

# WENTWORTH SKI RACING CLUB

PO Box 307, 610 Wright Avenue, Dartmouth, NS B3B 0H8

[www.wentworthracing.com](http://www.wentworthracing.com)



## Academic Policy

WSRC acknowledges Alpine Canada's Policy related to athletes' academics. This policy is created to describe how WSRC achieves this.

Ski racing does not in itself require athletes to miss school. It is possible to compete at a recreational level while placing a high priority on attending school. However, as athletes progress in their ski racing career, those who wish to train the ACA recommended number of days and to compete at a more intense level will soon find themselves missing a considerable amount of school. Extended training on weekdays, training camps in Quebec, New Brunswick and Wentworth combined with a race series that includes travel lasts several days can place a lot of demand on athletes' time.

At WSRC, we recognize that the integration of an athlete's academic goals with his or her ski racing ambitions is a challenge. Ultimately parents and athletes, working together with the school and WSRC, must determine a program that best meets academic obligations while at the same time maximizing the athlete's ski racing potential and opportunities. There is no easy answer as to how such integration is best accomplished, as each case is different. However, this is not a new challenge and for many years athletes and parents have faced the same issue.

WSRC requires that athletes are not pressured or encouraged by the Club or its coaching staff to miss school. This is a parent/athlete decision. This decision shall be respected by the coaching staff.

The following guide is to help athletes and parents navigate their way through the integration of ski racing and academics.

### Parents

Parents play a key role in helping athletes pursue both academic and ski racing goals. They are the key liaison between the ski club, school and athlete. As the athlete matures, increasingly he or she can assume this role. However, in the early years, the onus very much rests with the parents.

The most important advice we can give parents is to be proactive. Having your child miss numerous days of ski racing and then afterwards, expressing concern when the report card comes home creates stress for all. A far better strategy is to get out in front of it through planning, organization and communication.

It is parents who must help their athletes find the most appropriate balance between ski racing and academic goals. This varies from each athlete and for each year. Generally though, the more successful the athlete is in ski racing, the more time they will be absent from school. It is up to the athlete and parent to decide the balance they wish to have between academics, ski racing and other recreational activities and interests. Parents need to continually engage in conversations with their athlete to help them through this process and decide on their best options.

# WENTWORTH SKI RACING CLUB

PO Box 307, 610 Wright Avenue, Dartmouth, NS B3B 0H8

[www.wentworthracing.com](http://www.wentworthracing.com)



- Make sure the school understands what is involved in ski racing. If needed WSRC can provide a letter, see attachment 1 for a sample.
- Find out what other ski racers attend the school. Have conversations with their parents to determine successful strategies and identify supportive teachers.
- If possible, try and request teachers who are flexible and supportive of elite athletes. They should also be tech-savvy. Teachers who have their lessons on-line and are able to field e-mail questions from athletes are ideal.
- Supply dates of absences well ahead of time. Many parents give the teachers the dates on which the athlete will be absent during the upcoming term at the start of each term. A reminder shortly before the absences then follows this up.
- If possible, ask teachers not to schedule tests immediately upon the athletes return to school. Typically athletes will need a few days to get caught up and few are able to study effectively for a test when away.
- Meet with the school early in the school year. Meeting when the season starts or just before the first race is simply too late for most teachers.

## The Athlete

Ultimately the integration of ski racing goals with academic ambitions is the responsibility of the athlete. The school, the club and parents have a critical role to play in supporting this, but when all is said and done it is the choices the athlete makes that will determine success.

As an athlete progresses through their ski racing career they will, as in anything, have to make decisions regarding their commitment to the sport. Ski racing afford athletes a wide range of options ranging from those for whom it is simply an enjoyable weekend activity in which they can learn a great skill and make wonderful friends. At the other end of the spectrum we have those talented athletes who harbor ambitions to represent their province and region.

Those athletes who are committed to serious competition are faced with a challenging yet immensely rewarding schedule. In signing up for ski racing they are also signing up for the development of a wide range of life skills. Those that are able to develop these skills typically succeed academically. Those that struggle may ultimately have to choose between ski racing and school.

To succeed at school the ski racing athlete needs to demonstrate the following:

# WENTWORTH SKI RACING CLUB

PO Box 307, 610 Wright Avenue, Dartmouth, NS B3B 0H8

[www.wentworthracing.com](http://www.wentworthracing.com)



- Discipline. It takes incredible discipline to remain committed to an academic program while ski racing.
- Responsibility. To succeed at school, athletes must take on the responsibility for their learning. Parents can help set the stage, but ultimately athletes must coordinate things with each of their teachers.
- Organization. Athletes must be well organized if they are to succeed at school. They always need to be looking ahead and planning appropriately.
- Focus. To complete the work that they have missed at school, athletes require a high degree of focus.

## WSRC

While WSRC cannot directly offer academic support, we recognize it is essential that we provide an environment that will facilitate athletes' academic success. To this end WSRC is committed to the following:

- To offer Wentworth-based on-snow training opportunities whenever possible on days that there are no classes. (Examples: Christmas Break, March Break, PD Days.)
- Ensuring study blocks are set-aside during all training camps whenever possible.
- Ensuring that athletes have access to the Internet while away.
- When possible, ensuring athletes have access to a quiet room in which they can study and complete homework.
- Helping educate the school on the nature of ski racing.
- Providing a schedule well ahead of time so that teachers and athletes may plan accordingly for absences.

WSRC can provide an environment that will help support athletes' academic goals. However, it should be pointed out that coaches are not teachers and will not provide homework supervision. They simply do not have the expertise or the time to do this. Ultimately, the responsibility for completing homework must rest with each athlete.