



Windsor Slough Eton & Hounslow Athletic Club Academy Information October 2023

UK Athletics state “we define athletics as a Late Specialisation sport. Athletes should only focus on one group of events after they have had the chance to develop their skills in the whole sport. This needs to be done whilst recognising the inevitable changes that will occur to a young person’s body and mind as they grow”.

1) The Windsor Slough Eton & Hounslow (WSEH) Athletic Club Academy is for young and beginner athletes in school year’s 6-11 who are establishing themselves in the sport and for whom ability in particular events is yet to emerge.

2) The Academy trains young and beginner athletes across all aspects of athletics, running (sprints, hurdles and some middle distance), jumps (long jump and high jump) and throws (javelin, discus, shot).

UK Athletics define this as the ‘Foundation Stage’ of the Athlete Development Pathway. We believe athletes in the Academy develop their confidence and all round athletics skills.

Our aim is for their potential for events to emerge, with a view to progressing them onto any specialist training groups when they are ready.

3) Potential Academy athletes start with a general club trial session. The purpose of a trial is two-fold:

1. For parents/athletes to ‘get a feel’ for the club, the environment, the training, etc, to see if they like it.
2. For the club to assess ability / potential, fitness levels and their attitude & receptiveness to training.

4) Any athletes not at the required level of fitness, or are not yet ready for the training, could come back and re-trial when they are older or fitter.

5) Athletes for whom the Academy is considered the most appropriate group for them, would be offered membership of WSEH and a place in the Academy.

6) **WSEH is not a fitness club.** It is a competitive athletic club, (across track & field, road running and cross country) and **we expect all our athletes to compete.** Our expectations for being a member are:

1. Athletes to train regularly, which for Academy athletes is twice a week at Academy training nights, which are Tuesday & Thursday evenings, 6pm to 7.30pm (held where WSEH is based, which is Thames Valley Athletic Centre, Pococks Lane, Eton, Windsor, SL4 6HN).
2. Athletes to compete for the club. Matches are on Saturdays or Sundays, from 11am**

*If your child has other sporting/recreational commitments which clash with athletics training, you will need to consider this when thinking about joining, as regular attendance at our training sessions is expected.

**With regard to competing in league matches, our teams are selected based on the group that can collect the most amount of points for the team. We view athletics as a team sport and strongly encourage versatility and adaptability, so like to see athletes competing for the club in additional events that they are capable of doing, as well as just their specialist ones.

If an athlete does not meet these expectations, their Academy membership will be terminated. There is no refund of club fees in this case.

7) All academy athletes will train in a range of events. The aim is to develop them technically and to give them experience of all areas of athletics, i.e. running, jumping, throwing. Finding out what they are good at and what they like, (normally the same thing), is a key aspect of an athlete's time in the Academy.

They will all participate in sprint and/or middle distance running every week. This is for general fitness and the assessment of running capabilities. No matter what event they progress to in the future (e.g. long jump, high jump, hurdles, javelin etc) a lot of running and general fitness is needed to support the technical training.

8) The Academy coaches will be constantly assessing the athletes to monitor their development. When they reach potential for joining a specialist event training group, they will be invited to trial with that group, with a view to progressing from the Academy.

9) We meet in a designated area at the track. Athletes are expected to be ready to start warm up at **6.00pm**. Session finish time **approx. 7.30pm**. Athletes are the responsibility of parents before 6.00pm and after 7.30pm. Finish time may be earlier if the weather is very wet or very cold. Sessions may be cancelled at the last minute if it has been snowing. Please note that for safety athletes are expected to be collected from inside the athletics centre.

10) Training continues throughout the year including half term breaks and school holidays. We only have a break over Christmas and New Year.

11) Please inform the coaches if your child is unable to train on occasion, e.g. illness or injury. This needs to be no later than two hours before the start of the session (i.e. by **4.00pm**). This is because the sessions are planned in advance, including groupings and pairings of athletes.

NB: For some injuries, the athlete could still train, because we can modify the session for them.

12) **If the athlete has any medical conditions that the coaches need to be aware of it is your responsibility as the parent to inform us, so that we can meet their needs.**

13) **Parents of children in the Academy are required to help assist at sessions** and at club competitions. You do not need any athletic knowledge to do this.

14) Athletics is a year-round sport, training in winter can be tough. Not only with the sessions being focused on hard fitness work, but also difficult weather conditions. **If it is raining or cold, we will still train.** Athletes need to be prepared for this. Athletes that do not attend sessions over the winter training period will not be able to re-join come the spring.

15) If an athlete's behaviour is disruptive or puts others or themselves at risk of harm or injury, their Academy membership will be terminated. There is no refund of club fees in this case. The coaches will not accept messing around, bullying, or disruptive behaviour within the Academy squad. Athletes are required to respect the coaches, the parent helpers and the rest of the group at all times.

16) Kit suggestions - we are not suggesting you go out and buy lots of kit, try to use items already in their wardrobe.

a. **Proper running trainers**, not fashion trainers

b. **A bottle of water**, no fizzy drinks

c. **Comfortable sports/athletic kit:**

- shorts or similar for when they sprint, plus tracksuit bottoms or leggings for warmth for the rest of the session, especially when it is cold.

- enough top layers to remain warm during the session, and a further layer for the warm up and cool down.

d. Bring a **rain jacket** in case it rains (and some dry clothes so they have something warm and dry to travel home in after the session).

e. Gloves and hat/running headband when it is cold.

Spikes are optional, but if you do want to purchase some, please consult with Ian first, as there are different types of shoes and spike lengths for different events, so it is important to get the correct type for general use.

17) Membership subscription fees:

Membership fees are £120.00 a year. The subscription year is from 1st March to 28th February.

For athletes joining from 1st September, the membership fee shall be half the fee for the subscription year (so £60.00).

For athletes joining from 1st January, there will be no membership fee to pay until the start of the new subscription year (1st March).

There is a one-off joining fee of £60.00, which covers the cost of trials & admin involved in a new athlete joining and includes a club vest, which all members need to own to wear when competing.

There is a fee of £17 a year for registering with England Athletics. The club would do this for you and athletes need to be registered to be able to compete in athletics meetings.

Like many other athletics tracks, there are also track fees to pay, which is separate to the Athletic Club (i.e. charged by Thames Valley Athletic Centre). There is a discounted track

card, which will also give you free parking. The cost is £78 and it lasts for a year. There is also a monthly direct debit option.

We believe these fees are one of, if not the cheapest, compared to other local clubs in Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and surrounding counties. No fees would need to be paid until an athlete has a place.