



***2019***

***PWC PANTHERS TRACK & FIELD  
CLUB HANDBOOK***

*Committed to providing kids of all ages; the abilities and opportunity to participate in competitive track & field meets while learning the fundamentals for success both on and off the track.*

*Revised: 1 March 2019*

Welcome,

On behalf of the Prince William County (PWC) Panthers Track & Field Club, we welcome all parents and athletes to our Track Team. This organization offers quality training in the sport of track and field with an opportunity to compete at an elite level while educating our athletes about the importance of healthy eating and being physically active. We are excited that you have chosen our organization to help your child develop into a well-rounded student athlete and hope that you take advantage of this program and the many levels of training and competition it offers.

The success of our program on and off the track can be attributed to the dedication of our administrative and coaching staff. Our coaches consist of volunteers who are certified through Amateur Athletic Association (AAU) and the United States Association of Track & Field (USATF). Our Staff and Coaches are very dedicated and have contributed to producing several local, district, regional, and national championship athletes.

This Handbook was created to help guide our parents and athletes through the track season. The contents contain a wealth of information and should answer many of your questions. It should also help you understand what is expected from the organization. The intent of this handbook is to serve as a living document for this organization. If you have any questions, concerns or suggestions please feel free to contact a member of our administrative team or coaching staff.

We hope your athlete enjoys his/her experience with PWC Panthers Track & Field Club. We are confident that your athlete will benefit from the training that he/she receives from our expert coaching staff. We look forward to working with you as a parent and the contributions that YOU will bring to the Prince William County Panthers Track & Field Club.

*Best regards,*

*Terry McFarland, Acting President*

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## **1. INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 CLUB RULES & POLICIES**

Every parent/guardian and athlete is required to read this handbook to become familiar with our program and abide by the policies and procedures outlined. In addition, every parent/guardian and athlete is required to sign the acknowledgement at the end of this handbook, certifying that they have read and understand PWC Panthers Track and Field operational guidelines.

### **1.2 CLUB HISTORY**

The Prince William County (PWC) Panthers Track & Field Club is a 501©3 not for profit organization that was founded in 2009. The desire was to create an organization that promotes and encourages sport aged student athletes and develop an environment that supports leadership, health, fitness, self-esteem, self-discipline and teamwork; while also promoting academic excellence and community involvement within a quality sports program. We are sanctioned by the United States Association of Track & Field (USATF) and Amateur Athletic Association (AAU) National Governing Body and its local Virginia Association for track and field.

### **1.3 CLUB MISSION**

PWC Panther's mission is to teach and prepare youth to become successful Student Athletes by providing each with necessary resources to excel academically, socially, and athletically in an environment that encourages leadership and prepares them for advancement toward post-secondary education and athletic competition. Our mission is to teach rising young athletes fundamental techniques of track and field, help develop running strength, balance, agility and endurance and to improve individual performance through comprehensive training and instruction.

### **1.4 CLUB CULTURE**

PWC Panthers Track & Field Club success is based on a strong foundation of teamwork across the parents, the coaches, and the support staff. By working together and supporting each other across the full spectrum of club activities, we promote a positive environment for our athletes to grow. In order to ensure optimal success and team synchronization, PWC Panthers operate as a family. Please make an effort to do the following:

- Introduce yourself and get to know other PWC Panthers' parents. We all must be accountable for our athletes. Track meets can be very crowded and there are many unfamiliar faces. To ensure the safety of our athletes, we must be familiar with each other and ask questions if we do not recognize an adult interacting with one of our athletes.
- Dress in team colors and or PWC Panthers paraphernalia during track meets. This aids in team identification and cohesiveness.

- Sit together as a team during meets and events. We aim to be unified and support all of our athletes.
- Volunteer your services if you see a need within the club. We cannot stress enough the importance of parental involvement in order to make our club run smoothly and successfully.

## 1.5 **CLUB GOALS**

PWC Panther's goals are as follow:

- To develop strong bodies, minds, self-discipline, self-esteem and high moral standards through track and field.
- To help athletes develop exceptional athletic skills by exposing them to quality training and elite competitive opportunities.
- To provide opportunity for physical conditioning as they learn specific skills to help them become successful in their chosen sport.
- To promote health and wellness by providing education and resources to improve nutrition.
- To encourage academic excellence by connecting athletes with tutoring services and advanced learning opportunities

## 2. **GENERAL INFORMATION**

### 2.1 **COMMUNICATION**

Communication is very important to PWC Panthers; therefore, we continue to stress our open door policy. If you have any questions, don't speculate or assume. Gossip often distorts truth and intent, so please talk directly to our staff. Don't hesitate to pose your questions to our coaches. If you need clarification on any matter, please speak to our Team Parent(s), Club Administrator(s), Head Coach or Club Vice President or President.

Communicating effectively with everyone on our team is a challenge. We work very hard to disseminate information to all families in a timely manner by providing information via our website, mobile group messaging app, handouts and via e-mail. Parents are asked to check our website (calendar & parent news pages) frequently for updated information. **OUR PARENT NEWS SECTION IS PASSWORD PROTECTED. SEE TEAM PARENT(S) FOR PASSWORD.**

Mobile Group Text Messaging will be primarily utilized to disburse information quickly and efficiently. It is the parent's responsibility to obtain all information and to follow through. Please see the Club Administrator to be added to the Mobile Group Text Messaging system. There will also be a communication table present during practices for parents to obtain information.

Meet information will be distributed prior to each meet in paper form, e-mail and in the Parent News section of our website. If you do not have web or email access, please provide contact information to the Team Parent(s).

## 2.2 ATHLETIC/SPORTS PHYSICAL

PWC Panthers athletes must submit a copy of a current Athletic Participation/Physical Examination Form, including the required physical by a doctor, prior to participation in any activities. Athletes are **NOT** permitted on the track or in warm-up/drill areas during practice unless a current Athletic Participation/Physical Examination Form is provided to a PWC Panthers Staff member.

Athletes must maintain a current Athletic Participation/Physical Examination Form throughout the track season. Athletic Participation/Physical Examination Forms are valid for 1 year (expire 365 days from the physician signature date). If the expiration date occurs before the last day of the final scheduled track meet, the athlete must submit a new Athletic Participation/Physical Examination Form in order to continue participation in PWC Panthers activities.

## 2.3 ATTENDANCE

All practices are **MANDATORY**, unless approval for absence is granted (Refer to Section 4 Training Schedule). Athletes **MUST** arrive on time and ready to workout. It is the athlete's responsibility to check in with the Team Mom(s) for attendance prior to entering the track.

Unexcused absences will result in, at minimum, loss of position on relay teams, alternate status and/or removal from the club. In order to be excused from club activities, the athlete must have been absent due to school activities, illness, family emergency, religious observation, or have approval for the absence at least one (1) week in advance.

Athletes who participate in school sports during the PWC Panther track season are required to provide their practice and event schedules to the Team Parent(s). Athletes who miss practice due to sporting events must update their attendance with the Team Parent(s).

## 2.4 LEAVING PRACTICE

Athletes must request permission to leave the practice area. This applies to leaving practice early, going to the restroom outside of breaks, or calling home. The coaches and/or Team Parent(s) **MUST** know where athletes are **AT ALL TIMES**. This is for safety and security reasons.

Parents/Guardians/Chaperones must be present to pick-up their athlete(s) at the completion of each practice. This is for safety and security reasons and consideration for the volunteer time of the coaches and staff. Excessive occurrences in violating this policy will result in a parent meeting with the President and/or Vice President and possible disciplinary actions.

## 2.5 INJURED ATHELETE

Athletes must report **ALL** injuries, medications, and medical policy changes to the Club President, Head Coach or Team Parent(s). If an athlete is injured or becomes ill during practice or a meet, an incident report must be completed by the athlete's coach or Team Parent(s), and be signed by the Head Coach, Club President and parent(s)/guardian(s).

If an athlete becomes ill during a track meet, the athlete is no longer eligible to continue to compete in the meet. The athlete's eligibility **DOES NOT** change when medication is administered by parents. PWC Coaches and Staff are **NOT** permitted to administer medication unless the parent(s)/guardian(s) are present or written instructions and approval is provided by the parent(s)/guardian(s).

For the health and safety of the athlete, when an athlete is consistently unable to fully participate due to an injury, a medical evaluation should be obtained. The medical evaluation should include a doctor's note stating the athlete's restrictions and expected duration. Additionally, before an athlete can return to full participation a follow-up medical evaluation with a doctor's notes stating that the athlete's restrictions have been lifted/removed. The medical evaluation is the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s).

## **2.6 SCHOOL/OUTSIDE SPORTS/ACADEMIC REQUIREMENTS**

PWC Panthers will not interfere with an athlete's school athletic programs. If the athlete participates in sports other than track and field, please inform the coaches prior to participating with the PWC Panthers. Athletes must adhere to the published practice schedule or obtain approval from the PWC Panthers coaching staff to be eligible to compete in meets.

**Academic success is important to the PWC Panthers coaches and staff.** All PWC Panther athletes are required to maintain at minimal a "C" average in school. If your athlete requires assistance, we suggest having an athlete receive homework assistance prior to practice, sitting in the bleachers to complete homework before joining practice, or removing athlete from the program.

Grades will be collected by the Team Parent(s) one week after receipt from schools. Submissions may be made via hard copy, e-mail, or original document. Failure to submit a copy of the grades may result in disciplinary actions to include but not limited to non-participation in practice and/or track meets. Questions or concerns should be directed to a member of the PWC Panthers Administrative Staff.

## **2.7 PERSONAL BELONGINGS**

Please ensure that the athlete's clothing, uniform, and personal equipment is labelled. PWC Panthers Track Club will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items. All items found or turned in at the end of practice/meets will be posted on the "lost & found" section of our website. All lost items will be held for one week. At the end of one week, unclaimed items will be donated or disposed of.

## **2.8 INCLEMENT WEATHER**

Practice will rarely, if ever, be cancelled. If practice is cancelled, parents will receive a Mobile Text Message (Refer to Section 2.1 Communication) up to 1 ½ hours prior to practice and a

message will be posted on the home page of our website. If practice is cancelled for the day, normal practice will resume on the next scheduled day unless otherwise noted/communicated.

Track meets, occasionally, are not cancelled due to inclement weather. In the event of lightning, track meets will be delayed. The PWC Panthers Staff will communicate the status of delayed meets via Mobile Group Text Messages.

## 2.9 **SOCIAL MEDIA**

PWC Panthers Track Club understands the popularity and usefulness of social media websites and supports the use by our athletes, provided there is **NO** offensive or inappropriate use of language or photographs, to include the posting of team-related activities (especially while wearing PWC Panthers team gear).

Please keep the following in mind:

- Before participating in any online community, understand that anything posted online is available to anyone in the world. You should not post any information, photos, or comments that could embarrass you, your family, your team or AAU/USATF. This includes information that may be posted by others on your page. **NEVER** post your address, phone number(s), birth date, or other personal information. You could be the target of predators or hackers. **PWC Panthers Staff and Coaches do monitor social network sites regularly.** Athletes could face disciplinary actions or dismissal for violation of this policy.

Parents and athletes must sign the PWC Social Network Agreement form agreeing to abide by the PWC Panthers provisions on social networking and acknowledging that violation of these provisions may result in limitation or dismissal from the club.

## 2.10 **TRASH & FACILITY CLEAN UP**

Please help keep our training facility and spectator areas at track meets clean. **ALL** trash at practice and scheduled track meets, near our location of staging, must be picked up. Failure to keep our training facility trash free jeopardizes our facility use. Failure to keep our team area cleaned at track meets may preclude us from further participation in the meet.

## 3. **REGISTRATION FEE & EXPENSES, FUNDRAISERS AND REFUNDS**

### 3.1 **REGISTRATION FEE & EXPENSES**

Registration fee for the outdoor season ranges from \$150 - \$500. The fee will include uniforms, scheduled invitational meet fees, AAU/USATF membership, club administration, field usage and etc... for the season. The fee may vary for athletes based on if they are a new member or a returning member to the club; elementary, middle or high school student-athlete; and if the athlete must purchase the mandatory uniform apparel. Please note, this fee is **NON REFUNDABLE** after the first day of practice. (For exceptions see 3.3 – REFUNDS/EARLY WITHDRAWALS)

Registration fee does not include track spikes, running shoes, travel expenses or expenses affiliated with qualifiers or the Junior Olympic Championships.

We do extend a family discount for families with more than (1) athlete from the same immediate family. The club accepts payment in the form of cash, check, debit card or money order, made payable to **PWC Panthers Track Club**.

Because our club is nonprofit, our objective is to invest all fees and proceeds during that season, right back into our program. We do our best to keep our fees as closely aligned with our budget as possible.

### 3.2 **FUNDRAISERS**

Prince William County **DOES NOT** provide funding for the PWC Panthers Track Club. Furthermore, there is no “seed money” or start-up money for our club operations. Our entire budget is funded by parents, sponsorships, community donations, and other generous supporters. In addition to the required participation fee, there are fundraising opportunities that can generate funds for the operation of our track and field program. This is an all-volunteer organization and your help, support and cooperation is critical for our club to be successful.

PWC Panthers Track Club has a mandatory raffle every season. This is the only mandatory fundraising required of club members. Families have the choice to either pay for the raffle tickets or sell them to their family, friends, neighbors or co-workers. All tickets *must* be sold by each family and payment returned to a member of the PWC Panthers Administrative Staff. Please see a member of the PWC Panthers Administrative Staff if you should have any questions.

The FedEx FUNdraiser program is our largest fundraising tool which is through the operation of a concession stand at FedEx field. We challenge you to volunteer to work our concession stand during a minimum of **four (4)** regular season home games and events of your choosing. Prior Frontline and TiPS training is required. (Training Dates & Game Schedule will be posted on website). Through the FedEx FUNdraiser, we are able to raise valuable funds needed to operate our club and provide the service that our club members have become accustomed to.

Throughout the season, there will be additional fundraising opportunities (e.g. Chick-Fil-A, Laser Tag, car washes, community yard sales, etc.). With the generosity and dedication of people like you, there is every reason to believe that we can do whatever we put our minds to!

### 3.3 **REFUNDS/EARLY WITHDRAWALS**

If for any reason, an athlete wishes to withdraw from the PWC Panthers Track Club, the athlete or parent must contact the Club President or Head Coach to inform them of their request to withdraw from the team. If the withdrawal date occurs before the first day of practice, all fees will be refunded less the club administrative fee and uniform restocking fee. If the withdrawal date occurs on or after the first day of practice, all fees are non-refundable. If the withdrawal date occurs after the uniform orders have been placed, you will receive the ordered uniform. If

a successful agreement is made to sell the uniform, you will be refunded the cost of the uniform less shipping costs. Refunds for high school athletes will vary depending upon the date of registration and payment receipt.

There will be **no refunds** for athletes removed due to disciplinary action.

#### **ALL MERCHANDISE SALES ARE FINAL.**

Registered athletes who withdraw prior to the beginning of the running season are subject to a one year penalty before being allowed to return to the club. Athletes who desire to return at the end of the one year penalty must receive board approval.

#### **4. TRAINING SCHEDULE**

The club schedules regular practice sessions that each athlete must attend. The Head Coach provides the practice schedule.

The following is the PWC Panthers practice schedule (Formatted in order to compete in upcoming scheduled track meets):

**3-day format - Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM** (instituted during the school year)

**4-day format – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, 6:00 PM – 8:00 PM** (instituted during summer break)

Practices may be added or changed throughout the season (mid-March thru late July) depending upon scheduled meets. All scheduled practice dates, times, and practice locations will be posted on the PWC Panthers website.

If an athlete misses **2 of the 3-day format** or **3 of the 4-day format** of scheduled practices, the athlete will not be permitted to participate in the upcoming track meet. This poses a liability towards the PWC Panthers Track Club safety policy due to a possible injured athlete competing without receiving proper training or observation from the Coaching Staff as a result of missed practices.

#### **5. PARENTAL DAILY ROLE**

PWC Panthers are a friendly, family-oriented club. We believe that parents play an important role in the development of a successful athlete. We welcome your presence at team practices, functions and all scheduled meets. We respect your input and request your support with assisting us achieve success for your child(ren). Please remember to remain positive with your child at all times. The following rules and policies are designed to ensure a fun, safe and successful program for all involved.

## 5.1 GUIDELINES

- Parents WATCH and Coaches COACH!!!
- Parents are **required** to watch the Sports Alliance Video instructing spectator sportsmanship, perspective and discipline at youth sporting events. The video is available on the Parent News section of our website and at the URL <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MiHSzpKEt90&feature=youtu.be>
- Parents are **NOT** permitted on the track or in warm-up/drill areas during practice unless asked by the coaching staff to assist.
- During practice, we require all parents to refrain from “sideline” coaching. **Negative comments will not be tolerated** nor will judging your athlete against the abilities of other Panther athletes. Each athlete performs differently, but we train together as a club. ONE TEAM! ONE FIGHT!
- Due to the limited amount of training time and our coaching staff ability to maintain focus on the training requirement for each athlete, we encourage parents to talk to the coaches after practice or contact them to schedule a conference without it interfering with practice.
- If your athlete must leave practice or a scheduled meet early, notification must be provided as early as possible and preferably prior to scheduled practice or meet. **Please provide notification to a Team Parent(s).** We do understand that there may be occasions when you will need to leave a meet at the conclusion of your athlete’s events; however, we are a family-oriented team and we are big on the “Team Support Concept.” If you care about team support for your “Little Johnny”, then it is courteous to be there cheering for someone else’s “Little Jane.”
- Notify the Team Parent(s), Club Administrator, or Coach if your athlete sustains an injury or illness that will prevent them from attending/participating in scheduled practices and/or meets.
- The outdoor season is March - July. Please try and plan your family vacations around our competitive schedule and mandatory events as much as possible.
- **DO NOT** drop your athlete off at practice and leave without notifying and providing contact information to a Team Parent(s). If you leave, please notify the Team Parent. There may be occasions where practice has to be cancelled early, relocated, or shortened due to unforeseen occurrences. If you choose not to remain on-site for the duration of practice, please be respectful of the PWC Panthers Staff and pick up your athlete in a timely fashion. There is no “grace period.” Our staff, like you, are full-time employees with families. They choose to volunteer with our club after fulfilling their professional responsibilities and sacrifice time with their families to do so. We want to remain appreciative of their commitment to our Panther team.
- Physically, it is your responsibility to ensure that your athlete gets enough sleep, proper nutrition, arrives to and from practices and meets with the proper clothing and equipment. Emotionally, it is your responsibility to provide unconditional love, support and encouragement, especially when your athlete is experiencing difficulties.

- **Consumption of alcoholic beverages and drug use are PROHIBITED during practices and scheduled meets. Violation of this rule provides grounds for immediate expulsion of the parent or athlete from practice and/or scheduled meet.**
- If an athlete has to leave our program due to the actions or inaction of his/her parents, please understand that we do not punish athletes for the actions of their parents. It is because we cannot cultivate successful athletes without the positive support and cooperation of their family. If you decide to withdraw your athlete, please refer to the guidelines specified in Section 3.3 Refunds/Early Withdrawals.
- If your needs are not being fulfilled by the PWC Panthers, certainly let us know. Our coaches and staff have an open door policy and we encourage communication. We acknowledge that our program is not for everyone. If you decide to leave the PWC Panthers Track & Field Club, please allow us the opportunity to end our relationship on a positive note.

## 5.2 PARENT ROLES DURING COMPETITION

- Always pay the appropriate admission fees when attending competitions. All PWC Panther athletes' entry fees will be paid by the Club when registering for the competitions.
- GOOD SPORTSMANSHIP IS IMPORTANT! Having a strong cheering section is an advantage for our team. Cheer loud and often, but do so in a respectful manner. Don't be disruptive to other athletes, parents, coaches or officials. Cheer for ALL members of our team as well as any outstanding performances you witness during the meet. Become friends with other Team Parent(s) and cheer for their athletes as well.
- KEEP A POSITIVE ATTITUDE. Always promote PWC Panthers Track & Field Club in any way you feel is positively appropriate. T-shirts and banners are great expressions of support. NEVER speak negatively about our club, athletes (both Panthers and competitors), and coaches (both Panthers and competitors).
- Arrive at all meets at least **1 hour prior** to your athlete's first scheduled event and check-in with the Team Parent(s) and then with the coaches.
- Parents and athletes are responsible for listening for the call of their events and for being prepared and warmed up.
- Parents are **NOT** permitted in the off-limit areas (e.g. Clerking Area, Field Event Area, Track) during scheduled track meets unless approval has been granted by the track meet officials. Parents are **NOT** to warm-up or stretch athletes, unless requested by the Coaching Staff.
- On the day of meets, the Club will attempt to have a designated area for parents and athletes to set up. All athletes must sit together in this area. If a parent decides to sit in another location (e.g. bleachers), the parent will bear sole responsibility to muster their athlete(s) for their events. The team tent will be used for athlete check in, event mustering, resting, athlete training and Coaches and Team Parent(s) use exclusively.

## 6. ATHLETE'S DAILY ROLE

### 6.1 RESPECT THE SPORT OF TRACK & FIELD

The way you behave at practice and scheduled meets is a reflection on yourself, your parents, your teammates and the PWC Panthers staff and coaches.

The following actions are expected of PWC Panthers athletes:

- Participate in all scheduled meets. Our club is a COMPETITIVE Team. While winning is not the only goal, winning represents what we strive for. Trying to win means you attend practice every day with the commitment to working hard, and overcome your fears by getting up when you fall down.
- It is imperative for all athletes to attend all scheduled practices leading up to meets. Show the highest regard for our sport and your hard work by arriving to all practices and meets on time. Conduct yourself with class and courage during the meets by accepting all times, placements and measurements in a positive manner.
- Thank your coaches, officials and competition for hosting and spending their time on your behalf.

### 6.2 ATHLETE EXPECTATIONS

Athletes must follow the directions of the coaching staff during practices. This includes all exercises and participation during drills and completion of the daily training program. Athletes unwilling to participate in workouts will be dismissed from the track or practice area and will not be allowed to return until the coaches have spoken with their parents. Repeated misconduct, distractions, and/or refusals to complete workouts will be considered grounds for expulsion from the program.

The following behaviors are not allowed:

- |  |  |   |   |
|--|--|---|---|
|  <b>Profanity</b>   |  <b>Horseplay</b> |  <b>Abusive Language</b> |  <b>Fighting</b>       |
|  <b>Sexual Comments</b><br>(displayed by photographs or cell phone) |  |   |  <b>Cell Phone Use</b> |

**DISTRACTIONS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!!!!**

### 6.3 PRACTICE ATTIRE & ACCESSORIES

Practice attire must be appropriate in appearance and conducive to the training. Sweat pants and jacket are to be worn upon arrival to practice and should remain on during warm-up laps and drills, unless otherwise instructed by the Head Coach or coaching staff to discard these items.

**Athletes who are NOT properly dressed for practice will not be permitted to participate in practice until they have the proper attire. NO SWEATS, NO PRACTICE, NO EXCEPTIONS.**

Athletes are also required to bring the following items to practice:

- Water Bottle
- Running shoes (NO BASKETBALL SHOES)
- Track Spikes
- Shorts & T-shirts (may be worn under sweat suit)

#### 6.4 **MEET UNIFORMS**

We are a team – we will look like a team by being dressed in a PWC Panther Track & Field Team uniform.

Information pertaining to the Team uniform is provided during the Open House & Registration and may be found on the PWC Panthers website. Uniform order questions may be directed to the Club's Uniform Manager or Panther Staff Member.

Each athlete must wear a clean and well-maintained team uniform in order to participate in scheduled track meets. Specifically, athletes are to cover their uniforms, especially the bottom portion, when not competing. **Athletes must only wear an approved team uniform by the Head Coach or a member of the coaching staff.**

We are unable to replace uniforms during the track season because the uniforms are custom made (production time is approximately 6 weeks). If an athlete borrows a uniform, a commitment agreement must be signed and items will be returned in good condition or you will be held for financial responsibility. Uniform must be returned during practice following that meet.

Please review the following dress code guidelines:

- No denim OR street shoes
- Sports bras are required as needed and WILL NOT be worn alone
- Wear athletic supporters (jock straps) as needed
- No jewelry
- No obscenity or distasteful artwork
- Spikes may be allowed and are encouraged for competitions **(BRING YOUR SPIKES TO PRACTICE OR MEET, THE COACHING STAFF WILL LET YOU KNOW WHEN TO PUT THEM ON)**

## 6.5 COMPETING/COMMITMENT

The PWC Panthers track meet schedule consists of invitational, district and national meets and the Junior Olympic Games.

Youth competitions typically take place in two-year age divisions (e.g. 8 & under, 9/10, 11/12, 13/14, 15/16, 17/18). These age divisions provide young athletes the opportunity to compete with other athletes of similar ability.

All competition groups are determined by the athlete's age in the current year. The athlete's YEAR OF BIRTH shall determine the appropriate age division for current year competition for all age divisions 8-Under through 15-16 Year Old. The DATE OF BIRTH shall be used to determine the appropriate age division for the 17-18 age divisions thus assuring that any athlete that DOES NOT turn 19 before the last day of the National Championship competition is still eligible to compete.

Track & Field has its own vernacular for describing these age groups. The terminology for AAU meets differs slightly from USATF meets. The explanation for each age division and events can be found on the UNDERSTANDING DIVISION EVENTS page of the club website.

Coaches will select the events in which each athlete will participate. No athlete is "guaranteed" to participate in a particular event at every meet. Event selections for athletes will be based upon the recommendations of the coaching staff based upon observations and progression made during practices. Coaches will ensure that athletes are exposed to a variety of events. On occasion, athletes will have the opportunity to select an event in which they desire to participate. Due to inconsistency, participation in relay events is not guaranteed.

The Team Parent(s) will obtain confirmation for each participating athlete one week in advance of a meet for accountability and registration purposes.

## 6.6 WATER BREAKS

Every athlete **WILL** bring a water bottle to practice, with their name on it. **If you leave it, you lose it.** Throughout the season, PWC Panthers will supply a water cooler with cups for practice. The Team Parent(s) maintains a rotating log for parents to volunteer to provide this service for our athletes.

Water breaks will be given regularly during practice and will increase as the weather grows warmer. **This includes bathroom breaks.**

## 6.7 CELL PHONES USAGE

There will be **NO CELL PHONE USE DURING PRACTICE AT ANY TIME.** If an emergency arises, an athlete must obtain permission from a coach for phone use. **This includes texting as well.**

## 6.8 ATHLETE ROLES DURING COMPETITION

- Arrive at all meets at least **1 hour prior** to your first scheduled event and check-in with the Team Parent(s) and then with the coaches.
- Athletes are expected report to their meeting place in a timely fashion.
- Pay attention to the meet announcer. The meet announcer makes the calls for each event check-in. There is a call (1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and Final) for each age group and event. The coaches of Team Parent(s) will make an announcement within our set up area. Otherwise, it is your responsibility to report to your event on time.
- When you check in, you should be fully equipped (e.g. in uniform, wearing your bib number, and equipped with running shoes or spikes) and ready to compete. Take your water or sports drink with you to check in. Once you check in at your running or field event, you WILL NOT be authorized to leave the check-in area.
- Athletes are expected to eat, drink and use the restroom before reporting to the bull pen or staging area.
- **Concession stands are off limits during scheduled meets.** Athletes may enjoy refreshments from the concession stands AFTER competing in their last event and/or with clearance from a Panthers coach.
- During the meets, athletes are required to wear team warm up and club apparel. Keep all items needed for the meet in your team bag. There should be a coach or team parent representative near the bull pen to collect your backpacks with item INSIDE of the bag. The backpack will be placed back under the Team tent for you to recover. **PLEASE MAKE SURE ALL YOUR CLOTHING IS MARKED WITH YOUR NAME OR INITIALS.**
- Athletes are expected to remain with the team until they have been released to their parent(s), guardian(s), or parent designee at the conclusion of scheduled meets.

## 7. DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

### 7.1 GUIDELINES

The rules and policies associated with Prince William County Panthers AAU/USATF Track & Field Club have been outlined in this handbook. In the event there is an ongoing pattern of disruption or rule infractions, disciplinary actions may be necessary.

The handbook and procedures listed below are not intended to be inclusive. They represent our beliefs as to what disciplinary actions are necessary and appropriate. We will treat all of our athletes and parents as individuals and will seek to impose the most effective disciplinary actions based on each unique set of circumstances.

### 7.2 EXAMPLES OF DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS

- The athlete will lose a position/spot.
- The athlete will be asked to sit and watch or may be given a strength, flexibility, or endurance assignment.

- The athlete will be asked to leave the facility and go home early. They must exit the track and wait in the bleachers until the parent arrived. **THEY ARE NOT TO LEAVE THE SCHOOL GROUNDS.** The coach will request a meeting with the parent(s).
- The athlete will be suspended from the club for a period of time or may be omitted from a meet. **PLEASE BE ADVISED:** If an athlete is suspended from practice or from a meet for any reason, **THE FEE IS NON-REFUNDABLE.**

## 8. TEAM TRAVEL RULES

### **TRAVEL IS NOT INCLUDED IN REGISTRATION FEE.**

All travel costs are the responsibility of the parent(s). Travel to out-of-town meets entails additional costs that are not included in the club registration and meet fees (e.g. lodging, gas, food, etc.).

For scheduled meets that are two or more days in duration, PWC Panthers Track Club may arrange lodging accommodations. Reservation and payment of lodging will be the responsibility of the parent(s)/guardian(s). While the club will attempt to secure lodging for all members at one facility, it may not always be possible. If a member does not desire to obtain lodging at the club-arranged lodging facility, then the member is responsible for securing their own accommodations.

Athletes on relay teams: All athletes on relay teams are **REQUIRED** to attend scheduled meets. The Team Parent(s) will have travel itineraries (e.g. mode of transportation, arrival time and lodging) that are required by our club. Relay fees tend to be much higher than individual fees. Once these fees are paid, if your athlete fails to commit, it will result in an immediate replacement/removal from that relay team, and **NO REFUND** of the relay fee. Both AAU & USATF require verification of participation within 48 hours of posting qualified athletes for both regional and national events, unless a valid excuse is rendered.

Athletes and parents represent the PWC Panthers Track Club while traveling. Please maintain control of your athletes at all times. Athletes should not be allowed to run in the halls at lodging facilities or behave inappropriately at any time. Curfews will be imposed for 12 Year Old and younger athletes.

All athletes are required to arrive at the meet site on time. Athletes who are tardy to their events may face possible removal from that event.