculum (b) Selecting and/or approving course materials and study schedules. (c) Selecting tutors, co-op classes, teachers, dual enrollment options, and/or other educational resources.
- The athlete must be between 8 and 18 as of September 1 of current school year.
- Athletes may only compete for 4 years at the High School level.

#### **Communication**

Primary method of communication: GroupMe App: HHA XC & Track and Field

Should you have a question or statement that applies to only your athlete, contact your coach directly via DM on GroupMe or their cell phone number below.

**Cross Country Head Coach:** Reagan Reeves (979) 820-8183

**Off Season Track – Head Sprint Coach:** Dante Robinson (936) 820-8183

**General Admin Questions:** David McClelland (409) 782-7291 or Nikky Howard (281) 705-4205

HHA Email Address: [maverickstrackncc@yahoo.com](mailto:maverickstrackncc@yahoo.com)

HHA Website <http://houstonhomeschoolathletics.com>

Social media or team threads: No derogatory or negative remarks about other athletes, parents or coaches will be tolerated. There will be disciplinary action. Do not post anything that you would not feel comfortable saying directly to the team or a particular person.

## **Team Assignments**

- Teams will be determined based upon the athlete's age, gender, and skill level.
- Each meet will specify how many athletes per team can run in each division.
- Occasionally we will move an athlete from one division to another as needed to complete a roster (usually to simply fill a temporary need due to injury, illness, or scheduling conflicts).
- Our goal will always be to have all athletes compete as much as possible, however, meet registration will not be guaranteed. Athletes are encouraged to ask - "What could I do to improve?" if they would like to be able to move up to a more advanced team or be registered in more meets.

## **Practice**

- HHA Cross Country and all Off-Season Training practices will be held on:
  - Mondays and Thursdays, 6-8 pm
  - Primarily at Bear Branch Sportsfields (5205 Research Forest Dr, The Woodlands, TX 77386). If location changes, you will be notified via GroupMe.
- Please arrive on time. PRACTICE IS IMPORTANT: practice is to teach both knowledge and skill, and to grow both athletes and teams. What you put in is what you will get out of it.
- If you arrive late to practice, please immediately head to do your warm-up and dynamic stretches/drills prior, then ask your coach for instructions on what to do next.
- Due to illness, vacations, injuries, etc., we understand there will be times that an athlete will miss practice. Since attendance is not taken, you do NOT have to notify anyone if you will not be attending a practice, or if you are running late.
- Athletes with fever or stomach flu (diarrhea and/or vomiting) within 24 hours of practice should not come to practice.
- If a practice needs to be cancelled, rescheduled, or needs a location/time change, a notification will be sent through the Group Me page by 4 pm that day.
- Be sure to be well hydrated and fueled prior to practice. Bring plenty of water to practice!

## **Meets**

General info:

- All meet registrations are decided by the coaches.
- XC meets are typically held on Saturdays and typically last from 7 am-Noon.
- Plan to arrive one hour before race time (to account for parking, warming up, and rolling starts. (Rolling starts: Meet directors give approximate start times, but each division starts when the previous one is completed.)
- Typical HS order: Var Boys, Var Girls, JV Boys, JV Girls
- Typical MS order: Div 1 Boys, Div 1 Girls, Div 2 Boys, Div 2 Girls
- High School XC Boys will run in a mix of 3200M and 5K races.
- High School XC Girls will mostly run in 3200M races and a few 5K races.
- Middle School XC athletes will run in a mix of 1, 1.5, and 2 mile races.
- HHA will compete against public, private, and homeschool teams.
- Bring plenty of water, snacks, sunscreen, & sunglasses (if desired)

Athletes:

- Arrive fully dressed for the meet & bring appropriate shoes.
- Arguing with the officials, other teammates, or coaches will not be tolerated.
- Begin warming up about 30 minutes prior to your event. This may be done anywhere that does not interfere with the course.
- Do not go to the start line unless you are about to race.

- Do not go near the finish line unless you are racing. Bibs have timing chips in them. If you get too close to finish line before your race, it will mark you as raced and disqualify you from your actual race.

Parents:

- Be ready to assist if needed during the meet.
- Unless serving as a Tent Parent, please give priority to athletes and coaches to sit under the tent, so they can be in the shade prior to and after their race to recover.
- Parents, please DO NOT coach your child while the coaches are at practice or the meets. If you have ANY questions/concerns regarding coaching, please discuss them with their coach.

### **Safety Tips**

By following these safety and injury prevention guidelines, athletes can maintain optimal performance while minimizing the risk of injury. Listen to your body. If you feel pain, it is better to rest than risk injury.

- Ensure the track/running area is in good condition. Check for any potential hazards, such as uneven surfaces or debris, before training.
- Be mindful of weather conditions. Running in extreme heat or cold can increase injury risk.
- Avoid overtraining by taking rest days and ensuring adequate sleep (8-10 hrs./night) to allow the body to recover.
- Gradually increase intensity and duration of training to avoid overloading muscles, tendons, and joints. Sudden spikes in training volume can lead to overuse injuries.
- Apply techniques such as foam rolling, massage, or even ice/heat therapy to help with muscle recovery.
- Static stretching is important after intense runs.
- Mental stress can also impact physical performance and lead to injuries. Promote a positive mindset and coping strategies for athletes to manage competition pressure. When athletes have a negative mindset, they can lose the race before ever stepping on the track.
- Pay attention to the early signs of overuse injuries (e.g., sprains, strains, shin splints, tendinitis). If pain persists, consult a sports medicine professional.

### **Dress Code**

Practices

- Uniforms are not required for practice. They must be worn at meets. They can be purchased on the HHA website, or at first practice. Samples will be available to try on for sizing. Uniforms may be worn for multiple years. We do not change them each season.
- It is advised not to wear jewelry at practices OR meets.
- We desire the focus to be on running, not on what you are wearing. Please do not wear anything that would draw focus to the body instead of ability. Clothing should be breathable. Shirts should not show midriff. Shorts should be worn over biker shorts or leggings.
- Wear appropriate running shoes (no worn-out shoes, slip-on, or Velcro shoes should be worn).

## **Parent Expectations and Involvement**

HHA is a parent-run organization. There are several ways you can get involved:

- If you desire to help at practice, ask a coach what would best serve them.
- Parents must monitor siblings who are not participating.
- If you are not able to attend a meet, please assign an adult that is not a coach to look after your child and make medical decisions on your behalf if your child has a medical need.
- Parents are responsible for transportation to and from meets.
- Most coaches are parents. Talk to Coach Reeves if you have experience and are interested in coaching.
- Volunteer opportunities at practices and meets:
  - Track and record times/distances
  - Set up and take down the team tent
  - Be a team tent parent (corral athletes, notify athletes of next events, etc.)
  - Take pictures for social media / GroupMe
  - Plan/execute special events (end of season parties, team get-togethers)
  - Find/reserve group rates for hotels for out-of-town meets
  - Find discounts for student athletes on items related to running.
  - Find sponsors for the team

## **Travel**

- HHA's travel policy places the responsibility of most aspects of travel to meets and supervision of athletes on their parents.
- Parents are responsible for all costs for travel and meals for themselves as well as their athletes.
- Athletes who have a driver's license may drive themselves and their siblings to meets if their parents allow them.
- At no time may an athlete ride with a coach of the opposite sex unless traveling with the team or a portion of the team and with another adult.

## **Hotel Policies**

- Athletes must be with a parent or assigned guardian.
- TEAM hotel is suggested, but if you desire to stay at a different location, please be prompt to come to team events.
- All athletes are expected to be in their rooms and in bed at curfew. Unless a coach has designated a specific time, the default curfew will be 10:00 pm.
- There should be no one of the opposite sex in the hotel room with an athlete for any reason unless they are a relative.
- Athletes may not leave the hotel area at any time without permission from their parents or the parents with whom they are staying. Athletes should never be alone. Use the buddy system.

## **Team Fees**

XC Season fees pay for coaches, cross-country meets, equipment, park fees, liability insurance, and other misc. expenses.

### **Parent/Guardian Costs**

- Team Fees
- Uniform – covers jersey and shorts for athletes.
- Any travel expenses or meals for athletes.
- Apparel or accessories such as practice clothes, warm-ups, shoes, socks, or gym bags/backpacks.

### **Billing and Payment Policies**

- Costs: Current prices for Team fees and Uniforms are listed on the website.
- Payments: via credit card on the website, or by cash or check if paid in person. (Checks should be made out to Houston Homeschool Athletics. Please write the athlete's name in the memo line on any checks.) Do not mail cash.
- Late or Returned Item Fees: \$30.00 fee if the payment is not received within 10 days of the stated due date or if a check is returned.
- Refunds: If the participant becomes severely injured while competing or practicing with the organization and they cannot practice or compete for more than 2 months, then a partial refund will be given. The party responsible will still be required to pay the deposit (\$50 per athlete) and the uniform fee. Refunds will not be given if the parent/ athlete is asked to leave HHA or decides to discontinue.
- Delinquent Payments: An athlete who is delinquent with payments will not be placed on the roster until the fees are paid. If there is a financial hardship, contact the coach.

### **Parents to Coach Communication**

- Communicate your positive experiences with the coach or the team. If we are doing things right, then reinforce that by letting us know.
- Any information about your athlete's physical or emotional health that is pertinent to them participating on the team, please communicate.
- Any allergies, medication needs, or injuries are important to discuss.

### **Coaches need to be immediately informed of**

- Any issues involving use of drugs, alcohol, weapons, or sexual improprieties.
  - HHA recognizes that all forms of sexual abuse, assault or harassment with athletes are illegal and unethical, even when an athlete invites or consents to such behavior or involvement. HHA will not tolerate sexual or physical abuse of any of its staff or of participants. HHA regards the safety of the young athletes entrusted to our care and instruction as our highest priority. We do not tolerate physical behavior that compromises that priority.
- Athletes using inappropriate language, explicit content or sharing pornography with other athletes.

## **Houston Homeschool Athlete Code of Conduct**

As an athlete, my primary goal is to become the best athlete that I can be. I am responsible for my own actions and behavior.

### **Attitude:**

- I will conduct myself in a manner that is respectful to God, myself, my team, and to Houston Homeschool Athletics. Including any activities/ drills that leadership initiates.
- I will abstain from alcohol, illegal drugs, or tobacco during the season. In no way will I imply that I am violating this policy.
- I will participate with full effort and intensity.
- I will commit to my team by getting adequate sleep and healthy eating.

### **Communication:**

- I will avoid criticizing my teammates.
- I will avoid giving unsolicited coaching tips to teammates and defer responsibility to my coaches.
- I will refrain from posting or communicating negative comments about other athletes, coaches, parents, or the organization via texting, email, or social media.

### **Coachability:**

- I will accept decisions by my coaches, knowing that everyone cannot always compete.
- I will accept my role on the team and do what it takes for the team to succeed.

### **Practices/Meets:**

- I will be at practices and meets. I see it as a priority.
- I will proactively contact my coach as far as ahead of time as possible if I am unable to make it to a meet for which I had previously RSVP'd.
- I will commit to being ready to run at the scheduled practice start time.

## **HHA Parent Code of Conduct**

Parents are crucial to the success of Houston Homeschool Athletics and their athletes' Cross Country experience. HHA requires that the parent(s) of any athlete in our program sign this code of conduct contract. I therefore agree that:

### **Safety:**

- I will inform the coach of my athlete's physical, emotional, or other difficulties
- I will reinforce a sports environment that is free from drugs, tobacco, alcohol, and sexual content and I will refrain from their use at all practices and meets.

### **Sportsmanship:**

- I will respect the officials and their authority during meets. I will not yell or scream at officials and leave it up to the coach to resolve issues with the official or timekeeper.
- I will not coach my child during meets or practices; I will let the coach direct him/her.
- I will teach my child to participate by the rules.
- I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning.

### **Coaching:**

- I will not coach my child or other athletes during practices & meets unless I am the official coach.
- I understand that registration in meets will try to be afforded to all runners, but not necessarily in equal proportions. Meet/team registrations are the sole decision of the coach and may be influenced by discipline and skill.

### **Communication:**

- I understand that my athlete should first approach the coach if they have problems or concerns, and I will encourage them to do so.
- I will wait 24 hours after an issue with the coach to make that a productive conversation.
- I will refrain from discussing disagreements with athletes, other parents, coaches, or administration with my children or other parents.
- I will resolve conflicts in a Matthew 18 manner.
- I hereby authorize Houston Homeschool Athletics to post my athlete's name and picture on the private GroupMe page, HHA social media, or HHA website.

**Indemnification and Medical Authorization Statement** (agreed to on HHA registration):

In consideration of our child's participation in Houston Homeschool Athletics (HHA) sports:

We, the parents of the registered child, do hereby release, absolve and hold harmless the directors, coaches, medical attendants (if any), and adult leaders of HHA from any and all liability for all losses, damages or injuries occurring as a result of our child's participation in the association's activities, including travel to and from games, meets, practices, and tournaments.

Furthermore, we, the parents of the registered child, assume the risk of Covid-19/Coronavirus accidentally being spread at games, meets, practices, and tournaments and are participating willfully and without force; and we KNOWINGLY AND FREELY ASSUME ALL SUCH RISKS, both known and unknown, EVEN IF ARISING FROM THE NEGLIGENCE OF THE RELEASEES or others, and assume full responsibility for our participation.

We (parent and child participants) willingly agree to comply with the stated and customary terms and conditions for participation. If, however, we (parents and/or child) observe any unusual significant hazard during their presence or participation, we will remove ourselves from participation and bring such to the attention of the nearest official immediately.

We understand that reasonable precautions will be taken to make the programs safe and beneficial for all children, but that risk of injury cannot be eliminated entirely, and that this release is necessary for our children to participate in HHA activities or programs. We understand that HHA is a nonprofit organization and that HHA does not provide insurance for losses, damages or injuries which may occur because of our child's participation.

Furthermore, we hereby authorize, in the event of injury to our child(ren), any director, coach, medical attendant, or adult leader of HHA to consent to emergency medical treatment for our child when we cannot be contacted to give consent. Such medical treatment may include, without limitation, x-ray examination, anesthetic, medical, surgical examination or treatment and general hospital care. NO prior determination of life-threatening emergency or danger of serious or permanent injury resulting from delay of treatment need be made under this authorization. This authorization is given in advance of any specific diagnosis, treatment, or hospital care being required, and is given to provide authority and power on the part of a director or coach of the HHA program to give specific consent to any and all such examination, treatment, or hospital care.

We specifically give our consent for first aid treatment with ice packs, bandages, antibiotic ointment (Neosporin, Neomycin, Mycitracin, Bacitracin, and/or Polymyxin), or Hydrogen Peroxide.

## Appendix A: YOUTH Cross-Country NUTRITION GUIDE

### **DAY BEFORE A MEET**

#### **DO**

- Eat/Drink: Pasta, Noodles, Potatoes, Peanut Butter & Jelly Sandwiches, Bananas, Oranges, Toast, Angel Food Cake, Plenty of Water
- Eat grilled, baked, or roasted chicken, or turkey.
- Get 8-10 hours of sleep.

#### **DO NOT**

- Eat/Drink: Sodas, Candy w/ Nuts or Fruits, Milk Products (Including Butter), Greasy Foods, Gravies, Large Quantities of Meat, High Sodium, Nuts
- No Soccer, Swimming, Basketball, Tennis, Football, Martial Arts, or other sports.

### **MORNING OF A MEET (Breakfast)**

All athletes **MUST** eat some form of breakfast as outlined below, a minimum of 2 hours before competing in an event. **DO NOT** bring breakfast to the meet site. For many of you, it will be too late to digest the food and perform on a competitive level.

#### **DO**

- Eat/Drink: Dry Cereal, Peanut Butter and Jelly, Bananas, Oranges (NOT Processed Orange Juice – the juice only and not the pulp from the Orange), Oatmeal, Malt-O-Meal, Pancakes and Waffles with Syrup, Chocolate and Granola Bars without Nuts, Honey.

#### **DO NOT**

- Eat/Drink: Milk or Milk Products (Including Butter), Greasy Foods, Meat, Plums, Grapes, Peaches

**DO NOT** buy the athletes what they want; buy them what they need to compete effectively. Coolers are a terrific way to store food and fluids during the meet.