**2020 Murphy High School Track and Field
Athlete and Parent Handbook**

**Congratulations Parents and Athletes!**

You have joined one of the top Track & Field programs in the Nation!

It is the hope of the team coaches that you, the parent, will help to accentuate the total track and field program and experience at Murphy high school by working with the coach(es). In doing so, the athlete will be better able to reach his or her full potential and also enjoy the track and field experience to the fullest.

**Did You Know:**

Track & Field is one of the top participatory sports in the nation for high school students, as well as being #1 in middle schools and at the collegiate level.

We are all blessed to be at such an amazing high school where high expectations and great leadership have given us the ability to compete against some of the best teams in the country! We offer a comprehensive program for both boys and girls and we will attend some of the best meets in the nation.

**Fees and Fundraising:**

We run an amazing program with generally about 60 athletes each season. We work hard to attend the best local meets, provide transportation to out-of-town meets, and develop relationships with companies like Nike to provide us with top level gear. This is a very expensive endeavor, with this year's budget coming in at just under $10,000. It is expected that all athletes and parents buy in to our program and contribute to the team’s success by purchasing your $100 team membership fee to ensure we have great coaches, equipment, schedules, and out-of-town transportation this season. In order to keep us as one of the top programs in the nation, we also need each athlete and family to commit to help out with our fundraising endeavors this season. The fundraising money helps to cover meet entry costs, out-of-town transportation costs, equipment costs, etc. not covered by team fees. All money earned goes back to the athletes during the season! In comparison, most high school sports teams ask for $200-$250 for their team fees each season. ***Our team fee of $100 is due on January 17th, 2020.***

**Season TEAM Goals**

Our season goals are a guide to the things we would like to accomplish this year as a large group. Please work hard to support these goals as an athlete or parent.

* Develop a culture of success for each group on the team (Distance, Sprints, Throws, Vault, Jumps, Hurdles).
* Win the Mobile County Championship Team Titles.
* Win the Sectional Championship Team Titles.
* Qualify as many individual athletes to compete at State as possible.
* Continue to be one of the top programs in the Nation!

**Team Expectations**

·        Be on-time and attend each day.

·        Have a positive attitude.

·        Buy in to the team (Show up, work hard, pay your fee, work fundraisers and compete for your teammates).

·        No foul language, name-calling, put-downs.

·        Be respectful to everyone.

·        Represent MHS and the team in the right way at all times (school, practice, meets, etc.).

·        Give 100%.

·        Communicate to the coaching staff

**Meet Transportation**

o   **Home Meets-**

For home MIDDLE SCHOOL meets, please arrive at the track at the appropriate time and check in with your group coach for instructions. At the conclusion of the meets, we will have a mandatory clean-up session for all team members. We realize that everyone is busy and so are we. Make it a priority to be there and show your teammates and coaches that you are **bought-in** to being a good teammate.

o   **Weekend/Invitational Meets**-

Some Saturday invitationals will require the athletes arriving on their own.  The number one reason for this is that the many different events and event levels will be spread out through the entire morning or afternoon. Please have your athlete at the meet team area at the appointed arrival time.  Once the athlete has warmed down and been released from their team responsibilities, you may take them home. This also saves our team a lot of money for transportation costs which can be $2500-$3000 for some large invites.

o   **Extended Trips**-

Occasionally, the teams may travel on an overnight trip to a major invitational or the State Meet.  This is a great educational experience and usually involves the missing of one or more full-days of school.   Parents are always welcomed to come and help support the team.  Upon request, we will give you advanced notice as to costs, and hotel accommodations, etc.

Traveling to an away meet that involves an overnight stay in hotel or home is a privilege and only reserved for a select group of individuals.

***Rules* for Traveling with the Murphy’s Track & Field Team:**

* Follow all coach/chaperone instructions at all times.
* Be on your best behavior at all times.
* Know where you are supposed to be and stay there.
* Do not leave your hotel room for any reason after “lights out” time!  No exceptions!
* No boys or girls in each others rooms at any time!
* Athletes may not leave the hotel grounds without a chaperone at any time!
* No foul language at any time!
* Be aware of how your actions are being interpreted by those around you.
* Be quiet and respectful at all times at the hotel, restaurants, venue, etc.
* If you have any needs, communicate them immediately to chaperones.
* No boyfriend or girlfriend activity of any kind is allowed.
* If you are feeling ill, communicate that immediately to chaperones.
* Have a positive attitude, even in the face of adversity.
* Athletes are to remain in assigned groupings during the trip.  No one is to be alone.
* All school rules and regulations are in full effect the entire time on this trip.

Travel is a privilege and not a right.  Be on your best behavior and follow the rules and you will stay eligible to travel with the team in the future.

**Pre-Meet**

Get acquainted with the facilities and the strategic spectator points; i.e., the start and finish lines, throwing or jump areas.  It is also helpful to identify your school’s team uniforms (we have many different combinations of uniforms).

Be aware that numerous races will be run during the course of the meet.  A track meet may last anywhere from three hours to a full day.  Meets/events may be organized by the number of schools entered, the class level of the athletes, or divisions.  Find out what time your child is competing and in which particular race.

DO NOT expect the attention of your child once they have joined their team at the meet site.  They need time to mentally and physically prepare for their event(s) with the coaches and the rest of the team.

**Meet Team Area**
The team area is similar in nature to the side lines at a football/soccer game or the bench utilized by the basketball or volleyball teams.  It is a place away from spectators, family, friends, and other teams.  The purpose of the team area is to create “their space” at the meet event.  The team area is used for changing clothes, team synergy, pre and post-race conversation as well as a mobile classroom for the coaching staff.

Please be respectful of the team area and allow the athletes to be adequately prepared and debriefed at the event.  Often the coaching staff may designate a parent(s) as an ambassador of the team or the coaches. Please listen to and follow the advice of this ambassador.

**During The Meet**

Track and Field is most often observed from a stationary point (i.e. bleachers).  The athletes appreciate your support and positive encouragement.  All comments should be positive in nature and never negative to our team or any other team.  Truly all these students are champions for their courage to participate in the great sport of track and field!

At no time is a fan allowed to run along side of the athlete with the purpose of aiding or pacing them.  Please be mindful of that and most definitely be aware and look out for other athletes who are in the race.  One more reminder for you is to dress for the conditions; fans need to drink water as well as athletes, and to have proper shoes.  Learn the names of the other athletes on the team and encourage them as well. Our team can be a family or a group of individuals who avoid each other based on how our parents respond to things in the stands. Good things will happen. Bad things will happen. All are learning experiences for your child. Stay positive with your athlete and his/her coaches no matter what.

Athletes are never to leave the venue without permission from a coach.

**Post Meet/Race/Competition**

After an athlete comes through the finish line or completes their field event they need time together. They need time to share their excitement, frustrations, pain, overall feeling and coach(es) evaluations and instructions about the event.  This will build strong team togetherness.

Also, be aware that athletes have certain responsibilities after they finish their final event.  **The athletes need to warm down as a relay or event group** after their final event and potential alternate assignment as well as actively support teammates who are still competing or have yet to race.  **Taking the athlete home immediately after their event is done may be convenient but is not the best scenario for the team.  This practice does not take place in other sports and should not happen in track and field.**

It is important to note:  after an event, an athlete will possibly be more physically spent than you would anticipate. Symptoms may include rubbery knees, general weakness, and the appearance of fainting, glassy eyes, nausea, and salivating.  These symptoms usually pass quickly.  Coaches, trained in first aid, are aware of these physical reactions and have the responsibility and ability to treat them. If you feel your child is experiencing anything beyond the norm, please let the coaching staff or training staff know immediately.

**Scoring A Track Meet**

For the standard invitational points go to the top eight places with 10 for 1st, 8 for 2nd, 6 for 3rd, 5 for 4th, 4 for 5th, 3 for 6th, 2 for 7th, and 1 for 8th place. High score wins.

**Awards**

At Invitationals, awards are usually given for individual top finishes and these (medals or ribbons) are usually collected by the coaches at the end of the meet. Please check the meet info to see if you need to pick it up or if the coaches do.

**Winning & Losing**

The goal of our program is to develop one of the top combined track and field programs in the nation each season. In order to do that, we as coaches must develop athletes over time so that there will always be a group of athletes that are developed enough to lead the team. This takes time, patience, and wins and losses for athletes. It is always fun to win, but some meets are there purely for development. Some competitions or events are there for the athlete to learn and develop. We truly are either winning or learning in this program. The sky isn't falling when we lose as an individual or as a team, but we will learn from it and make adjustments and come back better for the next event or meet. Sometimes we will put your athlete in a great situation to win, and sometimes we will put them in over their head to see how they respond to high level competition. Please understand that we have a plan in place to develop your child into the best version of themselves they can be. For that to happen they must be allowed to make mistakes, take loses, and be given time to learn how to improve. I believe we have shown in our history that our teams compete well when it matters.

**GOALS**

The setting and assessment of goals is very much a coach & athlete dual decision in track and field.  Certainly, the team has many goals but individual athletes must work with their coaches to set their own.  Some particular goals may include:

PR- Personal Record.

Race Pace - Maintaining a particular speed throughout a race.

Place - Place of finish relative to the entire field.

Team Position - Place of finish relative to one’s teammates.

Progression in Throwing or Jumping.

Good starts.

Good baton exchanges.

Making a specific meet or relay team.

Being a good teammate/helping teammates.

NOTE:  PR can only be relevant if an athlete has previously run that event.  (Under similar conditions.) PR's are fun but have more to do with weather, competition, time of the season, etc. than anything else. Do not expect to PR every time out!

-In addition to athletic and team goals, our athletes are asked to have weekly meet goals.

\*Remember:  Expect the possibility of disappointment after an event by the athlete.  Although one goal set by the individual may have been achieved, an athlete may have fallen short of others and (may) not be satisfied with their total results.  Athletes may need some emotional space after the race by both the parent and the coach.

**SHOES**

If possible, go to a store that deals primarily with running equipment (Run-N-Tri: 6345 Airport Blvd Suite K, Piccadilly Square Drive, Mobile, Alabama 36609 Phone: (251) 340-8101 OR Fleet Feet: 3972 Airport Blvd, Mobile, AL 36608 Phone: (251) 461-6701) or to a specific salesperson who is an experienced runner.  A knowledgeable salesperson can help you make a proper decision based on size, shoe width, running style and type of running training versus racing.  For a beginning runner, there are shoes that can serve for training and racing.  Be sure that the salesperson understands that the shoe will be used for daily training.  300-400 miles (2-3 months) is about the most you can expect to keep a pair of shoes. See the coaching staff if you have additional thoughts or questions on shoes or other equipment.

Spikes and or special field event shoes may be recommended by the event coach. Generally, racing spikes are not for daily practice until late in the season.

**Clothes & Other Equipment**

Athletes need to wear weather appropriate clothing to practice. Group coaches may require specific attire to practice in order to participate (sweats, etc.). Please be aware of the weather and have athletes in appropriate clothing each day. School appropriate dress is expected by athletes at all times at practices and meets. Athletes need to be in team uniform, warm-ups, other team clothing during meets.

**Practice Times**

The track team practices daily (except for Saturdays and Sundays).  The regular school day routine is as follows:

-Practice begins in January.

-2:45 pm - athletes arrive at the track (step or bleachers) for the team meeting.

-4:45pm - practice typically ends.  Variance depends on distances run, and weight room work.  **Please coordinate with your child for practice pick up. Some practices may end as early as 4:30 and some as late as 5:00pm.**

**Spring Break Practices**

**All athletes are expected to be in attendance during spring break practices and meets**.  If you have a special circumstance that requires you to be out of town during that time, you need to see Coach Oliver to discuss whether or not you will be eligible for the remaining meets on the schedule.  Athletes that do not attend spring break practice without being excused ahead of time, may be suspended for up to 2 meets at the head coach’s discretion. We will do our best to work with family time, but a full week is a long time in the middle of the season. Please plan accordingly.***\*\*Group coaches may choose to offer some voluntary practices during spring break.***

**Issues**

Please communicate problems or issues to the head coach as soon as possible.  If there is a point of interest that concerns you, first email the head coach directly. From that point if further attention is needed, a meeting will be scheduled with the head coach and designated assistant coaches.  Finally, if after careful consideration, the parent wishes to have more clarification on an issue, the next individual to speak to would be the Athletic Director.

**Varsity Letter**

Varsity letters are awarded at the end of the season awards banquet.

**To letter Varsity in Track & Field, an athlete must:**

* Remain eligible throughout the season,
* Have no unexcused absences from practices or meets,
* Have no more than two (2) unexcused tardies to practice,
* Exhibit a Varsity Attitude throughout the season,
* Participate in all MHS Track & Field fundraising activities, **and**
* Complete**one** of the following options during the season:

**1.  Consistent varsity level leadership, work ethic, and focus per their group coach.**

**Or**

**2. Qualify and compete in the State Championships.**

**Or**

**3. Finish 4 years as a contributing member of the MHS Track Team in good standing.**

**Varsity Attitude** – Varsity level athletes must meet these expectations to remain varsity and be eligible to letter (just being fast does not mean you are a varsity athlete!)  Varsity Attitude is:

• Enthusiasm that has the athlete show up on time, or early, to each workout and meet.
• The willingness to do what the coach asks without complaining.
• The desire to work as hard as possible at all times.
• The eagerness to do more work and volunteer for extra tasks.
• Cheerfulness at the privilege of being able to work out and compete with our team.
• Team spirit exhibited by cheering on all teammates all the time.
• The graciousness in being polite to all competitors before, during & after competitions.

**Remember, being on varsity does not mean that you somehow have the privilege of doing less -- instead, it means that you have the honor of doing more!**

**Note:** The coaching staff, at their discretion, may letter any athlete due to extenuating circumstances.