

November 2020



King Henry VIII Senior School
Warwick Road
Coventry
CV3 6AQ

Headmaster: Philip Dearden
BA (Hons), MA Ed

Dear Teachers, Coaches and Runners,

50th ANNUAL KING HENRY VIII SCHOOL CROSS COUNTRY RELAY

I do hope that you are well, and have found ways to keep healthy, fit and active with your running in this challenging year. To begin with, I am sad to announce that the King Henry VIII Relay Race will not be able to go ahead as normal this year. In discussion with the Headteacher and our local authority, we know that it would not be appropriate for schools from around the UK to compete in one location in this way.

This news is especially disappointing as it was to be our 50th event, the Relay Race having first been run in 1972, and also because our school governors have recently announced that we are to be merged with our sister school in Coventry from next year – and so from 2022, life at King Henry's will see some considerable changes.

However, I am pleased to confirm that, COVID-19 aside, the 'King Henry VIII Relay Race' will continue in its current form for many, many years to come – despite the school merger, the plan is to continue with all the traditions of the Relay Race. We have a rich and proud history. In fact, just before I was informed about the changes to the school, I had compiled all of the race results in a GDPR-compliant manner on our website, for all to see! For these results, please go to our updated 'History of the Race' page:

<https://kinghenrys.co.uk/co-curricular/king-henry-viii-relay-race/king-henry-viii-relay-race-archive/>

So, onto the 2021 Race.

This year we have had to do some problem solving, to facilitate schools competing against each other – and we have come up with what I hope will be a satisfactory solution for all!

Around the UK there are 1074 parkrun locations, which clearly set out a 5km run. On the parkrun website there is, for almost all the routes, a map showing the route. It may also be the case that you have run this course as part of your running activities over the years. The parkrun organisers are facing considerable challenges themselves, and don't feel they have the capacity to help us in a formal way, but Paul Sinton-Hewitt (parkrun Founder and a previous guest speaker at the Relay Race) is very supportive of our idea, and extremely keen that the Relay Race goes ahead using the same simple, accessible and decentralised thinking that parkrun has always employed to bring running to so many.

So – how will next year's race work?

Step 1: Course – Go to www.parkrun.org.uk/events and find a course local to your school.

Step 2: Safety – Check the route yourself to ensure you are happy with it. Please contact me, not parkrun, if you have any questions!

Step 3: Sign Up – Enter the race, for free, via this link, telling us which course you have chosen and roughly how many teams you would like to enter: [CLICK HERE](#)

Step 4: Practice – Get your young people running! Get your school runners practicing times of 5km, and ensure that they know the route well.

Step 4: Teams – WHEN WE KNOW A DATE THAT ALL PUPILS ARE BACK IN SCHOOL.... WE WILL SHARE A DATE TO RUN THE EVENT. In the week before the “Event Week” you need to decide on your teams. I will be emailing you and asking you to submit the names. You can enter more than one team for boys and girls – we expect an A team (your best runners), and then perhaps B, C, D (which will be made up of others, so not necessarily ranked). We will be asking for your runners’ year group, and so will have more prizes this year than normal.

Step 5: Race Week – During the “Event Week” run the course, collect times for all your runners and submit times (and a photo if you are able – we’d love to compile these).

Step 6: Prizes – At Henry’s we will then work to collate the data and award prizes to schools for the following:

- Top 10 Fastest Teams
- Top 10 Fastest Runners
- Juniors – age-related prizes to teams and individuals
- North vs South vs Midlands
- Certificate for all competitors
- Teacher / Coach Race

Step 7: Special Mentions – The fact is that not all courses in parkrun are alike, but parkrun are allowing us to use their data to try and weight the courses according to difficulty – will it change the ranks? (This is the time when you’ll get rewarded for running up all those northern hills, unlike the plains of Salisbury!)

- Toughest Course Run
- Weighted times: Top 10 Fastest Teams; Top 10 Fastest Runners

Step 8: Awards Ceremony – As usual, we will have an opportunity for your young runners to hear from people who have contributed to the sport – we hope that your team will enjoy hearing some inspiring words and interesting statistics from the race, as well as celebrating the success of the teams and individuals.

It is my hope that this makes sense, and that your young people are inspired to run hard! Looking forward to hearing from you, and of course if you have any questions, do contact me.

Kind regards,



Tom Andrews
Master in Charge, Relay Race