



Academy Information September 2025

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 academy is for athletes in school year’s 6-11 who have shown potential for competition athletics and who are establishing themselves in the sport.

2) The Academy trains 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 athlete’s ability/potential, speed/fitness levels, their attitude & their receptiveness to coaching/training.

4) Any athletes not at the required level of fitness, or are not yet ready for the training, could come back and retrial 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 a competitive athletic club; the value of being a member is the opportunity to be able to train and compete.

- Academy training is at the twice weekly sessions at club training nights (Tuesday & Thursday evenings, 6pm to 7.30pm).
- *NB: If your child has other sporting/recreational commitments which clash with academy training, you will need to consider this before you commit to joining.*
- Training regularly ensures athletes will develop and improve. They will also have positive interactions with other athletes and make new friends. We have also found that they enjoy the confidence and focus resulting from training and competing.
- Because there is an investment in time by our coaches to develop athletes, we believe that competing for the club, alongside the opportunity to train, is the return on that investment.
- Competing for the club, will mean at league matches on Saturdays or Sundays, during the summer season (which is April to September.) Middle distance runners will also compete in road racing and cross country during the winter season (October to March).
- *NB: 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.*
- By both training and competing on a regular basis, athletes will fully develop their potential. By doing this, athletes will give themselves the opportunity to compete in a wider range of competitions such as school, county, regional and national championships.

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.

8) The Academy coaches will be constantly assessing the athletes to monitor their development. When they reach potential for joining any specialist event training groups, they will be invited to trial with them, 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 the session 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 need to be collected from the athletics centre reception.

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 Ian if your child is unable to train on occasion, e.g. illness or injury. Ideally, this needs to be as early as possible because the sessions are planned in advance, including groupings and pairings of athletes.

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

13) Parents of children in the Academy are sometimes 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 fitness work, but also sometimes with difficult weather conditions. If it is raining or cold, we will still train. Athletes need to be prepared for this.

15) Athlete's behaviour should not be disruptive or put others or themselves at risk of harm or injury. The club will not accept messing around, bullying, or disruptive behaviour. Athletes are required to respect the coaches, the parent helpers and the rest of the group at all times.

16) Kit suggestions.

- Proper running trainers, not fashion trainers.
- Shorts or similar for when they sprint, plus when it is cool/cold, leggings for warmth for the rest of the session. When it is very cold, it is a good idea to wear trackies over leggings while warming up.
- Enough light top layers to remain warm during the session, including multiple light layers when it is cool, plus when it is cold, a warm top layer for the warm up and cool down (but not a big baggy top).
- Rain jacket in case it rains.
- Gloves and hat/running headband when it is cold.
- Regarding spikes, 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:

The subscription year is from 1st March to 28th February.

For the subscription year 1st March 2025 to 28th February 2026, the membership fee is £135

For athletes joining from 1st August 2025, the membership fee shall be half the fee for the subscription year (so £67.50).

For athletes joining from 1st January 2026, there will be no membership fee to pay until the start of the new subscription year (1st March 2026).

There is also a one-off joining fee of £65, 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 also an annual fee of £20 a year for registering with England Athletics. The club would do the registration 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 £84.50 and it lasts for a year. There is also a monthly direct debit option.

That's fantastic news. Many thanks for all your hard work and the training that she received from the team. Much appreciated (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thank you, really appreciate all the encouragement from his coaches, he has come a long way under your guidance (has progressed onto a specialist middle distance group)

I know she has really enjoyed the Academy. Great coaching and support and encouragement from the coaches (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

She has loved being part of the Academy – thank you for all of the support (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group, plus advanced long jump training)

Many thanks to Academy coaches, it's thanks to all Academy training and your support (has progressed onto a specialist long jump group)

Thank you Ian for all the wonderful coaching and support (has progressed onto a specialist middle distance group)

Thank you Ian for all your coaching, help and advice in her first year (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group, plus advanced long jump and specialist high jump training)

Thanks Ian and thank you so much for being very supportive with her progression. She has really enjoyed her time in the Academy and it has given her the motivation to want to progress in athletics (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group specialist hurdles training)

Thank you Ian for everything you have done for her, she has enjoyed her time in the Academy (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thank you so much Ian for all your support, she has really enjoyed being in the Academy (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks so much for all your support Ian, she's really enjoyed being in your group (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks so much for all of your support and encouragement – it goes a long way! She loved the Academy for her short time with you and is delighted to now be focusing on sprinting (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group, plus advanced long jump and specialist hurdles training)

Thanks for all your help over the last year / Thanks Ian....It's great news, she's really looking forward to working with specialist coaches and may the girls thrive in their athletics development (two athletes progressing onto a specialist sprint group plus advanced long jump and specialist hurdles training)

Once again thank you Ian for everything. She would not have achieved this without you....she is super excited (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks Ian, she's looking forward to focussing on these events. thanks for all your help (has progressed onto a specialist high jump group and a specialist long jump group)

Thank you Ian for all your work with her. She loved the Academy so much, as shown by how long she wanted to stay with you....she is very much looking forward to the sprint sessions. Thank you (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group, plus specialist hurdles training)

Thank you so much Ian, the Academy has been amazing for her.... she is super excited to step up her training and is loving working with new coaches (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group, plus advanced long jump and specialist hurdles training)

Thank you, Ian, for your invaluable advice, guidance, honest discussions, and encouragement for her from the very beginning. She thoroughly enjoyed her time with you at the Academy and is excited to continue developing her skills in the sprint group. We are deeply appreciative of all your support (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thank you so much Ian for all the time, knowledge, patience and support that you've invested in her progress, it's very much appreciated and I know she'll miss the academy but so good to you'll still have contact and see her race (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks Ian, the academy has been brilliant for her. We really appreciate your dedication, enthusiasm and time spent helping her progress (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

A big thank you from us. She has loved her time in the Academy. You made her feel welcome from day 1 (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks so much Ian. He has really enjoyed trying out all the events and is very excited to progress with his throwing. Thank you for all the coaching, guidance and support (has progressed to specialist training groups for discus/shot and javelin)

Thanks Ian for all the support and coaching you've given him this last year! (has progressed to a specialist long sprint/middle distance group)

Thanks Ian for all your support to enable her progression and thank you for all your support throughout her time in the Academy (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thank you Ian for all your help and support over the last year and thank you for helping her get there (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thank you Ian for the coaching and support you gave him over the past year (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)

Thanks very much for sending us this great news and for all your efforts with him since joining your academy group last year, he has thoroughly enjoyed being part of the team and participating in both training and events! He has been looking forward to progressing (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, hurdles and long jump)

I just wanted to sincerely thank you for the support you've given him throughout his time at the academy. He had a truly fantastic experience, enjoyed every moment, learned a lot and grew. Your guidance and encouragement played a big part in that, and I know he really valued your support. It's been great to see how much he gained from the experience, and we're genuinely grateful for the role you've played in his development (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, hurdles and long jump)

Thank you so much Ian for your dedication to our children's development. He had great years of training with you and benefitted from not only the events but also on resilience, discipline and ambitious. He will miss you as his coach. Thank you for everything (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, long jump and high jump)

Thank you for your guidance and support Ian, onwards and upwards (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, long jump and high jump)

Thanks again so much for your support over the past year. It's really appreciated, and everyone at WSEH has been so welcoming.....Thanks for all your support Ian, he has really flourished in the last year under your guidance. Can't thank you enough (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, long jump and high jump)

Thank you Ian for all your help and to all the other athletes that made it such fun enough (has progressed to specialist training groups for throws, long jump and high jump)

Thank you Ian for welcoming us into the club, and for all your teaching, support and guidance. The whole experience has been fantastic (has progressed to specialist training groups for sprints, hurdles, long jump and high jump)

Thanks Ian. Appreciate the help and support given to her during her time with the academy and looking forward to the next stage in her sprinting journey / Many thanks for your help with her

training, she is looking forward to being part of the sprint training group (has progressed onto a specialist sprint group)