

# PARENT HANDBOOK

VICTORIAN LITTLE ATHLETICS  
FAMILY FUN AND FITNESS



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# WELCOME



**T**hank you for choosing Little Athletics for your child. We hope that you enjoy the experience of learning new skills with your child(ren). Thank you in advance for helping at your Centre. Without the enthusiastic help of all parents, Little Athletics as a family activity would not exist, so we encourage you to participate in all Centre activities.

This Handbook will give you an overview of the entire Little Athletics family, and the structures that exist outside your Centre. It is intended that you will keep this handbook with you when you are at Little Athletics. Your local Centre is where you will find most of the information you will need for the weekly Little Athletics activities, and your Centre Handbook/newsletter is the best resource for local information.

If you have any questions or queries, your first point of contact is always your local Centre, or call the Victorian Little Athletics Association (VLAA) office on (03) 9676 3600.



# HISTORY OF LITTLE ATHLETICS

Little Athletics evolved, like most voluntary community organisations, through the mind and conscience of one man. Trevor Billingham recognised a need and introduced an idea designed to meet that need. On an October day in 1963 three boys turned up at an athletics meeting in Geelong. They were ready to compete. On approaching an official they were told they were too young to take part. The official was Trevor Billingham.

The disappointment evident in the boys left a marked impression on his mind. The thought was temporarily forgotten. It came alive again several months later. At a coaching clinic designed for secondary school students it was noted that the majority of children were of primary school age. Reminded of his earlier experience, Trevor had a gem of an idea. The answer to the need expressed in the children could be a simple Saturday morning competition. On the first Saturday of October 1964, Trevor met with a small group of children on a Geelong oval. They took part in a short program of running events.

Little Athletics created tremendous interest. By 1967, the Victorian Little Athletics Association (VLAA) was formed. Within five (5) years there was an Australian Little Athletics Union. Today, more than 100,000 children regularly participate at Little Athletics Centres in every State and Territory in Australia. This represents over 4 million children who have experienced the sport since its inception.

## Today the VLAA Mission is

**“Through the enjoyment of athletics, develop positive attitudes and a healthy lifestyle for our children, families and community”**

# HISTORY OF LITTLE ATHLETICS



# ***VLAA STRUCTURE***



# VLAA REGIONS

The state is broken up into 8 Regions: 4 metro, 4 country.

**Regions:** In what Region is your Centre?

## **EASTERN METROPOLITAN**

Box Hill  
Camberwell/Malvern  
Cockatoo  
Collingwood  
Croydon  
Doncaster  
Kew  
Knox  
Lilydale/Yarra Ranges  
Nunawading  
Ringwood  
Sherbrooke

## **NORTHERN METROPOLITAN**

Coburg  
Craigieburn  
Diamond Valley  
Essendon  
Fawkner  
Hume  
Keilor

Kilmore & District  
Preston/Reservoir  
Sunbury  
Whittlesea City

## **SOUTHERN METROPOLITAN**

Brighton  
Casey  
Caulfield  
Chelsea  
Cranbourne  
Dandenong  
Frankston  
Mentone  
Moorabbin  
Mornington  
Oakleigh  
Pakenham  
Sandringham  
Seaford  
Southern Peninsula  
South Melbourne  
District

Springvale  
Waverley  
Westernport

## **WESTERN METROPOLITAN**

Altona  
Bacchus Marsh  
Brimbank  
Corio  
Geelong  
Gisborne  
Melton South  
Werribee  
Williamstown

# VLAA REGIONS

## **GIPPSLAND**

Bairnsdale  
Corner Inlet  
Leongatha  
Moe  
Orbost  
Sale  
Traralgon  
Warragul  
West Gippsland  
Wonthaggi

Mt. Beauty  
Murrindindi  
Nathalia  
Rochester  
Seymour  
Shepparton  
Strathbogie Shire  
Wangaratta  
Wodonga  
Woodend  
Yarrawonga/Mulwala

## **WIMMERA MALLEE**

Charlton  
Cohuna  
Kerang  
Maryborough  
Mildura & Districts  
St. Arnaud  
Swan Hill

## **NORTHERN COUNTRY**

Albury  
Barooga  
Benalla  
Bendigo  
Corowa  
Echuca/Moama  
Howlong  
Kyabram  
Kyneton  
Lancefield/Romsey  
Lavington/Jindera  
Mansfield

## **WESTERN COUNTRY**

Ararat  
Ballarat  
Camperdown  
Casterton  
Colac  
Dimboola  
Hamilton  
Horsham  
Nhill  
Portland  
Stawell  
Warrnambool



# CENTRE ACTIVITY



## What to wear at Little Athletics/Registration

The VLAA requires all athletes to wear the provided registration number/chest patch at all times at all Centre activities. This is a safety, procedural and sponsorship requirement. This allows other parents to know your child's name and age group. In case of accident or emergency the child's name can be accessed quickly.

The athlete should also wear appropriate footwear, and clothing for participating in athletics events.

Children and parents are encouraged to wear hats and sun cream to all Little Athletics events. All participants should also bring a drink bottle to Centre activities.

Parents should ensure that they have completed the registration form in full, and signed the form. Parents must detail any medical conditions on the registration form.



# CENTRE ACTIVITY



## How to get involved?

All parents who sign their children on to attend Little Athletics are required to help at the Centre level. Many parents choose to help at all Centre competitions and may elect to be on the Centre committee etc. Your help is not only welcomed, but required.

You may like to start by “raking the pit”, or timing a race, or setting up the equipment and then after learning from other parents, you may like to attend a coaching course to learn more about your favourite event. Whatever you choose to do, we thank you for your help, the children would not be able to enjoy and learn skills at Little Athletics without you.

You can start by reading through the “How to help at Little Athletics”. For more information on the Level 2 Officials program contact the office.



## Introduction to Coaching course (ITC)

The Introduction to Coaching course (ITC) is a Level 0 accreditation with the Australian Track & Field Coaches Association. The courses are held each year throughout the Track & Field season at venues throughout Victoria.

The course offers tuition on each of the athletic events held at Little Athletics, plus extra modules on warm ups, coaching and officiating children. ITC courses are aimed at anybody wanting to have a basic understanding of athletics, and enough confidence to be able to coach children at beginner stages.

No experience or knowledge of athletics is required to sign up for a course. If you would like a registration form, or you have any questions, please contact our Development Co-ordinator on (03) 9676 3600.



# ON TRACK

## On Track

### On Track

**O**n Track is a modified version of athletics that makes it easy for your children to learn the skills of our sport and easy for parents to coach it. Aimed at the U/6 to U/8 age groups, the program commences with basic fundamental motor skills and progresses through to the more complex athletic extension skills. The program is an action packed, fun filled 90 minutes that has the children on the go the whole time. Using an extensive range of fun activities, the idea is to teach children the correct skills and techniques of athletics using the enjoyment kids naturally get through exercise. Like modified skill based programs of other sports, it's the parents that become the coaches, but don't worry, VLAA teaches you everything you need to know. It's easy to pick up and a lot of fun too. If your Centre doesn't run the On Track program, you need to ask "why not?"

If you have any questions, or want to know how your Centre can get On Track, please call the Office on (03) 9676 3600.



# ***JUNIOR DEVELOPMENT SQUAD***

## **Junior Development Squad – JDS**

**T**he JDS is a program aimed at giving our talented athletes a little more in terms of coaching, education and a sense of accomplishment. Athletes must qualify for the Squad by achieving athletic results that better a set performance criteria. The squad is open to all registered athletes from U/12 to U/15 who meet the performance criteria. Scheduled during the Track & Field season, the program consists of numerous activities including coaching days, coaching camp, education sessions, information sessions for parents and a presentation ceremony. For details on how to qualify for the JDS and to view the performance criteria please visit our website, ask your Centre Secretary for the information, or call the Little Athletics office on (03) 9676 3600.



# VLAA AWARDS

## Awards for Volunteers/Parents

Each Centre and Region has specific awards for parents and other volunteers who help make Little Athletics a huge success. The VLAA also has awards for our volunteers.

## VLAA Awards

The Victorian Little Athletics Association recognises service by both individuals and Centres. These awards are:

- 1) Life Governor
- 2) Distinguished Service Award
- 3) Meritorious Service Award
- 4) Jeff Crouch Award
- 5) Volunteer Award
- 6) Responsible Centre Award
- 7) Top Centre Award

Application forms and further information are available from the Little Athletics office for Awards 1, 2 & 3. Also see section 38 of the VLAA Constitution. Details for awards 4, 5 & 6 with application forms are included in Centre mailings each season. The criteria for the awards are as follows:

## Awards and Criteria

### Life Governor

A minimum of 15 years highly meritorious service that has positively contributed to the betterment of the Association. 10 years of such service being outside an affiliated Club or Centre, in administrative roles at Region, Standing Committee, Board of Management or Australian Little Athletics.

### Distinguished Service

A minimum of 12 years highly meritorious service with a positive contribution to the betterment of the Associations operations. 6 years of such service to be outside an affiliated Club or Centre in administrative roles

# VLAA AWARDS

at Region, Standing Committee, Board of Management or Australian Little Athletics.

## **Meritorious Service**

A minimum of 8 years service to the Association, with 5 years of such service to be in administrative or senior officials role at Region or Association level.

## **Jeff Crouch Award**

A minimum of 10 years service to the Association in a role that renders the nominee ineligible for other service awards

## **Volunteer Awards**

Meritorious service to a Club, Centre or Association during the current season.

## **Responsible Centre Award**

Those Centres which best promote the Healthy Lifestyle policies of VicHealth and the Association during the season, and additionally adopt and promote other Association policies.

## **Top Centre Award**

Centres who retained at least 55% of the previous year's members and who increased their registrations are eligible for the TOP CENTRE Award. The Centres are also assessed according to their participation in / compliance with the following: Bring A Friend, Athletics in Schools, State Conference, Laps for Kids, State Championships, On Track, Association Financial and Registration requirements, and Administrative proficiency (eg response to requests from the office).

# INSURANCE

## Insurance

The Victorian Little Athletics Association, through its relationship with Australian Little Athletics provides insurance for all Little Athletics participants, members and helpers throughout Australia. Little Athletics members are covered by policies arranged through Horsell International Pty Ltd.

The insurance provided includes: Personal accident at the Centre, Liability insurance for coaches and Centre executive members, and Public Liability.

The insurance scheme covers all registered members, participants trialing before becoming a member, coaches, voluntary workers, directors and officials of the Australian Little Athletics and their affiliated State Associations, Centres, Regions and Clubs.

Little Athletics Centres must arrange their own equipment insurance. This can be done through Horsell International or another insurer.

All Centres have been supplied with a Australian Little Athletics Insurance scheme and the Personal Injury Claim Form. If you or your child is injured at the Centre, you should ask the Centre to complete the form that is found in the Centre Resource Guide. The Centre secretary will have a copy of this Guide.

To make a claim the Centre should forward the claim form to the VLAA Chief Executive Officer. The office will then forward the details of the claim to the Horsell office in Sydney.

If Centres have any questions about Insurance they should contact the Chief Executive Officer on (03) 9676 3600.



# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Web Site

For all up to date information on all areas of Little Athletics, please check the Little Athletics web site at [www.littleathletics.com.au](http://www.littleathletics.com.au) The web site contains all policies, timetables for State events, State Championships results, Centre contact details and much more.



## Magazine

All Little Athletes families are given a copy of the “Little Athlete” magazine in February/March and September/October. The magazine can be collected from your Centre. If your family does not receive a magazine, please call the VLAA office on (03) 9676 3600.

## State Squad –



## Australian Little Athletics Championships – (ALACs)

The Australian Little Athletics Championships (ALACs) are conducted under the auspices of Australian Little Athletics. The VLAA appoints an ALAC Management Team each year to oversee the State Team activities. This Management group consists of: a State Coach, a Team Manager, and an ALAC Coordinator. The Championships are held in a different state each year and include the Australian Team Championships (under 13) and Multi-Event Competition (under 15). The under 15 Multi Event athletes are chosen from the Gold and Silver medallists at State Multi Event. The under 13 athletes are not necessarily chosen from medal winners at State Championships. Under 13 athletes are chosen for rounded ability and maximum point score.

# GENERAL INFORMATION



Each year, a State Team is chosen from the under 13 and under 15 age groups. Twenty two (22) under 13 athletes make up a final team for the Australian Teams Championship. Four (4) under 15 athletes will contest the Multi Event Championship.

## **VLAA Conference**

The Victorian Little Athletics Association holds its Annual Conference and Annual General Meeting in August each year. The Association invites two delegates from each Centre to attend in order to represent the members of their Centre; observers are also welcome. It is at the Conference that Centres have the chance to vote on Constitutional and Competition motions that have been submitted by the Centres in order to change the rules of the Association. All Centres are encouraged to review the Constitution and the Competition Regulations in order to place motions, and be part of shaping the rules of the Association.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Dual Registration

Dual registration is for athletes who are in the Under 13 to Under 15 age groups, who are interested in participating at the senior level (Athletics Victoria (AV)).

The athlete registers with their Little Athletics Centre, then registers with an AV Club.

Your Little Athletics Centre will give you a letter stating that your child is interested in becoming a Dual athlete. The athlete presents this letter with a minimal fee to the AV Club.

## Open Days

Many Centres conduct Open Days throughout the season. At an Open Day, athletes can enter their favourite events and compete against athletes from many surrounding Centres. These Open Days allow athletes to compete against a different set of athletes, choose their own events rather than following the normal Centre program and provide an opportunity to meet other athletes. The Open Day entry forms are sent out to Centre Secretaries with the Centre Newsletter each fortnight. Or you can call (03) 9676 3600 to obtain a list of Open Days and a copy of any entry forms available.

## Region Coaching Camps

Most Little Athletics Regions hold Coaching Camps. Please ask your Centre for information about Region Coaching Camps. These camps provide athletes with the opportunity to get extra coaching and meet other children.

## Kids Klix

Kids Klix are specialists at childrens photography. They attend all State Championships and take photographs. They can also attend Centres upon request. Telephone: 9576 5586.

# GENERAL INFORMATION

## Merchandise



The VLAA has a large range of great merchandise items. These can be purchased at State and Regional Championship events, or from the Little Athlete magazine. If you would like to view the Little Athletics merchandise range, please check out the web site at [www.littleathletics.com.au](http://www.littleathletics.com.au)

## Where to go after Little Athletics – AV contact

As you will discover during your time at Little Athletics, athletics is a great social sport. You or your children may like to continue with Athletics once your children are past the Little Athletics age range. Athletics Victoria is the organisation that organises and promotes athletics at the senior level (15 years plus). Athletics Victoria can be contacted on (03) 9428 8195 or visit their web site at [www.athsvic.org.au](http://www.athsvic.org.au)

# PRIVACY

Privacy legislation governs how information that is collected from members is used.

The VLAA collects information from our members on the registration form at the beginning of each season. This information will be collected for the sole use of the Victorian Little Athletics Association. The information on the Registration form may be used for the following purposes:

- to mail out the Little Athlete magazine to each family
- to track athletes and families when the Centres have misplaced some of the registration data
- to mail information to certain age groups that may be interested in products such as the Junior Development Squad or training camps
- to return lost property
- to check medical details for camps
- and to track down members to seek permission to use them in photos in the magazine and promotional posters.

If you have any questions regarding how your family's personal information is used, please contact the office.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

All Centres have a set of house rules depending on the venue and the committees' decision on rules that are needed to keep children safe at the Centre.

The VLAA has rules in place that the Centre must pass on to the parents and children to ensure that all participants are in a safe and healthy environment. These include:

## **The Safety Plan**

All Centres have been provided with a Safety Plan and checking templates. This plan gives the Centre committee a guide on what elements of the track and field equipment must be checked before events can take place at the Centre. There are templates provided for the chief of each event to check before commencement of the event.

## **SunSmart**

All Little Athletics Centres must implement SunSmart procedures. This means they must encourage all participants to wear hats at the Centre and remind participants to wear sun cream. Where practicable, shade should be provided.

## **SmokeFree**

In line with the VLAA mission, all Little Athletics Centres are SmokeFree. Smokers must move outside the venue, away from the sight of children to smoke. This rule is enforced in the best interests of the children and the health of all participants at the Centre. The rule will be enforced at all Centre, Region and State events.

## **Healthy Food Options**

In line with the VLAA mission, Centres that provide food for participants and spectators, must provide healthy options for those members. These healthy options include water, fruit juice, fruit, salad sandwiches etc.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

## **Codes of Behaviour**

The following Codes of Behaviour underpin the Association.

### **Administrators' Code of Behaviour**

- Involve children in the planning, leadership, evaluation and decision-making related to the activity.
- Ensure that equal opportunities for participation are made available to all children, regardless of ability, size, shape, sex, disability or ethnic origin.
- Ensure that equipment and facilities are safe and appropriate to the ability level of participating children.
- Ensure that rules, equipment, events and training schedules take in to consideration the age, ability and maturity level of participating children.
- Ensure that adequate supervision is provided by qualified and competent coaches and officials capable of developing appropriate positive behaviour and skill technique.
- Remember that children participate for enjoyment and play down the importance of rewards.
- Avoid allowing programs to become primarily spectator entertainment. Focus on the needs of the participants rather than the enjoyment of the spectators.
- Provide clinics aimed at improving the standards of coaching and officiating, with an emphasis on appropriate behaviour and skill technique.
- Ensure that parents, coaches, sponsors, administrators, officials, physicians and participants understand their responsibilities regarding fair play.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

- Distribute the Code of Behaviour sheet to spectators, officials, parents, coaches, athletes and the media.
- Avoid use of bad language.

## **Officials' Code of Behaviour**

- Compliment all participants on their efforts.
- Be consistent, objective and courteous in calling all infractions.
- Condemn unsporting behaviour and promote respect for all opponents.
- Ensure that the “spirit of the game” for children is not lost, by using common sense and not over-emphasising errors.
- Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of the participants.
- Publicly encourage rule changes, which will reinforce the principles of participation for fun and enjoyment.
- Ensure that your behaviour is consistent with the principles of good sporting behaviour. Actions speak louder than words.
- Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound officiating principles, and the principles of growth and development of children.
- Avoid use of bad language.

## **Parents' Code of Behaviour**

- Encourage children to participate if they are interested. However, if a child is not willing, do not force him or her.



# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

- Focus upon the child's efforts rather than the overall outcome of the event. This assists the children in setting realistic goals related to their own ability by reducing the emphasis on winning.
- Teach children that an honest effort is as important as victory, so that the result of each event is accepted without undue disappointment.
- Encourage children to always participate according to the rules.
- Never ridicule or yell at a child for making a mistake or losing an event.
- Remember children are involved in Little Athletics for their enjoyment, not yours.
- If you disagree with an official, raise the issue through the appropriate channels rather than questioning the official's judgement and honesty in public. Remember, officials give their time and effort for your child's involvement.
- Support all efforts to remove all verbal and physical abuse at Little Athletics activities.
- Recognise the value and importance of being a volunteer official and/or coach. They give their time and resources to provide recreational activities for the children and deserve your support.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not harassing athletes, coaches or officials, nor smoking on the arena or being intoxicated.
- Avoid use of bad language.

## **Spectators' Code of Behaviour**

- Remember that children participate in Little Athletics activities for fun. They are not participating for the entertainment of spectators only, nor are they miniature professionals.
- Applaud good performances and efforts from each athlete. Congratulate all participants upon their performance regardless of the event outcome.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

- Respect the officials' decisions. If there is a disagreement, follow the appropriate procedure in order to question the decision and teach the children to do likewise.
- Never ridicule or scold a child for making a mistake during a competition. Positive comments are motivational.
- Condemn the use of violence in any form, be it by spectators, coaches, officials or athletes.
- Show respect for each participant. Without them there would be no events.
- Encourage athletes to follow the rules and the officials' decisions.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not harassing athletes, coaches or officials, nor smoking on the arena or being intoxicated.
- Avoid use of bad language.

## **Coaches' Code of Behaviour**

- Be reasonable in your demands on young athletes time, energy and enthusiasm.
- Teach athletes the rules of the sport are mutual agreements, which no one should evade or break.
- Whenever possible, group athletes to give a reasonable chance of success.
- Avoid over-coaching the better performing athletes, the "just average" athletes need and deserve equal time.
- Remember that children participate for fun and enjoyment and that winning is only part of their enjoyment. Never ridicule or yell at the children for making mistakes or losing an event.
- Ensure that equipment and facilities meet safety standards and are appropriate to the age and ability of the athletes.
- Take into consideration the maturity level of the children when scheduling and determining the length of training times and competition.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

- Develop respect for the ability of opponents as well as for the judgement of officials and coaches.
- Follow the advice of a physician when determining when an injured athlete is ready to recommence training or competition.
- Make a personal commitment to keep yourself informed of sound coaching principles and the principles of growth and development of children.
- Demonstrate appropriate social behaviour by not harassing athletes, other coaches or officials, nor smoking on the arena or being intoxicated.
- Avoid use of bad language.

## **Little Athletes' Code of Behaviour**

- Play by the rules.
- Never argue with an official. If you disagree, ask your Team Manager/Age Group Manager to deal with the matter.
- Control your temper. Verbal abuse of officials or other athletes, deliberately distracting or provoking an opponent is not acceptable or permitted in our sport.
- Work equally hard for yourself and/or your Centre/Club. Your Centre/Club's performance will benefit.
- Be a good sport. Applaud all good results whether they are by your Centre/Club, opponent or the other Centre/Club.
- Treat all children, as you would like to be treated. Do not interfere with, bully or take unfair advantage of another participant,
- Co-operate with your coach, club mates and other participants. Without them there would be no competition.
- Participate in Little Athletics for the "fun of it" and not just to please parents and coaches.
- Avoid use of bad language.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

## **Codes of Health Behaviour**

Little Athletics understands the harmful affects of smoking on health, fitness and performance in sport, and as a result has adopted the following Code of Behaviour:

Participants/Athletes are reminded that smoking adversely affects performances and are prohibited from smoking during competition, trainings, warm-ups, and warm-downs.

Coaches and Officials are reminded of their responsibilities, as “role models” particularly with juniors, and are asked to refrain from smoking whilst associated with our sport.

Premises and playing areas are “Smoke Free Zones”.

Visiting Participants, Coaches and Officials are also asked to respect our Codes of Behaviour.

Spectators are reminded that smoking is inappropriate behaviour in a sporting environment and are asked to respect our sport Code of Behaviour

Canteens will provide options of healthy foods for athletes and parents.

# ***CENTRE RULES/POLICIES***

## **Championships**

The Association holds four State Championships each year. These are the Relay Championships in December, the Multi Event Championships in late February/early March, the Track & Field Championships in March and the Cross Country Championships in July.

## **Competition Regulations**

The Association competitions are governed by a set of rules named the Competition Regulations. A new set of Competition Regulations is produced every year after Centres vote on changes at the Annual VLAA Conference. Centres use these rules to run Centre competition, although some may be modified to suit the particular Centre. The current Competition Regulations can be downloaded from the Little Athletics web site at [www.littleathletics.com.au](http://www.littleathletics.com.au)

# VLAA SPONSORS

Without sponsorship Little Athletics in Victoria would not be what it is today. These companies and organisations are supporting your sport... we would like to see you supporting them...

## NATIONAL SPONSORS:



adidas

The Athlete's Foot

## STATE SPONSORS/SUPPORTERS



IGA – Major sponsor



VicHealth

HEALTH THROUGH SPORT

VicHealth



Department for Victorian Communities









**CHECK OUT**  
**[www.littleathletics.com.au](http://www.littleathletics.com.au)**  
**FOR**

- **On line ticket book**
- **Coaching/Training Tips**
  - **Games**
    - **Groovy Gear**



# ***HOW TO CONTACT LITTLE ATHLETICS***

## **YOUR LOCAL CENTRE CONTACT DETAILS**



### **The Victorian Little Athletics Association**

**Unit 2, 95 Salmon Street (Cnr Rocklea Dve)**

**Port Melbourne, Vic 3207**

**Ph: (03) 9676 3600 Fax: (03) 9676 3601**

**[www.littleathletics.com.au](http://www.littleathletics.com.au)**

**Postal Address:**

**Locked Bag 1011 Port Melbourne 3207**