



ATHLETICS COOK ISLANDS

2026 NZ SECONDARY SCHOOLS ATHLETICS CHAMPIONSHIPS

TEAM COOK ISLANDS SELECTION POLICY

Two-stage youth development and selection pathway

Version	August 2026
Long List Trials	24, 26 and 28 August 2026
Final Qualification Closes	30 September 2026

This policy should be read together with the Athletics Cook Islands General Selection Policy.



1. Purpose

- 1.1** This policy sets out the specific selection criteria and process for athletes seeking selection to represent Athletics Cook Islands at the 2026 New Zealand Secondary Schools Athletics Championships (NZSSAC).
- 1.2** This policy should be read together with the Athletics Cook Islands General Selection Policy. Where there is any inconsistency, the specific requirements contained in this policy will apply for selection to the 2026 NZSSAC team.
- 1.3** The NZSSAC campaign forms part of Athletics Cook Islands' youth development pathway as we build the athlete pool toward Pacific Mini Games 2029 in the Cook Islands. Selection is intended to identify young athletes who demonstrate both current performance and the potential and commitment to develop through a structured preparation programme.

2. Eligibility

- 2.1** To be considered for selection, an athlete must:
- Meet Athletics Cook Islands' eligibility requirements for national representation;
 - Be attending secondary school in the Cook Islands;
 - Meet the relevant age requirements;
 - Be a current financial member of Athletics Cook Islands, or become a member if selected to the Long List;
 - Submit the required application by the published deadline;
 - Have parental or guardian approval if under 18;
 - Be medically fit to undertake the required training, travel and competition; and
 - Be available for the team travel dates advised in the Information Memorandum.

3. Age Categories

- 3.1** For the purposes of this selection process, the age categories are:
- Junior, Under 16: athletes born in 2011 or 2012.
 - Senior, Under 20: athletes born from 2007 to 2010.
- 3.2** Athletes must also comply with the official NZSSAC age and school eligibility requirements applicable to the Championships.

4. Selection Philosophy

- 4.1** Athletics Cook Islands will use a two-stage selection process comprising Long List selection followed by Final Team selection.
- 4.2** The purpose of Stage One is to identify athletes with sufficient current performance or development potential to benefit from a period of structured athletics-specific training.
- 4.3** The purpose of Stage Two is to determine which athletes have demonstrated the performance, preparation and competition readiness required to represent the Cook Islands at NZSSAC.
- 4.4** Achieving a published performance standard makes an athlete eligible for consideration but does not automatically guarantee selection.

5. Stage One: Long List Selection

- 5.1** Athletes seeking selection should participate in one of the designated initial selection trials:



- Aitutaki: 24 August 2026
- Rarotonga: 26 August 2026
- Rarotonga: 28 August 2026

5.2 Athletes who achieve the relevant Long List Standard contained in Appendix 1 will be eligible for consideration for the Long List.

5.3 The Selection Panel may also, at its discretion, include an athlete who has not achieved the Long List Standard where the athlete demonstrates significant athletic potential.

5.4 In exercising this discretion, selectors may consider age and development potential, previous athletics experience, performance progression, technical potential, previous competition results, coach recommendation and other relevant circumstances.

5.5 Selection to the Long List is not selection to the final travelling team. It represents an invitation to enter the NZSSAC Development Squad and work towards final selection.

6. Long List Training and Development Period

6.1 Athletes selected to the Long List will enter the NZSSAC Development Squad.

6.2 From Long List selection until final selection, athletes will be required to:

- Attend a minimum of two Athletics Cook Islands squad training sessions each week;
- Follow an agreed athletics training programme;
- Work constructively with Athletics Cook Islands coaches and their personal coach, where applicable;
- Demonstrate satisfactory attendance, effort and attitude;
- Advise their coach in advance where they are unable to attend training;
- Disclose any injury or medical issue that may affect training or competition;
- Participate in designated trial or competition opportunities; and
- Demonstrate commitment to improving towards the Final Selection Standard.

6.3 Attendance, commitment and progression during this period may be considered by the Selection Panel when making final selections.

7. Stage Two: Final Selection

7.1 The final qualification period will close on 30 September 2026.

7.2 Final trial opportunities will be held on 28 September 2026 and 30 September 2026.

7.3 To be considered for final selection, athletes should achieve the relevant Final Selection Standard contained in Appendix 1 during the approved qualification period.

7.4 Performances achieved at other recognised competitions may be considered where the competition has been approved by Athletics Cook Islands and the performance can be appropriately verified.

7.5 An athlete who achieves the Final Selection Standard before the final trials will not be required to reproduce the exact performance at the final trial. The athlete must, however, continue to demonstrate appropriate fitness, preparation and commitment.

8. Final Selection Considerations

8.1 Meeting the Final Selection Standard does not automatically guarantee selection.

8.2 In making final selections, the Selection Panel may consider:



- Performance against the Final Selection Standard;
- Performances achieved throughout the qualification period;
- Current form and fitness;
- Performance progression;
- Training attendance and commitment;
- Technical and competition readiness;
- Coach recommendation;
- Athlete conduct and attitude;
- Team size and balance;
- Event entry limitations;
- Available funding; and
- Athletics Cook Islands' youth development priorities.

8.3 The Selection Panel may select an athlete who has not achieved the Final Selection Standard where the athlete has demonstrated significant progression and training commitment and, based on coach assessment and available performance evidence, has a realistic prospect of reaching or approaching the Competition Performance Target by NZSSAC. Any selection made below the Final Selection Standard must be supported by reasons recorded by the Selection Panel.

8.4 We encourage athletes not selected for the final team to remain in the development squad for further development and competition opportunities.

9. Selection Panel

9.1 Selection will be determined by a three-person Selection Panel appointed in accordance with the Athletics Cook Islands General Selection Policy.

9.2 Conflicts of interest must be declared. A conflicted selector will not participate in discussion or decision-making relating to the affected athlete.

10. Final Team Requirements

10.1 Athletes selected to the final travelling team will enter a more intensive preparation phase from final selection through to NZSSAC.

10.2 Athletes selected to the final NZSSAC team will be required to:

- Attend a minimum of three structured athletics training sessions per week, unless an alternative programme has been agreed with the team coach;
- Athletics will be the athlete's primary competitive sport during the final preparation period. Participation in other organised sports, competitions or training that may affect NZSSAC preparation must be discussed and agreed with the team coach.
- Sign and comply with the Athletics Cook Islands Athlete Agreement;
- Disclose injuries or medical issues promptly;
- Meet all financial commitments by the specified deadlines;

10.3 Selection may be reviewed where an athlete does not maintain the required level of training, fitness, conduct or commitment.



10.4 The Competition Performance Target shown in Appendix 1 is the performance benchmark athletes will generally work towards for the competition, they are not a selection standard.

11. Athlete Contribution and Financial Commitments

11.1 Athletes selected to the final team must meet the financial commitments and payment deadlines advised by Athletics Cook Islands in the Team Information Memorandum. Failure to meet these requirements may result in selection being withdrawn.

12. Confirmation of Final Selection

12.1 Athletes selected to the final team must confirm acceptance and complete all requirements specified by Athletics Cook Islands within the advised timeframe. Failure to do so may result in selection being withdrawn.

13. Withdrawal, Injury and Fitness

13.1 Athletes must immediately advise Athletics Cook Islands of any injury, illness or other circumstances that may affect their ability to train, travel or compete.

13.2 Where an athlete withdraws after costs have been committed, the athlete may be responsible for costs that Athletics Cook Islands is unable to recover, in accordance with the Athletics Cook Islands General Selection Policy and Athlete Agreement.

14. Appeals

14.1 Athletes may seek clarification regarding non-selection from the Convenor of the Selection Panel.

14.2 Any formal appeal must be submitted in writing within 48 hours of the final selection announcement.

14.3 Appeals may only be made on the grounds that the published selection process was not correctly followed or the published selection criteria were not correctly applied.



Appendix 1: NZSSAC Athlete Performance Pathway

The standards below reflect three different stages of the development and selection process. Times are electronic unless otherwise advised by Athletics Cook Islands.

Event	Category	Development Squad	Final Selection	Competition Target
100m	Senior Boys	12.0s	11.85s	11.6s
100m	Junior Boys	12.3s	12.15s	11.9s
100m	Senior Girls	13.5s	13.30s	13.0s
100m	Junior Girls	14.0s	13.75s	13.4s
200m	Senior Boys	24.3s	24.0s	23.4s
200m	Junior Boys	25.2s	24.9s	24.3s
200m	Senior Girls	27.8s	27.4s	26.8s
200m	Junior Girls	29.0s	28.5s	27.8s
400m	Senior Boys	56.0s	55.3s	54.0s
400m	Junior Boys	58.0s	57.1s	55.5s
400m	Senior Girls	65.0s	64.0s	62.0s
400m	Junior Girls	67.0s	66.0s	64.0s
800m	Senior Boys	2:10	2:07	2:03
800m	Junior Boys	2:18	2:15	2:10
800m	Senior Girls	2:40	2:36	2:30
800m	Junior Girls	2:50	2:46	2:40
1500m	Senior Boys	4:30	4:24	4:14
1500m	Junior Boys	4:45	4:39	4:30
1500m	Senior Girls	5:30	5:22	5:10
1500m	Junior Girls	5:50	5:42	5:30
Discus	Senior Boys	35.0m	37.0m	40.0m
Discus	Junior Boys	32.0m	34.0m	38.0m
Discus	Senior Girls	25.0m	27.0m	30.0m
Discus	Junior Girls	23.0m	25.0m	28.0m
Javelin	Senior Boys	37.0m	39.0m	43.0m
Javelin	Junior Boys	31.0m	33.0m	36.0m



Event	Category	Development Squad	Final Selection	Competition Target
Javelin	Senior Girls	24.0m	25.5m	28.0m
Javelin	Junior Girls	22.0m	23.5m	26.0m
Shot Put	Senior Boys	11.5m	12.0m	13.0m
Shot Put	Junior Boys	10.0m	10.7m	11.7m
Shot Put	Senior Girls	9.5m	10.2m	11.2m
Shot Put	Junior Girls	9.0m	9.7m	11.0m
Hammer Throw	Senior Boys	25.0m	27.0m	30.0m
Hammer Throw	Junior Boys	25.0m	27.0m	30.0m
Hammer Throw	Senior Girls	25.0m	27.0m	30.0m
Hammer Throw	Junior Girls	20.0m	22.0m	25.0m
High Jump	Senior Boys	1.65m	1.70m	1.75m
High Jump	Junior Boys	1.50m	1.55m	1.60m
High Jump	Senior Girls	1.40m	1.45m	1.50m
High Jump	Junior Girls	1.35m	1.40m	1.45m
Long Jump	Senior Boys	5.30m	5.50m	5.80m
Long Jump	Junior Boys	4.90m	5.10m	5.40m
Long Jump	Senior Girls	4.30m	4.45m	4.70m
Long Jump	Junior Girls	4.10m	4.25m	4.50m

Notes

- Development Squad Standard: performance level used to identify athletes with sufficient current ability or potential to enter the development programme.
- Final Selection Standard: performance level used as an important indicator of progression and readiness for selection to the travelling team.
- Competition Performance Target: December benchmark athletes are expected to work towards after final selection. It is not a removal threshold, it is a desired target.
- Selectors retain discretion in accordance with this policy, particularly where an athlete demonstrates significant progression, commitment and a realistic prospect of reaching or approaching the December target.