



Parent/Athlete Handbook & Code of Conduct

ROOTS

Our club expects all participants to be respectful. We use this acronym to remember our ROOTS:



Rules – Respect the rules of the sport.

Opponents – Respect your competition; be fierce but friendly.

Officials – Respect those in charge.

Teammates – Never do anything on or off the field that would embarrass your teammates, parents, or coaches.

Self – Honor the sport even when others are not. Choose to live your life by a higher standard.

Athlete Conduct

- All athletes are expected to be positive and encouraging to their teammates and their coaches. Though track is considered an individual sport, we are a team—we build each other up, not tear one another down.
- Athletes are expected to remain with your coach and/or assigned group at all times, unless otherwise directed.
- Athletes are to not use the equipment/track in an unsafe manner or unsupervised.
- Athletes will be on time to practice; if they will be late or need to miss a practice, they will make sure their coaches are aware via a text, phone call, or email. Please be ready to begin practice at the start time.





- Athletes will check in/check out when arriving/leaving a practice or meet.
- Athletes are expected to clean up after themselves, at practice and meets. This includes the setting up/putting away of equipment, putting any throwing equipment away where it was, garbage and/or bottles. We are being allowed to use parks/facilities and equipment; we need to leave it nicer than when we got there.
- Athletes are expected to do the homework assigned to them on their off days. This is for YOUR benefit. "You can never expect to succeed if you only put in work on the days you feel like it."
- Listen attentively to instructions from the coaches. Sometimes specific instructions are given for specific reasons. This is for your safety and benefit. You can get injured if you are goofing off, not paying attention, or sometimes doing nothing wrong. Your form is especially important so be aware of *how* you are doing something.
- Athletes should notify their coaches if they believe they have injured themselves. We do not want to make a small injury much worse by not assessing it correctly.
- Athletes will get out of this what they put in. Coaches are here for the athletes' benefit; however, the coaches cannot run it for them.

Parent Conduct

- We encourage parents to cheer on their children during practices and meets.
- It is expected that parents will be good communicators regarding their children including late arrivals to practice, absence from practices, concerns with their child, or any other issues that may arise.
- Parents are expected to support what their children's coaches are teaching them, as well as encouraging them to be healthy and hydrated.
- Parents are expected to assist their children with homework on the off days. We would appreciate if a parent has a question or suggestion regarding the training methods provided, that they speak with the coach first. This should take place outside of practice time. You have entrusted us to coach your child during practices and meets.
- Please make the coaches aware of any additional sports activities that your child(ren) may be participating in. Practice plans are designed to provide the most beneficial amount of training; additional sports and practices will need to be accounted for to prevent over-training and over-use injuries.
- Parents are expected to make the coaches aware of any changes in their child(ren)'s health, including medications, before the season. This is to ensure the child's safety.





- Parents will drop off their child(ren) at practice and return at the end of practice. We need the kids focused on what their coaches' instructions are, to prepare them mentally, and to strengthen the bonds between the team.
- If you have experience and would like to volunteer your services, please let Coach Shannon know.

Communication

There is an open line of communication between parent(s), athlete, and coaches. Our main forms of communication are phone and email, but we will also regularly send out information via text. The best way to let us know if your child(ren) will be absent for a particular practice is via text (509.893.2800). We have a website (valleyflashtrackclub.weebly.com), Instagram ([@valleyflashtrackclub](https://www.instagram.com/valleyflashtrackclub)), and a Facebook page ([Valley Flash](https://www.facebook.com/ValleyFlash)).

Nutrition, Hydration & Sleep

It is very important that our athletes stay hydrated, especially during the hotter days. The best way to ensure your child is hydrated is to have them drink water throughout the day, not just during or after practice. Young athletes need to be drinking water all the time. All athletes are required to bring a water bottle with them to practice. Eating a healthy, balanced diet is important to the overall well-being of athletes. A person's diet can impact their athletic performance. We promote a balanced diet that does include occasional treats and "junk food", as long as it is supplemented with healthy foods. Nutrition the day before/of/after a meet is especially important and will be addressed before our first meet.

It is vitally important to be aware that the more consistent an athlete's sleep cycle is, the better he or she will perform. It reduces risk of injury, aids in recovery, boosts performance, strengthens the mind, boosts coordination, improves speed, increases your intensity, balances hormones, consolidates muscle memory, and increases reaction times. If there are any questions, please ask your coach.

Clothing, Shoes, Equipment

All athletes that participate in our club are required to purchase a uniform that consists of a singlet and shorts. This will be worn for our meets only. Please have your child(ren) wear athletic shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, etc. for practices. We encourage the kids to dress in layers and to be prepared. It is easier to take off clothes that are not needed than add them if you don't have them. Please come in long sleeves and sweats every day. Proper footwear is also important and will help reduce injuries. Please ensure the shoes are not worn out (the breakdown of a shoe will quickly lead to shin splints) and are not too large for their foot. Good running shoes are a very important investment.

If your child will be wearing spikes, please know that these are intended to fit "like a glove", usually worn without socks. The spikes should be brought to every practice. There are different types of spikes for the different events, and it will make a difference if the wrong type is worn. If your child is doing sprinting and jumping events, there is no need to purchase a specific sprint and a specific jump spike. We encourage all athletes to wear spikes, though it is not required. Goodwill, Value, Village, Once Upon





a Child, and eBay are all good places to look for inexpensive spikes. Amongst our families and coaches, there are spikes kids may have outgrown that people may borrow as well.

If your child has their own personal equipment (discus, shot, javelin), please have their name written on it clearly. They will be responsible for ensuring they have their equipment at the end of every practice, as well as ensuring they have the required equipment they will need for the meet.

Relays

All athletes 8 & Under to 13/14 wishing to participate on a relay team must be committed to competing through Regionals. The relay teams and running order will be determined by the head coach. All athletes at the 15/16 and 17/18 levels wishing to participate on a relay team must be committed to competing through Nationals. If there are more than four (4) athletes in any one age/gender group, there will be a run-off. The commitment to a relay team is significant; you must be available for possible extra practices. It is imperative that the members of a relay get enough practices in with hand-offs. Relay athletes must attend at least two (2) practices per week, which includes the last practice before a meet.

Meets

Participation at the USATF meets is not required; however, if an athlete wishes to participate in the Regional and/or National meet, they MUST attend and qualify at the Association Championship meet. For track, we will be attending the SFCC Bigfoot All Comers meets on Tuesday's in June; these are also not required but encouraged attendance.

All athletes are expected to be in one designated area during the meet. The athletes must be checked in/checked out of this designated area. This is an athlete-only tent. Athletes are expected to stay in this area during the remainder of the meet; if they complete their events and have been checked out by a coach, they are free to leave the designated athlete area. There are to be minimal distractions in this area.

Performance Enhancing Drugs

USATF subscribes to the US Anti-Doping Agency guidelines. While we don't believe any of our athletes would intentionally use performance enhancing drugs, some common over-the-counter or prescription medications may fall onto the prohibited substances list, and we want you to be fully aware of this list. Please follow the link below if your child takes any medications. Medications to be particularly aware of are: ADHD treatments, common cold medications with pseudoephedrine, albuterol, caffeine (energy drinks, energy shots, etc.), or steroids. If you think your athlete needs a waiver for prescribed medication, please pursue this process to avoid potential problems at higher-level competitions. (usatf.org/about/legal/antidoping/faq.asp)





Character

All our coaches are volunteer; we are choosing to do this for the love of the sport and the athletes who compete with us. We all have a passion for doing what we do, and we expect our athletes to take that seriously. If your child is acting in an inappropriate manner, they will be asked to stop. If the behavior continues, they will be asked to sit out for the remainder of practice. If this behavior persists in other practices, they will be asked to leave for the remainder of the season. It is not fair to the coaches, nor to their teammates, if an athlete is taking away from their experience. An athlete does not only impact himself/herself, he or she is impacting teammates with his/her work ethic. Build a culture of success.

Our goal is to make your children better. We are not solely focused on winning, though it is great. We focus on goals and times and measurements; this means each athlete is constantly competing with themselves to get a personal best (p.r.). We encourage them to set goals and to work to achieve those goals. We also expect each athlete to give their all, not to quit, and to hold their head high even in disappointment. Getting 1st place in an event is an achievement to be commended, but it isn't the only definition of celebration. We also celebrate every time an athlete achieves their goal or earns a personal best. Our other focus is on creating lifetime athletes and well-rounded young adults. As John Hays Hammond says, "Character is the real foundation of all worthwhile success." We are committed to giving each athlete a solid basis in the sports of cross country and track and field for short and long term success.

