

February 16, 2019

Dear Cross Country Parents,

The first day of school for students next year is Monday, August 26<sup>th</sup> and the first day of cross-country practice will be on Wednesday, August 14<sup>th</sup>. This means that we will have 10 practices before the first day of school. **It is important that you take time to read this entire letter, so you are aware of the commitment required for your son to participate during the 2019 season.**

Attendance Policy & Expectations:
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**(1) A limit on absences:** divided into “Controllable” and “Non-controllable” absences:

- Athletes who exceed 5 **“controllable”** absences will be dismissed from the team. 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. **FOR ATHLETES CUT FROM OTHER FALL SPORTS THAT ARRIVE LATER THAN AUGUST 14<sup>TH</sup>, THEIR CONTROLLABLE ABSENCES WILL BE LIMITED TO 3.**
- **“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.

**(2) Meet participation:** Athletes are expected to participate in every meet for which they are eligible. In 2019, there will be a minimum of 8 competitions 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.

**(3) Preseason Fitness:** Athletes should arrive to the season with a moderate level of fitness. It is our expectation that sophomores through seniors should be averaging at least 30 – 40 minutes of running 5 times per week during the summer. Starting the season in poor shape prevents athletes from participating fully with their teammates in workouts, often results in avoidable injuries such as tendonitis and knee and ankle soreness, and requires the coaching staff to devise alternate workouts which takes time away from athletes who have prepared properly for the season.

**(4) Post workout:** After each workout, all athletes are expected to stretch together, do core exercises together, and shake a coach’s hand before departing. In addition to the flexibility and strength benefits of these sessions, some of the best team bonding occurs during this time. Since we frequently leave campus for our workouts, it is also important for our coaches to know that each athlete is back on campus and safe.

**(5) Behavior:** Athletes are expected to follow all team policies established by the head coach and respective level coaches, as well as strive to do their best during each workout session and meet. Walking, shuffling, refusing to do the workout, negative behavior or attitude, and poor effort will not be tolerated. After the first incident, the athlete will be warned and parents will be contacted, a second incident will result in the removal of the KW exemption privilege for junior and seniors and a second call home for all athletes. A third incident will result in dismissal from the team.

Cross Country is a no-cut sport which allows any athlete to participate, regardless of their ability level or athletic background. The coaching staff believes strongly in the power of athletics, and specifically Cross Country, to help students develop and hone critical life skills (such as dedication, hard work, focus and perseverance), improve their fitness, and engage in self-improvement. Participation on the New Trier Cross Country team is not a right, but a privilege that requires a full commitment and sacrifice from the athlete to attend all practices and meets while giving their best effort each and every day. In order for the student-athlete to uphold this commitment, it is vital that they have the full support of their parents/guardians.

Our coaching staff recognizes that these requests may ask the athletes to make some difficult choices, but our program will only benefit from the collective willingness of its members to sacrifice for one another. Our team camaraderie and resolve in difficult situations will only be strengthened when each athlete makes consistent effort, commitment and determination in our pursuit of excellence in everything that we do. We appreciate your respect and support of these policies. I expect the 2019 season to be a great season for our team and fun for both athletes and coaches. Our schedule is posted on our school website and included with this letter, so you can start making plans to attend our meets, the sports information meeting and banquet. **Daily practice times and events for each level can also be obtained by checking the Google calendar found on the school website.** I look forward to seeing you during the fall. Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to give me a call: 847-784-6622.

Sincerely,

Dave Wisner  
Head Coach – Boys Cross Country – New Trier High School