



# HOWARDS GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL

## CROSS COUNTRY

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Principal: Heather Zizis

Athletic Directors: Gary Kalk and Ann Parnitzke

Coach: Gary Kalk

August 7, 2020

Dear Athlete, Parent(s) and Guardian(s):

The upcoming cross-country season is quickly approaching. I trust your family continues to be in good health. I will serve as your child's middle school cross country coach this fall and am excited to take on this challenge. With the Covid virus still active in our community, a great deal of my planning has centered on creating a fun and safe environment for your child to learn the sport of running. Trust that I will follow all guidelines put in place by our local, state, and federal leaders. This will include utilizing social distancing and implementing mask usage whenever in close proximity to others.

### **Social Distancing**

I will do my absolute best to keep kids social distanced while at practice. They are still kids, so I anticipate they will need constant reminders in this area. Please help encourage them as well. I will work diligently to socially distance athletes during warm-up and cool-down activities. I will also work to spread kids out when going on practice runs.

### **Mask Requirement**

Masks usage is a requirement for all cross-country athletes. The Covid virus continues to be highly contagious and easily transmissible. We can never be too careful. The purpose of wearing a mask is not to protect you, but to protect other people, which reduces the risk of asymptomatic spread. Regardless of how you may feel about wearing a mask, we all need to consider the consequences of our individual actions on the community around us.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and World Health Organization (WHO) offer the following advice:

- CDC guidelines recommend “cloth face coverings in public settings and when around people who don't live in your household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.”
- Wearing a mask can help reduce the spread of the virus between people interacting in close proximity, as asymptomatic spread is still a concern.
- Runners should be running safely, either solo or in very small groups, and on routes where they will not encounter others or can maintain at least six feet of distance or more from others at all times.

It is my recommendation for each athlete to add a piece of string to their mask during cross country. Adding string from ear strap to ear strap allows the mask to be easily worn or removed, as necessary. I realize wearing a mask is no fun and running in one is not either. However, mask usage is not optional. Let's work together to manage our current Covid situation the best we can. Adding a piece of string will allow for your child's mask to be removed when socially distanced while running and easily worn while around others.

## Transportation

Transportation to and from all meets is provided by the Howards Grove School District. For most meets we share busing with the high school cross country team. Some meets will require you to be released early from school. Please be sure that you are communicating with your teachers and are staying caught up with your schoolwork.

**Please note: To lessen the number of athletes riding the bus, and better promote social distancing, parents are strongly encouraged to transport their own child to and from all meets. Simply fill out the attached *Alternate Transportation Form*, please indicate you will be transporting your child to and from all meets and return the signed form to me. An emailed photo of your completed form will suffice. Thank you in advance for helping to alleviate the number of kids on the bus!**

## Athletic Requirements

Absolutely no one will be allowed to practice, under any circumstances, until all athletic registration items have been completed. This includes uploading a physical or alternate year card, electronically signing the athletic code and concussion form, and paying the \$25 athletic fee. All athletic registrations are completed online through rSchool. Please note: This process is separate from school registration.

## Uniform

Our online clothing store deadline has been extended to **August 10**. There are many items for families to choose from. You may place an order for your child or any other family member. You are only **REQUIRED** to have a blue cross-country t-shirt for your child this season. You may continue to use last year's t-shirt if you so desire.

Here is the link to the online clothing store.

<https://www.bsnteamssports.com/shop/HGCC20>

You will locate our team t-shirt near the bottom of the clothing options. It is royal blue in color and may be identified by its **YOUTH** designation. Attached to this email is an image of the specific t-shirt you should be ordering for middle school cross country.

## Schedule

The attached cross-country schedule is tentative. I will inform you if any changes occur.

## Practice

Practice is set to begin on **Monday, August 24**, at **3:00 PM**. Please plan to meet near the middle school soccer field.

Boys and girls will practice together. Plan on practice lasting at least 1.25 hours. We will take our time warming up, conduct a training workout, and finish with a team cool down and stretch.

As a general reminder... please dress appropriately for the weather, wear comfortable running shoes, and bring lots of enthusiasm each day.

Be prepared to run in all kinds of weather conditions. We may run in the rain (unless it is lightning), the wind, and the cold. Pack layers so you are prepared for anything Mother Nature throws at us. Always make sure you have your running shoes!

You will get out of practice what you put into it. Yes, we will have fun - but I also expect you to work hard and give each day your best effort.

Practice routines -- Dynamic warm-up, running (sometimes games, sometimes a straight run), form drills, strength work, cool down and stretching. Practice will vary from day to day.

Be a positive leader and encourage your teammates not only at practice and at meets but throughout the school day. We could all use more positive energy in our lives.

There will be **NO PRACTICE ON WEDNESDAYS!**

Consistency is key in running. Please try to attend all practices. If you need to miss a practice, please let me know via a note or email from your parent. Try to put in a run on your own that day (unless of course you are sick).

**Parent Pick up** – I will make sure we end on time and will wait until all students are gone before leaving myself. I do appreciate prompt pick-up. Please arrange all rides before practice and communicate those with your students or the school before school lets out for that day.

## **Weather**

I will communicate any weather-related cancelations as soon as possible. Please watch your emails if the weather looks questionable.

## **Competition (Meets/Invites)**

Please be sure to check your email. This is how I will communicate with you. I will share all meet information with you as soon as I receive it from the host school. Middle school runners typically begin racing at 4 pm.

Parent release forms (Alternate Transportation) need to be signed and submitted to the school office ahead of time. I need to have personal communication with your parent if you are going home with them after a meet. **NO ONE LEAVES A MEET UNTIL I HAVE PERSONALLY DISMISSED YOU. I NEED TO RECORD RACE TIMES AND BE SURE YOU ARE SAFE AND HAVE BEEN ACCOUNTED FOR.**

Middle school races range from 1-2 miles. I will let you know before the meet what the actual race distance is.

Set goals to improve your time. Strive to always be the best you can be that day. Aim for a personal best time or PR! I will be extremely excited when you do, and you should be, too!

We start races as a team and will end races as a team. After your individual finish I expect you to go to the finish area and cheer on the rest of your teammates as they complete their race (Please wear your mask). Be a GREAT teammate. I know from personal experience that hearing someone shout your name near the end of a race can help you push yourself more than you thought you could. Positive energy goes a long way in running.

## **Gear and Nutrition**

Good running shoes make a world of difference! Focus on how they fit, not color. Considering we will be running on grass for races, you might want to look for shoes with more grip. Only wear your running shoes for running.

Get into the habit of drinking lots of water. Hydration is crucial in becoming the best runner you can be. Always bring a water bottle along to practice. -- One word of caution... do not chug a whole bunch of water right before practice or a race. Running with a sloshy stomach is not very much fun. Sip water all day long.

Try to eat as much real food as you can. Real fruit is better than fruit snacks. Eating healthy will help you recover faster, feel better, and help you have more energy. Try to avoid heavily processed items.

You do not need to invest in special clothes for running, but you might find that certain items breath better than others. Find clothes that are comfortable to run in.

## **Preparing for the Season**

Be active! Ride your bike, go swimming, play pick-up games of basketball, soccer etc. Just get outside and be active!

Consistency is key in running. To really grow and improve you need to run on a regular basis. Running twice this week, not running at all next week, and then running 5 times the following week will not be effective in helping you improve.

Develop a routine or a schedule for running. Make it a part of your daily plan. Maybe head out to run or run/walk for 15 - 20 minutes before breakfast. After a run take some time to stretch, don't just go inside and plop on the couch.

Begin to build your endurance. Run (or run/walk) 3-4 days a week. Or as often as you can. But remember rest is part of training too. On days you take it easier your body is recovering and getting stronger.

Starting out, try completing a run/walk for 15-20 minutes. Go with a friend or your parents. Talk the entire time. If you cannot carry a conversation, you are going too fast and pushing yourself too hard. Not all runs have to be done at top speed. Work up to being able to run nonstop for 20 minutes. Do not worry about how fast you are or how much distance you have covered. After you can run 20 minutes nonstop, work up to 30 minutes. Work up to the 30 minutes slowly by adding just a few minutes at a time. Maybe pick one run a week where you try to push your pace (even if it is just for a short stretch). Again, do not focus on being fast all the time. Enjoy your runs and being outside. If you can run 30 minutes nonstop by August 24<sup>th</sup> you will have built up great endurance and be in a great position to start working on your speed during our season.

## Other Notes

Running can be hard. Especially at the start. Some runs might feel great and then the next one might feel awful. Be patient with yourself. If you continue to work at it consistently, you will improve. After a few weeks of consistent running, you will probably start to notice that it feels a bit easier. Give it time to happen.

Stay positive. Running is just as much of a mental sport as it is a physical one. When runs are difficult, or things are not going well, try to find the positive. Try saying to yourself, "This difficult run is just making me better. I know I can do this." Practice positive self-talk.

The weather can greatly impact how a run feels. If it is hot out, take it easy. Do not try to run as fast as you can. If it is windy, consider it great resistance training. You can run in the rain (just do not run when it is lightning!).

Terrain can impact the level of effort you have to exert... running on grass is different than running on pavement. A hilly route is more taxing than a flat route.

Find a running buddy. Running with a friend makes the time fly by. Most runs should be done at a pace that allows you to carry on a conversation.

Try listening to music while you run.

Walking is okay. Especially at the start. If you need to alternate walking and running you are still getting a good workout and building your endurance. Just get outside, be active, and keep moving forward!

Take care,  
*Gary*



Visit us on:



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# August 2020

HOWARDS GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

- UPDATED -  
8/2/2020

SUNDAY      MONDAY      TUESDAY      WEDNESDAY      THURSDAY      FRIDAY      SATURDAY

						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10 Online Clothing Sale Ends	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18 High School Cross Country T-Shirt Fundraiser Ends	19	20	21	22
23	24 <b>CC BEGINS!</b> Practice	25	26 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	27 Practice 3:00 PM	28 Practice 3:00 PM	29
30	31 Practice	Practice 3:00 PM	<b>Teacher Inservice Days</b>			

# September 2020

HOWARDS GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

SUNDAY

MONDAY

TUESDAY

WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY

FRIDAY

SATURDAY

		1 Practice 3:00 PM <b>School Begins!</b>	2 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	3 <b>Kiel Invite</b>	4 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	5
6	7 <b>No Practice Today!</b> <b>Labor Day!</b>	8 Practice 3:00 PM	9 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	10 <b>Howards Grove Meet</b>	11 Practice 3:00 PM	12 <b>Manitowoc Roncalli Invite</b>
13	14 Practice 3:00 PM	15 Practice 3:00 PM	16 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	17 <b>Valders Invite</b>	18 Practice 3:00 PM	19
20	21 Practice 3:00 PM	22 <b>Plymouth Relays</b>	23 <b>No Practice Today!</b>	24 Practice 3:00 PM	25 <b>No Practice Today!</b> <b>No School</b>	26
27	28 Practice 3:00 PM	29 Practice 3:00 PM	30 <b>No Practice Today!</b>			

# October 2020

HOWARDS GROVE MIDDLE SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY

**SUNDAY**

**MONDAY**

**TUESDAY**

**WEDNESDAY**

**THURSDAY**

**FRIDAY**

**SATURDAY**

				1 Pumpkin Run @ Lakeland University	2 Practice 3:00 PM End-of-Season Bust-up Party!	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15 Middle School Conferences	16	17
18	19	20 Middle School Conferences	21	22	23 Fall Break No School	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31 Happy Halloween





Full Front

YOUTH

### GILDAN YOUTH DRYBLEND 5.6 OZ 50/50 T-SHIRT

SKU# BRG800B

**\$13.00**

SELECT SIZE

[Size Chart](#)

XSM

SML

MED

LRG

XLG

COLOR:

ROYAL

QUANTITY

- 1 +

DETAILS

ADD TO ORDER

# HOWARDS GROVE SCHOOL DISTRICT

## Alternative Transportation Request

### PARENT/GUARDIAN NOTIFICATION Waiver of Liability

The Howards Grove School District provides transportation to and from athletic competition and other school sponsored events. In the interest of supervision and safety, we respectfully request that all student participants use this available transportation. Should a situation exist where alternative transportation is necessary, a student may apply for exemption from school provided transportation by presenting this agreement and waiver of liability, signed by a parent or guardian, prior to the event.

Your child has requested to be exempt from school sponsored travel to/from (circle one or both)

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(Name of event(s) and location(s)/You may list more than one here)

on \_\_\_\_\_. Because your child may/is under the age of 18, he/she  
(Date(s))

will only be allowed to use alternative transportation with your written permission and acknowledgement that the school district, its employees, or volunteers, will be held harmless from any liability arising out of your request to use transportation other than that provided by the school district.

Before your child will be allowed to use alternative transportation, the School District would encourage you to strongly consider all of the above, and if you still wish your child to use alternative transportation, please sign and date this form on the designated lines below and return to the **Howards Grove Middle School Office** no later than 24 hours before the date of the event.

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Parent/Guardian Signature

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Date

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Student's Name

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Teacher/Coach