

2019 BOYS CROSS COUNTRY ATTENDANCE POLICY

There are two types of absences: “controllable” and “non controllable.” Controllable absences are limited to 5 (**NOTE: ATHLETES CUT FROM OTHER FALL SPORTS ARE LIMITED TO 3**), but we don’t have a limit on non-controllable absences. Controllable absences include, but are not limited to, the following: camp, college placement exams, college visits, family vacations, school-related activities, doctor appointments and family celebrations such as weddings, anniversaries, birthdays and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. Non-controllable absences such as illness, family emergencies, and observance of religious holidays will not be limited, but once an athlete reaches 5 absences (controllable or non-controllable), parents will be contacted to discuss expectations moving forward.

Practice Before School Starts

As dictated by the IHSA fall sports calendar, there will be 10 practices held before the first day of school (Monday, August 26th). These practices are not considered optional, and this time is not referred to as pre-season. Our expectation is that everyone will be there on the first day (**Wednesday, August 14th at 8 a.m. in Room G013 on the Winnetka Campus**) and every subsequent day unless absences have been cleared with the coaching staff before the end of the 2018-2019 school year.

- ❖ **Summer Jobs:** Every effort should be made so that athletes do not miss practice to work a summer job once the season starts on August 14th. That doesn’t mean that they cannot continue with summer employment past this date, it just means that they need to communicate with their employer and work out a modified schedule. August practices before school starts are from 8 a.m. until 10 a.m. each morning, although varsity practices will last longer. We have found that most employers are flexible with an athlete’s work schedule provided that the cross country commitment is communicated to them well in advance of the first day of practice. **Note: any job-related absences will count toward the controllable limit of 5.**
- ❖ **Summer Camps:** Our expectation is that all upper-class athletes (grades 10 – 12) will be home from summer camp by August 14th. In a situation when this is not possible, the athlete needs to communicate with the coaching staff before the end of the 2018-2019 school year and be at practice by Monday, August 19th. No sophomore, junior or senior athlete should expect to join the team after this date. **Note: any summer camp absences will count toward the controllable limit of 5.**
- ❖ **Family Vacations:** We understand that family trips are tough to schedule and that there are a limited amount of days to squeeze in this valuable time. We hope that this can be accomplished prior to August 14th, but we know that a few unique situations may come up. If they do, communication with the coaching staff prior to the end of the school year is critical, and we will allow an athlete to start practice as late as Monday, August 19th if this communication has taken place. No sophomore, junior, or senior athlete should expect to join the team after this date. **Note: any family vacation absences will count toward the controllable limit of 5.**

There is so much that is packed into the first few weeks of practice that we believe it is beneficial for the team and your son to attend during this time. Parents sometimes feel that an athlete can “train on their own” during this time period and achieve the same experience. We don’t believe this is possible. The foundation for a safe and successful season is established during this time. Setting expectations for behavior, attitude, practice time and competition are discussed and emphasized every day from the first team meeting. Establishing proper running form via drills and strength work begins on the first day, and there is obviously more time to work on technique prior to school starting than once school begins. Building up running volume and intensity gradually over the first four weeks prior to competition allows an athlete to be more successful during the season and avoid injury. We have found that athletes who come out late or in poor shape are much more likely to sustain an injury during the season than those who show up relatively fit on the first day. **Remember, once school starts, only 8 weeks remain before the season is over for most of our athletes.**

Practice After School Starts

- ❖ ***Clubs/Jobs/Music Lessons/Other Sports/Tutors:*** Absences due to any of these situations are considered controllable. Most non-freshmen practices run from 3:45 p.m. until about 5:30 p.m. Other than competing in a second sport, we do not discourage a student from partaking in any of the above; rather our expectation is that they will make arrangements to ensure that these events do not conflict with attending practice. We have also found that athletes competing in a second sport during the cross country season, even if it does not conflict with practice or competition, often don’t finish the season due to injury. A young man’s body can only take so much physical activity each day.
- ❖ ***Sickness:*** Communication is key. An e-mail or phone call to your son’s coach is expected prior to the start of practice on the day of the absence. Most young men competing in athletics need a minimum of 8 hours of sleep each night to recover from a full day of academics and a cross country workout. Chronic sickness is frequently the result of an overly ambitious academic schedule resulting in a lack of sleep. If something has to go, it should be running. We respect any athlete making this choice, and we always encourage them to join the following year if they can get the rest needed to be successful in both areas.
- ❖ ***Missing Meets:*** Our expectation is that our athletes will compete in every meet and hopefully look forward to and enjoy these competitions. Our sport is unique in that each athlete gets to compete in most meets and measure their progress against times from prior competitions. We consider missing a meet a big deal, and any circumstances that would lead to this situation should be communicated to the coaching staff well in advance of the competition. The foundation of our team and ultimately our success is based on friendship and support for one another, but this is not a running club, and competing in meets is a requirement for all athletes. In the 2019 season, there will be a minimum of eight opportunities to compete for all athletes. For juniors and seniors, missing two meets will result in the removal of the KW exemption privilege. For all athletes, 3 missed meets will result in dismissal from the team.