



Hi there,

Thank you for your interest in your child wishing to join Rathcoole Athletics Club.

The purpose of this document is to provide the parents of all prospective new members with all the relevant information about our Club to enable them to make an informed decision about whether or not to join the Club when a space becomes available.

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1. Athletics Ireland

We're not just a 'running' club - our aim is to provide athletes with exposure to as many different disciplines within athletics as possible – including track events, field events and cross-country.

We follow the Athletics Ireland curriculum for juvenile athletics, called “Run, Jump, Throw” which is designed to provide the juvenile age groups with experience of different disciplines so that they may decide in future to specialise (or not!) in any particular event.

For that reason, training will incorporate a mixture of events such as sprints, middle distances, relays, javelin, shot-put, long jump etc. so that they can enter those particular events at the upcoming competitions.

Some athletes will naturally prefer some disciplines to others, and we will never force anyone to participate or compete in a discipline they are not comfortable with. However, we will encourage each child to step out of their comfort zone and “give it a go”, and we hope that you will support us in this.

2. Club Ethos regarding Competitions, Training and Attendance

Rathcoole AC is a competing club, with our athletes expected to compete in the Dublin Athletics competitions held on weekends (usually Saturdays) throughout the year. There are only 13 days of competition spread throughout the full calendar year.

[Click here to see the full list.](#)

It is expected that members of Rathcoole AC will participate in **at least 75% of competitions**, and attend **at least 75% of training sessions** throughout the calendar year. We record attendance at training and participation in competitions.

Club members that miss a number of training sessions, or who don't attend the required level of training sessions throughout the year, further to a discussion between the parent and the club's Children's Officer, may lose their place in the Club to someone on the waiting list.

We appreciate that some children have lots of different hobbies and interests, including other sports. But we are an Athletics Club, and we are a competing club, therefore our emphasis is on training children and preparing them for athletics competitions.

It is important for prospective new juvenile members and their parents to be fully aware of these conditions so that there are no misunderstandings about our expectations from Club members regarding training or competing.

If you / your child feel that this could be an issue, please speak to one of the coaches or Children's Officer. Perhaps athletics may not be the sport for them at this point in time, and the space might be better appreciated by another child whose passion is athletics.

3. Membership Fees



Fees are currently €100 per calendar year per athlete (note: amounts are subject to review on an annual basis). This covers athlete insurance, competition entry fees, track bookings, Club public liability insurances, and other club expenses.

For parents (or prospective parents) with more than one child as a member, we offer a 10% discount on the second child's fee, and a 15% discount on the third (and subsequent) child's fee.

Failure to pay membership fees fully and in a timely manner will result in the athlete not being permitted to take part in training, and potentially losing their place in the Club.

4. Club competition Vests a.k.a. "Singlets"

During competitions, all athletes are required to wear the Club racing vest (called a singlet). Singlets cost €25 each and is in addition to the Club membership fees. Orders for singlets will be taken upon joining the Club.

5. Training Times – 9.30am Start!

Training *starts at 9.30am SHARP and finishes at 11:00am.*

Training goes ahead regardless of the weather (providing that it is safe to do so), so please ensure athletes are dressed accordingly. In the event that training may be cancelled or changed for any reason, parents/guardians will be informed via the Club WhatsApp group.

6. Training gear - clothing, runners, etc

Each week, we train outdoors and in all weather conditions, so it's important that the athletes arrive dressed appropriately. There's no need to be spending huge money on specialist running gear, there are plenty of cheaper options available (see some suggestions below), but wearing the right gear (particularly runners) will make it a lot more enjoyable for them.

Clothing: We would recommend layers of lightweight, stretch/lycra-type material rather than cotton t-shirts or cotton tracksuits (eg. school tracksuit) which can be baggy and heavy, absorb water and become even heavier and more uncomfortable for running in.

Whether they wish to wear long sleeve running tops and running leggings will be weather dependant. Your call.

Girls are well used to leggings, but sometimes the boys might be worried about 'appearances' wearing running leggings; if that's the case I'd suggest they wear a pair of shorts over the leggings. But they're definitely better than wearing cotton tracksuit bottoms. And sure if they're good enough for Usain Bolt.....

Jacket: A lightweight, windproof outer layer/running jacket would be good too. No need for it to be waterproof, let's face it, we're going to be getting wet sometimes.

Runners: again, no need to break the bank on expensive running shoes, but their feet and legs will be much better supported and less prone to injuries wearing runners such as Asics,



Nike and Adidas that have been designed specifically for running. They'll last longer and provide better support/cushioning for their feet and joints on harder surfaces and tracks.

We'd recommend the Asics Outlet and Nike Store at Kildare Village which has specialist runners for kids at really good value (less than €30).

Hats/gloves: Arctic-grade not needed, just lightweight ones that can keep off wind and rain. Again, avoid cotton which just soaks up water and get heavier and keep the hands cold.

Water Bottle: every athlete must bring their own bottle of water to training. This is extremely important. We incorporate numerous water breaks into the session. Sports/energy drinks not necessary.

Options for Running Clothes - some suggestions

- Penny's and Dunnes have a great range of lightweight running clothes for both girls and boys, and great value e.g. €6 for running leggings.
- Sports Direct have opened a massive shop just off O'Connell St, they also have smaller concessions in the larger shopping centres. However their website is actually cheaper than their shops <http://ie.sportsdirect.com/running/running-clothes/kids-running-clothes>
- Asics and Nike Outlets stores at Kildare Village.
- Aldi & Lidl also do perfectly good running clothes, though usually only on occasional specials.

7. Calendar of Events: Training, Competitions, etc.

Parents will be provided with a calendar setting out the dates of competition, the training days and their locations, as well as the Junior Park Runs.

This should be retained for future reference. If there are any changes to the itinerary, it will be updated and made available to all parents ASAP via whatsapp and email.

8. Cross Country Season, Track & Field Season

The period January to June in the Athletics Ireland calendar is dedicated to track and field competitions, of which there are approximately 9 days of competitions, starting with the Indoor Championships in February (over 4 separate days), and the Outdoor Track and Field League competitions (over 5 separate days) during May and June.

No competitions are held during the summer months of July and August.

The period September to December in the Athletics Ireland calendar is dedicated to cross-country running. There are 4 days of competition (all Sundays), held in various parks in and around Co. Dublin including Newbridge Demesne, Santry/Abbottstown Demesne, Phoenix Park and Tymon Park.

The races are all outdoor, and happen in all weather – it can be a more challenging experience than running on a track, but some athletes actually enjoy it more than track running.

Where possible, we try to hold a Sunday training session at the competition locations to get some experience of the course. Please refer to the calendar for further details.



Furthermore, all of the cross-country work helps build a solid fitness base for the upcoming track and field season. [Click here to see the 2019 competition dates.](#)
cross-country running.

9. Medium and Long Term Athlete Training Goals

In addition to our normal training, participation in competitions and strength & conditioning, we will be incorporating the Junior Park Runs at regular intervals during the training season.

Please refer to <http://www.parkrun.ie/events/juniorevents/> for further information on Junior Park Runs; parents must register their own children.

It is a timed 2km run in Griffeen Park (Lucan) every Sunday morning, it is completely free, and provides participants with a 'race-event' feel but without the pressure of being in a competitive event.

This will integrate well with our cross-country training, will develop stamina and endurance during the autumn winter, and lay a strong fitness base for the track and field season.

10. Practice Makes Progress

We all know that exercise and sport is an excellent way to improve physical and mental wellbeing. By encouraging our children to enjoy exercise now, hopefully they will integrate it into their lives as they grow older to continue to enjoy the benefits exercise can bring.

Regular athletics training sessions will improve their fitness, stamina and overall physical health. Entering athletics competitions will provide opportunities to set goals, challenge themselves, build self-esteem and teamwork.

They can't all become Olympic athletes, and to be realistic, there's only so much that can be achieved in 90-minutes per week. The children should improve their physical and mental well-being from participation on Sundays, but we would also encourage parents to perhaps also run and exercise with their children during the week.

11. Age Group Categories

Each child will compete in an age group with children of a similar age. Girls only compete against girls, and boys only compete against boys. Athletics Ireland apply a criteria that may be slightly different from other sports that you may be familiar with. It's dictated by the age of the child on 31st December, and best explained using examples.



Example 1.

- Lia turned 10 on the 3rd January 2019.
- On 31st December 2019, she will still be 10.
- Therefore she competes in the Girls Under 11 age group **for the whole of calendar year 2019.**

Example 2:

- Charlie will turn 9 on 2nd December 2019.
- On 31st December 2019, he will be 9.
- Therefore, he competes in the Boys Under 10 age group **for the whole of calendar year 2019.**

It's definitely an imperfect way of defining the age categories (arguably favours those born earlier in the year), but this is Athletics Ireland's method and is what we must adhere to. But as we all know, age and size aren't a reliable indicator of a child's ability or performance.

Stepping-Up: In some of the juvenile competitions, an athlete may 'step-up' to compete in the age group immediately above their own; for example an U9 athlete can compete in an U10's race, or an U10 can compete in the U11 age group, etc.

However, we would only encourage/permit an athlete to 'step-up' an age category if the Coaches felt that the athlete would genuinely be capable. Needless to say, it doesn't work the other way around i.e. an U10 can't step-down into an U9 race.

12. Fun / Social Events

We're not just about entering competitions. Our aim is to encourage our athletes (and parents!) to participate in athletics-related events just to have a bit of craic together.

Recently, our athletes and parents have participated in fun events such as Mini-Muckers, Mo-Run, Great Ireland Run, Junior Hell & Back.

13. More Volunteers Needed

As an amateur athletics club, we are totally reliant on parents to volunteer to fulfil coaching as well as administrative roles (of which there are many!); if you are interested in volunteering in any way, your help would be appreciated.

Please note that all adults who volunteer with Rathcoole Athletics Club (including club officials, coaches and other adults that help during training sessions) are required to have been Garda Vetted through Athletics Ireland.



If you feel that you would be interested in taking on one (or part of one) of these roles, please speak to Edel or myself for further information.

14. Communications – Whatsapp, website, emails, etc

The Rathcoole AC club website is still in its infancy, but will be developed further in the coming months.

The website will become the primary source of information for all current and future members, and where we will provide as much ‘static’ information that we can.

Whatsapp group will still be maintained for the more informal and ‘variable’ communications, and email for circulating important member-only information.

15. Sponsorship

There are a number of costs incurred in running an athletics club – including (but not limited to) public liability insurance, track hire, event entrance fees, sports equipment purchasing, Athletics Ireland affiliation membership fees, mandatory courses in child safety as well as attending coaching courses to ensure athlete progression and development.

These costs are met through the athlete annual membership fees paid by parents; however we would prefer to keep these costs as low as possible, which means seeking funding from elsewhere.

If any parents have business contacts that would be willing to donate/sponsor Rathcoole Athletics Club, please speak with our Club Children’s Officer or myself.

Thanks

Rathcoole AC



Competition Fixtures 2019

Dates Confirmed:

Track & Field Season: JAN – JUNE 2019

Dublin Athletics Fixtures 2019: Indoor & Outdoor Track and Field					
DATE		EVENT	VENUE	Start Time	
February 2019	Fri	1	Dublin Juvenile Indoor Championships - Day 1 of 4	National Indoor Arena, Abbotstown, D15	7pm
February 2019	Fri	8	Dublin Juvenile Indoor Championships - Day 2 of 4	National Indoor Arena, Abbotstown, D15	7pm
February 2019	Sat	9	Dublin Juvenile Indoor Championships - Day 3 of 4	National Indoor Arena, Abbotstown, D15	10am
February 2019	Sun	10	Dublin Juvenile Indoor Championships - Day 4 of 4	National Indoor Arena, Abbotstown, D15	10am
April 2019	Sat	13	Dublin Juvenile U10 - U16 Track & Field League - Day 1 of 4	TBC	10.30am
April 2019	Sat	20	Dublin Juvenile U10 - U16 Track & Field League - Day 2 of 4	TBC	10.15am
May 2019	Sat	4	Dublin Juvenile U10 - U16 Track & Field League - Day 3 of 4	TBC	10.30am
May 2019	Sat	18	Dublin Juvenile U10 - U16 Track & Field League - Day 4 of 4	TBC	10.30am
May 2019	Sat	25	Dublin U9/U10/U11 Pairs and Relay Championships	TBC	10am
June	Wed	5	Day 1 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	7pm
June	Fri	7	Day 2 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	7pm
June	Fri	14	Day 3 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	7pm
June	Sat	15	Day 4 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	10.30am
June	Sun	16	Day 5 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	10.45am
June	Fri	21	Day 6 Dublin Juvenile T&F Championships	<i>Club yet to decide whether to participate</i>	7pm

Summer Break July, August.

Dates Unconfirmed:

Cross Country Season: SEPT – DEC 2019:

- dates unconfirmed at this point, but will likely be 1 day of competition in Sept, 1 in Oct, 1 in Nov and 1 in Dec.