



Surrey Schools Athletic Association

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SURREY CROSS COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT SQUAD

(MONDAY 19th October, 2026 @ ACS International School Cobham, Portsmouth Rd, Hersham, Cobham KT11 1BL)

“Your Goals are the roadmaps that guide you & show you what is possible” Les Brown

Dear Athlete,

In recognition of your successful performance at Cross Country, you are invited to join this year's **Surrey Cross Country development squad on MONDAY 19th October, at ACS International School COBHAM.** This special training day will encourage athletes to **analyse their training and competition plans** and ensure that athletes are aware of how **to make the most opportunities** as they target the cross-county championships in early 2027. The day will encourage each athlete to be ambitious in their running and believe continuous improvement really is possible.

We are delighted to **Poppy Guest (AFD and Surrey regular with her incredible record of Success @ English Schools, CAU, ECCA, South of England and Nationally)** to share her story and steps from Lily B and early success in 2021 to many elite performances and National successes. Poppy will show our athletes should ‘believe’ & want to develop their full potential.

We would ask parents whose **athletes might still be attending school at this time to seek permission from school to attend this important development day.** Last year most Head teachers recognised the importance of the day and supported athletes attending the course.

All elite and talented athletes should have aims for their running whilst also realising that we are all different and progress at different rates. In other words, athletes should believe in themselves and that **small steps** really can achieve anything including a truly **successful cross-country Championships result in early 2027.**

The 128-acre campus is home to the best range of quality sports facilities of any international school in Europe, including all-weather astroturf pitches, **competition-class 25-metre swimming pool** (we will use this for one of our sessions) and an all-weather 400m running track - we have facilities to make a difference. We will also update athletes on the new **England Athletics Competition Age groups** currently being finalized. It seems likely to be as follows: **Under 12** (School years 5&6), **Under 14** (School years 7&8), **Under 16** (School years 9 &10) **Under 18** (School years 11&12) and **Under 20** (Year 13). The recommended School and District race distances are as follows:

Age Group (currently finalised & targets for U20 and U12s being decided)	Distances - Range
U18 Boys – U18 (11&12)	4800 – 5300
U18 Girls – U18 (11 &12)	3000 - 3500
U16 Boys – U16 (9&10)	4000- 4500
U16 Girls – U16 (9&10)	2600 - 3000
U14 Boys – U14 (7&8)	2300 – 2700
U14 Girls – U14 (7&8)	2300 - 2700

THE DAYS' PROGRAMME

The day will start at **9.30am** and finish at **4.30 pm**. After registration in Dining Hall between **9.15 and 9.30 am, athletes** will complete our Goal Setting for Future success @ XC Championships sheet (and after discussions with their coach) we believe this will help them move forward. The analysis will highlight key focus areas for successful training and racing. Self-confidence in training is the feeling that you are equal to the task at hand and our team of specialist coaches will once again follow up on the key points including use of pulse in training/recovery between training “reps” in order to ensure that training adds (rather than holds back) your progress. The importance of “staying strong mentally” along with recovery and “recovery techniques” will be key themes of the day.

YOU WILL NEED TO BRING

Our base will be at the Dining Hall at the heart of the school. We would ask athletes to bring 2 pairs training shoes for the Indoor and outdoor sessions along with **a swimming costume (and aqua jogging belt if they have one)** for the return of our Aqua Jogging training session. Lesley Taylor (ASA swimming coach, STA Associate member & UKA Coach) will lead the session that targets running form and staying focused, both of which can make a difference to performance. With the day encouraging athletes to become involved with reviews & discussions, key talks and indoors and outdoors training sessions, Aqua jogging / swimming, athletes should bring both spikes and trainers (2 pairs) and be prepared for changeable and wet weather. All athletes should bring 2 sets of kit to cover the possibility of poor weather, together with dry clothes to go home in. Athletes with sports watches (that can give pulse readings), foam rollers and an Aqua Jogging belt should bring these to the day. It is also recommended that athletes undertake only light training the previous day and seek to cool down after each activity.

Athletes should also bring a packed lunch/drinks

THE COACHES

Each athlete (from Primary to secondary school 6th form aged athletes) will be offered a suitable challenge and be led by a full range of **successful elite athletes** including **Julian Goater** (1981 National Cross-Country champion and voted in Athletics Weekly as one of the “greatest cross-country runners in history”).

Athletes will explore the importance of technique in running faster in the popular outdoor team relay sessions from **Julian Goater** (author of *The Art of Running Faster* available to purchase for £20 on the day) and **Rodger Hughes** (BMC Level 4 coach). **Rodger** will also lead another key technique **drill sessions** showing that a little progress in technique work can add up to big results.

Jo Davis (Member of the British Psychological Society) will support and encourage athletes to be positive and to develop their mental strength to support their running. Her key note session this year explains the **benefits of visualization**. Athletes will learn how to use visualization to sharpen focus, boost confidence, and enhance performance. Jo will show athletes how to apply these methods to training and unlock their mental edge on race day!

Louise Evans (County Schools/Club athlete, SE Schools, English Schools and European athlete) will share her experience and expertise as a top-class athlete with her knowledge as a lead **strength and conditioning specialist**. There is no one better than Louise to inspire our athletes and show the benefits of strength and conditioning drills, pulse checking and long-term planning.

Athletes should be prepared for changeable and wet weather. It is also important that they **seek to cool down after each activity.**

IMPORTANT DATES.

Monday,	19th October 2026	Country Development Squad @ACS International Cobham
Saturday,	21st Nov 2026	Midlands Inter County XC, Himley Hall, Dudley (likely 7/8, 9/10, 11/12)
Saturday,	9th January 2027	Surrey County AA Cross Country Champs (Lloyd Park, Croydon)
Saturday,	23rd January 2027	Surrey Schools <u>Primary</u> Cross Country Champs + <u>Secondary</u> (Reigate). <i>Please note this is a combined Championships!</i>
Saturday,	30 th January 2027	SEAA Southern Inter Counties @Beckenham Palace Park.
TBC		SE Schools Inter Counties Match (TBC)
½ term	15th February 2027	Elite Surrey County Squad Training Day (ACS Egham)
Saturday,	20th February 2027	ECCA National XC Championships @ Nottingham
Saturday,	6th March 2027	English Schools XC Champs, (Temple Newsom, Leeds)

I trust you will continue to enjoy being a runner and will use the day to plan to be in your best shape when it matters. Further details and information about this day will be posted on our website www.ssaa.org.uk. *Please contact me by email should you require further information about any of the important above events.*

We would ask parents to make a **£35 contribution** to cover the cost of the day. Our preferred method of payment is through **our Surrey bank** (although if needed parents can post a cheque). Surrey Schools Athletic Association, Nat West Bank, Branch code: 60 11 41 a/c No. 52473929 Please also add a reference **COBHAM26+THE SURNAME OF THE ATHLETE** the payment is for. PLEASE DO SCAN/PHOTO/EMAIL ME the completed form.

After consulting with your parents and/or coach, we hope that you (and your coach if available) will be able to join your team mates and join the **Surrey Cross Country Development squad on Monday 19th October at ACS International School Cobham**. We would like to thank ACS International Schools for again allowing us to host our annual event.

J Manson.

Surrey Schools AA

2026 SURREY CROSS COUNTRY DEVELOPMENT SQUAD

(Monday 19th October, 2026. ACS International School Cobham, Portsmouth Rd, Hersham,
Cobham KT11 1BL)

FOR THE ATTENTION OF:

MR J MANSON, 8, HOLMETHORPE AVENUE, REDHILL, SURREY, RH1 2HT

Tel: 07932 174860

Email: jmansonjm@icloud.com

FROM THE ATHLETE

Full Name
(BLOCK CAPITALS PLEASE)

Date of Birth School Year School

Home Address

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.....

Post Code

Home Phone Number Athlete's Mobile Phone Number

Parent's Email Athlete's Email

AGE GROUP (tick one)

U12

U14

U16

U18

U20

5/6

7/8

9/10

11/12

Year 13

FROM THE PARENT

My son/daughter will/will not be able to attend the elite cross country athletes team training day
on Monday 19th October, 2026. ACS International School Cobham, Portsmouth Rd, Hersham,
Cobham KT11 1BL

I am willing voluntarily to donate the sum of **£35.00** and have paid via BACS or enclose a cheque
payable to Surrey Schools AA as my share of the cost of the day. I understand that those
supervising my child are *in loco parentis* and must exercise a standard of care that would be
expected of any reasonably prudent parent. The County Council will not be responsible for any
personal injury or any other damage unless it is negligent.

Signed(Parent/Guardian) Tel

*NB: Athletes are recommended to bring along a packed lunch although it is hoped that some snacks
will again be available for athletes to purchase at the school (Dining Hall).*

**NOTE: SURREY SCHOOLS HOODIES (£23/£25), SURREY BEANIES HATS (£8) &
WARM UP / WARM DOWN LIGHTWEIGHT TOPS (£10) (32"/34" ONLY)** will be available
to buy before the sessions, lunch time and at the end of the day.

PAYMENT FOR KIT CAN BE MADE ON THE DAY, ONLY BY CASH OR CHEQUES