

Cheer Manual



SY26

Introduction

The Office of Sports Administration (OSA) is excited to welcome you to another season of CPS SCORE!

Please review the included Terms and Conditions document for key program information and requirements.

Non-compliance with any of the following information may result in the forfeiture of coaches' season stipend.

Any and all questions can be directed to the Athletic Program Administrator (APA) or Commissioner of your Network.

Thank you for your support of our student-athletes and programs across the District!

Contact Information

A CPS Elementary Athletic Program Administrator (APA) is assigned to assist each of the 13 networks across the District. Please send any general questions regarding this document or the CPS SCORE! Program to sportsad@cps.edu or contact the Office of Sports Administration at 773-534-0700.

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OSA Mission Statement

The Office of Sports Administration (OSA) oversees the equitable implementation of sports programs across all elementary schools (CPS SCORE!) and high schools within the Chicago Public School District (CPS) and Chicago Public League (CPL). Through effective sports policy creation and program management, OSA helps create an environment for schools to provide essential athletic and academic development for each student-athlete. It is the goal of OSA to promote sportsmanship, teamwork, integrity and a sense of community as we prepare students for the next level in athletics and in life. Our students will be able to learn the importance of **Academic, Athletic, and Social Awareness** as they advance through our program and become leaders in their communities.

2025-2026 Points of Emphasis

Prior to the start of each season, the Office of Sports Administration will prepare a form to collect anticipated/interest sports for each school.

This interest form will generate a spreadsheet based on teams interested in participating that season. Any team that does NOT complete an interest form/submit a principal/asst principal signed Aspen Roster by the communicated deadlines, are subject to non-approval and may not be included in the league schedule.

Non-compliance with any of the following may result in a coach/liaison delay or forfeiture of their athletic stipend. Any of the following may also require the school to have a supervisory conference with OSA.

- A. Students, Officials, Coaches, Spectators and School Staff are expected to promote sportsmanship. Any unsportsmanlike behavior may result in immediate removal from the property, and further investigation may result in the potential suspension of SCORE! program at your school.
- B. Teams that opt-in are expected to participate in the program in its entirety. Teams that drop out or do not meet the team approval requirements will be subject to loss of stipend.
- C. All participating teams that have met roster minimums are required to upload rosters to Aspen, complete the Coaches Directory, complete column "D" of the Attestation Form, and upload this information into the correct school folder located in the Google Classroom, by the communicated deadlines. Updated, signed rosters by the principal must be turned in to the designated CPS admin weekly.
- D. A certified coach may receive up to four stipends each athletic season (fall, winter, spring) maximum of twelve for the entire SY26. *Please see payment criteria breakdown for more details.
- E. **Mandatory Certification**
 1. Sports Liaisons must keep certificates in a file pending OSA audit and can be found under the Extra Training Tab in SafeSchools.
 - a. PCA Workshop Completion - Separate Training Outside Of Safe Schools
 - b. Concussion Training *required every 2 years - Athletics Sub Tab In Safe Schools
 - c. CPR/AED Training - Health Sub Tab in [Safe Schools](#)

[Roster Upload Folder](#)
[Athletic.net](#) | [Aspen Guide](#)

Coach Certification Statement

All individuals working in a coaching capacity must be formally hired as CPS Employees or CPS Level 1 Volunteers, as well as hold the following certification/training for the current year prior to coaching:

- A. Complete the SafeSchools Concussion Training
- B. Complete PCA Training Workshop
- C. Complete SafeSchools CPR/AED Training

Sportsmanship Statement & Guidelines

The Chicago Public League asks all of its students, officials, coaches, spectators and school staff to promote sportsmanship before, during and after every game. Offensive language, including profanity and/or derogatory or intimidating remarks of any kind, directed at officials, event staff, student-athletes, coaches or team representatives will not be tolerated. In order for sportsmanship to prevail, all coaches, students, staff, and spectators must display respect and civility in an effort to enthusiastically support our student-athletes to create a safe and inclusive environment.

[Click Here For Full Sportsmanship Policy](#)

Disqualification / Penalties

- A. All reasonable efforts will be made but if a team is not present for a contest OR is not ready to participate within 10 minutes of the assigned start time, the Office of Sports Administration (OSA) will reserve the right to disqualify the team.
- B. Teams that do not fall within their designated division range on performance day, may be subject to penalty at the discretion of OSA. **Use of alternates is highly recommended.

Calendar

CPS Regular Season Information

First Official Practice	Oct, 27, 2025
Aspen Roster / Coaches Directory / Pre-Attestation Deadline	Nov 7, 2025
CPS SCORE! Cheer Season Begins	Dec 13, 2025
CPS SCORE! Cheer Season Ends	Mar 7, 2026

CPS Calendar—Post Season & Championship Information

Regional Competition	Jan 10, 2026
Regional Competition	Jan 17, 2026
Regional Competition	Jan 31, 2026
Regional Competition	Feb 7, 2026
Regional Competition	Feb 14, 2026
City Semifinals (UIC Forum)	Feb 28, 2026
City Championships (UIC Forum)	Mar 7, 2026

League Terms and Conditions

Section One: Forming A Team

This section identifies general program rules and requirements associated with the SCORE! Elementary School Sports Program. The rules and requirements contained in this section apply to all Cheer ONLY.

- A. Elementary Cheer Program
 1. The Elementary Cheer program is the official interscholastic athletics league for 5th-8th graders for Chicago Public Schools. Students will participate in practices during the week and competition each Saturday at a select site, featuring other schools from within the district. Teams will compete in a regular season, Semi-finals (playoffs), and City Championship. 20 athletes max (not including alternates), are eligible to attend competition. All must be rostered Aspen athletes.
- B. Alternates
 1. Coaches may rotate or add players should they have absent students on game day. Alternates **must** be included on the Aspen roster form to participate.
- C. Participation Time
 1. The CPS SCORE! Program strongly encourages that all student-athletes have an opportunity to participate during game competitions. Students who register to participate in a sport will be provided the opportunity to participate during both practices and games. Coaches are encouraged to provide each athlete with the opportunity to learn and compete in different positions during the practices and games.
- D. Approved Team Criteria ([General CPL Rules and Team Approval](#))
 1. Teams must meet the minimum number of student-athletes to participate in the OSA Elementary Sports Program, and submit a signed Aspen Roster to the google folder by the specified deadline. **see terms and conditions for numbers specific to each sport*
 2. Teams must compete in all mandatory OSA games/competitions see [Coaches Competition Requirement](#) for details
 3. Any team that exceeds the maximum of 20 student- athletes may substitute or rotate players each Saturday competition at the coaches discretion.
 4. No changes in division are permitted after the designated division deadline entry date***Teams that do not meet their designated division range on performance day, will be subject to penalty at discretion of OSA**
 5. OSA recognizes a Head Coach (ONLY)per team *exception for Cheer:
 - a. A coach may be awarded a coaching stipend for any Aspen Roster that meets the minimum, not to exceed the maximum 20 student-athlete threshold. (Maximum of 2 stipends per season)
 - b. SCORE! Cheer teams may be granted an additional stipend OR an assistant coach stipend for Medium or Large teams as determined by the final schedule
- E. Student-Athlete Eligibility
 1. Students must satisfy several criteria to be eligible to participate in the CPS SCORE! Program. The student criteria is as follows:
 - a. Age / Grade
 - i. CPS SCORE! Sports are for 5th, 6th, 7th, or 8th grade students **only**. Students must be registered at the school in which they are participating.

b. 5th/6th Grade Level

- i. All 5/6th grade students are eligible for CPS SCORE! Sports.
- ii. 5/6th grade students are not allowed to play up on the 7/8th grade level during the regular season and conference playoffs.
 - α. **EXCEPTION:** Cheer
- iii. Any student that starts the academic school year at the age of 13 has “aged out” of participating at the 5/6th grade level and **must be enrolled and participate** on the 7/8th level.
- iv. If there are not enough 5/6th grade registrants at a particular school, this **does not** permit a school to allow 5th grade students to play up on the 7/8th grade level. **EXCEPTION:** 6th graders are allowed to participate on the 7th/8th grade level. But they cannot go back down a level once they come up.

c. 7th/8th Grade Level

- i. Any student that starts the academic school year at the age of 15 has “aged out” of participating in CPS SCORE! Sports.
- ii. All current 7/8th grade students registered at the school in which they are participating.
- iii. All 7/8th grade students are prohibited from playing down on the 5/6th grade level. *except Cheer

NOTE: Schools violating any student-eligibility rules shall receive a forfeit for that competition and all games in which the rules were violated (violation of the spirit of the rules may result in removal from playoff contention per the discretion of OSA).

d. School

- i. Be a full-time student or registered as a homeschooled student at the registered CPS elementary school.

e. Academic Standing

- i. Be academically eligible based on their school’s eligibility standards.
NOTE: Each participating elementary school principal shall set academic eligibility standards for their school.

f. Medical Requirement

- i. According to school records, student-athletes must have approval by a physician to participate in physical education to participate in SCORE! Sports.

F. Student Registration

1. Participating elementary schools are responsible for registering participating students using the method(s) designated by the Office of Sports Administration:
 - a. Schools are required to submit students and coach registration information in ASPEN.
 - b. Each participating school’s final roster must be signed by the school principal and submitted to their assigned CPS google classroom folder prior to the start of the season. The liaison shall make team rosters available to the assigned coach(es).
 - c. Each student registered in ASPEN to a sport/team **MUST** remain on that team roster for the remainder of that athletic sport season.

G. Team Breakdown

1. The coach and sports liaison shall be responsible for the formation of team rosters.

2. In order for a school team to be recognized for participation in programming, that school must field a team consisting of at least the minimum number of athletes (9). *Teams that do not meet their designated division range on performance day, may be subject to penalty at discretion of OSA
3. Teams in the small division ONLY must the minimum of 5 student athletes on competition day in order to compete
4. ASPEN Rosters must be signed by the principal and submitted to the Office of Sports Administration prior to the start of each competition
5. Once all interested participants are entered in ASPEN and an Official Roster has been submitted into the google folder (Winter Roster), a coach may begin conditioning and practice. Conversely, if an Official Roster has not been submitted and signed by the principal, students are not insured by the Chicago Public Schools insurance policy and coaches are not allowed to begin conditioning and practices until above stated requirements have been completed.
6. The coach is responsible for bringing the most recent signed ASPEN team roster to each contest. The roster must be signed by the school principal or AP. Any athlete whose name does not appear on the roster on the day of the meet, are not permitted to participate.

NOTE: Schools violating any roster rules are subject to receive penalties and up to DQ for that competition and all meets in which the rules were violated.

Section Two: Program Regulations

- A. Regular Season Dates:
 1. No practices will be permitted before the official start date of each season or after the official end date of each season, as communicated by the Office of Sports Administration.
 2. A hard copy of the aspen signed roster must be submitted to OSA Staff for each game and competition
 3. Coaches are responsible for signing the scoresheet at each game and completing the [Cheer Game Log](#) sheet.
 4. The Office of Sports Administration will establish and communicate the co-ed cheer season dates each year.
 - a. Note- It is the responsibility of the coach/school to read the program requirements regarding payment
 - b. The coaches are responsible for signing the scoresheet at every game participated and entering into the log in sheet
 - c. **Coach stipend criteria for Cheer:**
 - d. **1. Minimum of 4 SCORE! league sideline basketball games**
 - e. **2. One Regional competition**
 - f. **3. All coaches must be in compliance with all required trainings**
- B. Competition / City Championships
 1. Each competition will have 1/3 of teams that participate, advance.
 2. The Office of Sports Administration reserves the right to adjust the structure and approach of post-season competition at any time during the regular season to

accommodate changes in school, team, or player participation or due to other unforeseen circumstances.

C. Coaches Responsibilities and Safety Requirements

1. Prior to the start of the sports season:
 - a. Attend the Coaches Meeting.
 - b. Provide proof that the Concussion Certification training has been completed within the last two (2) years. (Must be on file with the school principal/liaison).
 - c. Complete the Protecting Chicago Children training (PCC)
2. During the course of the sport season
 - a. Prepare your student-athletes through daily practice sessions during the season.
 - b. Monitor your student-athletes progress on the field and in the classroom.
 - c. Accompany your team to all games.
 - d. Monitor the conduct of your athletes for the duration of each contest/competition.
 - e. Always have in your possession:
 - i. A copy of your up to date official roster
 - ii. A copy of the terms and conditions
 - iii. Emergency contact information for each student-athlete

D. Forfeits / Disqualifications

1. All reasonable efforts should be made to avoid forfeits.
2. If a team is not ready to compete at the scheduled time of competition with all of their team present, the team will compete as the minimum number of five (5) rostered student athletes are present.
 - a. The competition lead admin may make special allowances for weather or other special circumstances, if necessary.

E. Games and Competitions

1. **NO EARRINGS. No jewelry is allowed of any kind, and no hair ties on the wrist. The tape covering earrings will not be permitted.**
2. No glitter that does not readily adhere to the hair, face, uniform, or body
3. Hair must be worn away from the face and off of the shoulders.
4. SCORE! Staff and IHSA judges are responsible for enforcing these uniform regulations.

F. Advanced Contest Cancellations

1. The Office of Sports Administration will administer all advanced cancellations.
2. All participating schools are responsible for developing a communication policy and procedures for all participants and their families regarding notifying them of a cancellation.
3. Coaches, elementary school liaisons, conference commissioners, and/or principals may not cancel or reschedule games.
4. Schools must notify the Office of Sports Administration by close of business (4:00pm) on the Thursday before that game for any school-sanctioned cancellations.
5. Weather cancellations will be determined by the Office of Sports Administration and communicated to the Site Manager.
6. If a school has an official **school event or trip** scheduled on the same day as their assigned regional competition, the school will be rendered **ineligible** to participate in any subsequent or alternative regional competitions.

G. Advancement of Teams

1. **CPS SCORE! Competition Format *Each Regional competition will produce roughly a third of participating teams**
 - a. Schools that advance out of their regional competition, will meet during Semi-Final competition

- H. Contest Outcome Tracking and Reporting
1. The officials panel will complete the scoring process and report to The Office of Sports Administration
 2. Teams that advance will be announced no more that 48 hours after competition via google classroom
 3. There will be no announcements or award ceremony until the City Championship
 4. Judges are responsible for reporting all final contest scores/outcomes to the Office of Sports Administration within 48 hours after the scheduled contest date.
- I. Coaches Responsibilities
1. Prior to the start of the sports season:
 - a. Attend the Coaches Meeting.
 - b. Be able to provide proof that the Concussion Certification training has been completed within the last two (2) years. (Must be on file with the school principal/liaison).
 - c. Complete the Protecting Chicago Children training (PCC)
 - d. Complete the mandatory PCA training workshop(Positive Coaching Alliance) *once per school year
 - e. Complete the KIPP training (highly recommended)
 2. During the course of the sport season
 - a. Prepare your student-athletes through daily practice sessions during the season.
 - b. Monitor your student-athletes progress on the field and in the classroom.
 - c. Accompany your team to all games.
 - d. Monitor the conduct of your athletes for the duration of each game and competition.
 - e. Always have in your possession:
 - i. A copy of your official aspen roster
 - ii. A copy of the terms and conditions
 - iii. Emergency contact information for each student-athlete completed within the last two (2) years. (Must be on file with the school principal).
- J. Coaches Stipend Approval
1. A certified coach that has satisfied all [required competitions](#) AND has met all coaching eligibility requirements; may receive no more than **two stipends** per athletic season. Failure to complete mandatory requirements may result in the resignation of coaches stipend(s) or delayed payment.
 - a. ***Coaches on a leave of absence at any time during a SCORE! season will NOT receive payment**
 - b. **Division at competition will determine final payment.**

Section Three: Competition Regulations

This section identifies rules and requirements that are specific in nature to the CPS SCORE! Co-ed Cheer Program. *We are **not** governed by IESA or IHSA, rules are interpreted by The Office of Sports Administration. The Office of Sports Administration will assign at minimum one IHSA judge(s) per competition panel.

- A. **Cheer Music:** Cheer music must be appropriate to a game situation. Lyrics can be used during routines; however, appropriate music must be used. **For competition, music that is used should not exceed 2 minutes and does not have to be continuous.**
- B. **Cheer Routines:** Dances must be appropriate to a game situation. For competitions, the total routine shall NOT exceed 3 minutes, but not less than a minute and half (1:30).

- C. **Competition Music:** "The Association assumes no responsibility for the payment of copyright, royalty, or any other fees connected to the performances of any material in the cheer/dance competitive series." This language is intended to assure that the music used at competitions is in compliance with U.S. copyright law.

Section Four: Safety and Sportsmanship

Coaches are expected to act in the best interest of the health and safety of the injured child. That means exercising reasonable caution, particularly as it relates to loss of consciousness, tears, strains, or suspected breaks or fractures.

According to school records, student-athletes must have approval by a physician to participate in physical education in order to participate in the CPS SCORE! Soccer Program.

- A. Injuries and Serious Incidents
1. The safety and security of students is always of paramount importance and cannot be over-emphasized.
 2. In the case of student injury, it is the responsibility of each coach to seek appropriate care.
 3. If of a serious nature, the coach should call 911 immediately.
- B. Emergency Ambulance Transport
1. Any student-athlete who is not accompanied by a parent/guardian on contest day and has to receive transport to the hospital due to a severe injury, the following must occur:
 - a. The Head Coach or Volunteer Coach must ride with the student-athlete to the hospital.
 - b. Site Manager, CPS or CPD Commissioner or Office of Sports Administration staff must supervise the remaining teammates at designated sites.
 - c. Above personnel must notify school officials and parent/guardian to arrange for student-athlete pick-up.
- C. Blood Protocol
1. If blood is involved, it may endanger others as well as the injured.
 2. Individuals who have uncovered or open wounds or blood on themselves or clothing must leave the contest or practice immediately.
 3. A participant may return only when the bleeding has stopped, the wound is covered, and/or the clothing has been changed.
- D. Head Injuries
1. In the event of a concussion, the coach must follow the appropriate procedures identified in the CPS Concussion Management Policy: <http://policy.cps.edu/download.aspx?ID=258>
- E. Reporting Incidents
1. All serious incidents must be reported to the Office of Safety and Security by completing the appropriate Incident Reporting Form.
 - a. The coach of the athlete(s) involved in the incident is responsible for completing the Incident Reporting Form provided by the Office of Sports Administration.
 - b. The coach must provide the Incident Reporting Form to the appropriate elementary school liaison(s).
 - i. It is the responsibility of the elementary school liaison to report the incident within Verify, the CPS Incident Management System.
 2. All Incident Reporting Forms must be filed with the injured student's school liaison on the next business day.
- F. First Aid & Safety
1. Coaches are responsible for hydrating their student athletes.
 2. All schools must travel with a first aid kit and emergency contact information for every student athlete.

G. Sportsmanship

1. All participating student-athletes, coaches, and staff are expected to exhibit good sportsmanship.
2. When to cheer during contests:
 - a. As your team enters the floor for competition
 - b. Your teammate nails a move
 - c. As encouragement or tribute to an injured player on your team or the opposing team
 - d. An opponent completes competition
 - e. As encouragement to your team
3. When to NOT cheer during contests
 - a. Any player is injured
 - b. As announcements are being made

H. Spectator Conduct

1. Parents, guardians, and other spectators are expected to exhibit good behavior.
2. If a spectator, in the opinion of a contest IHSA Official or site manager, exhibits inappropriate or unsportsmanlike behavior, they may ask the spectator to leave the contest location. The Coach, IHSA Official, or Site Manager should work with the assigned CPS security personnel to assist in these situations.
3. The contest IHSA Official shall make the High School Site Manager aware of any issues regarding spectator conduct.
4. The High School Site Manager, as appropriate, shall report issues concerning inappropriate spectator conduct to the Office of Sports Administration.

Section Five: Protests

- A. All protests must be written to Jenni Dant at jldant@cps.edu and include sportsad@cps.edu.
- B. Must be submitted within 24 hours of the contest.
- C. If the contest is on a Saturday, the protest must be submitted by close of business (4:00pm) on the following Monday.
- D. No protest will be considered regarding judgment calls made by the judge.
- E. Protests will only be considered where there is a question of rules interpretation, which affects the outcome of the competition.
- F. No protest will be considered if the coach could not immediately produce a copy of the league rules for the contest official at the time of the questioned call.
- G. The protest letter must include the following:
 1. School check (\$50.00) made out to the Office of Sports Administration.
 2. Reason and details of protest.
 3. Proof of protest.
 4. Signature of person protesting.

Media and Social Media Expectations

The Chicago Public League is proud to offer in-depth coverage of CPS teams and student-athletes across each sports season. In order to continue to publish these stories, the CPL Sports Communications team asks the following of all participating athletics staff members and student-athletes:

- A. Ensure all student media consent forms are signed via the standard CPS enrollment packet
- B. Ensure coaches and/or players are available as requested for pre- and post-game interviews
- C. Share accomplishments and milestones with the CPS Sports Communications team so your teams and athletes can be recognized
- D. Interact and follow all CPL athletics content via our website CPSAthletics.com or via [Social Media](#).

CPS Sports Communications Team:

- A. Communications Manager: Joey Gelman – jdgelman@cps.edu
- B. Communications Specialist: Dominic Scianna – dscianna@cps.edu
- C. Communications Specialist: Michael Wojtychiw – mmwojtychiw@cps.edu

Digital Citizenship Expectations

Being a good digital citizen means that athletics staff members and student-athletes are positively contributing to the digital space, respecting other people's views even if in disagreement, and reporting issues that disrupt a positive digital environment.

A digital footprint and reputation is left online when videos and pictures are uploaded, and when posts and comments are made on websites and social media. Athletics staff members and student-athletes must consider the temporary and/or permanent effect actions online can have for themselves and their community both in the digital space and in person.

That is why the Chicago Public League asks all athletics staff members, coaches, and student-athletes to engage in respectful and positive social media interaction. Should there be any inappropriate social media being created or shared in your community, please report it to CPS administration within your school building so the situation can be properly assessed and appropriate action can be taken as necessary to ensure a safe environment for all those involved.



The Office of Sports Administration

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