



Dear Parents/Guardians,

Welcome to the 2026 Jr Bulldog Football Season!

This handbook was created to help our families familiarize themselves with the specifics of our program as it outlines season details, guidelines, and expectations.

Review and signature of this Parent/Athlete handbook is required to participate in the 2026 season.

If you have questions, comments, or suggestions now, or any time during the season, please reach out.

Sincerely,

Kevin Dooley, Director of Football
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Bob Cheval, Assistant Director of Football
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GO BULLDOGS!

2026 Jr Bulldog Football Handbook

Overall Program Description

We provide instruction and play for athletes in grades K through 8th in a fun, competitive, and safe environment. We have served the Riverside/Brookfield community since 2016 and are a part of the Chicagoland Youth Football League (TCYFL). We welcome boys and girls from first-time players to experienced athletes.

Divisions and Team Formation

TCYFL rules determine an athlete's division based on both age (as of 9/1/2026) and weight. Each division has strict age and weight restrictions. Athletes will be weighed in the preseason to ensure they are placed in the correct division. Athletes are also weighed before each game. The TCYFL division guidelines can be found at TCYFL.net.

The maximum team size is 30 players. Divisions with close to or more than 30 players may be split into multiple teams. Levels that are split into multiple teams will be done based on an evaluation of skill, experience, and commitment to create a competitive and fun experience for all athletes.

The Jr Bulldog Board, not individual coaches, makes final decisions on division assignments. Athletes will never be asked to lose weight. Positions are chosen by the team coaching staff based on skill. Gametime reflects practice participation.

Season

The regular fall season will start a week earlier than years past running from July 20th through mid-October. The first game of the season will be played on August 22nd or 23rd. Teams will play 9 weekly games with 3-5 home games. Games take place on either Saturday or Sunday. Playoffs, should your athlete's team qualify, take place in November, with Championship games played the first weekend in November.

TCYFL works on a flex schedule with games scheduled based on wins and losses. Schedules are released 2-4 weeks in advance of each game.

Preseason runs for 4 weeks starting July 20th. This period is critical to acclimate players to the heat and riggers of playing football while wearing equipment.

Practice will take place for two hours a day, Monday – Friday during preseason. Attendance is mandatory.

Starting the week of August 17th, (date to coincide with start of school and may be adjusted) practice will take place 2 hours a day, three days a week. An additional 1-2 hours a week of Film Study or Walk-through may be required for some teams.

Athlete Expectations

As a member of our Bulldog family, you wear more than just the team jersey – you carry the honor and responsibility of representing us all. Whether you're on the field, in school, or out in the community, your actions reflect not just on you, but your teammates, coaches, and the entire organization.

The Jr Bulldog leadership team and coaching staff have high expectations for our athletes both on and off the field.

On-Field Expectations

- Be on time.
- Come to practice and games prepared, ready to learn, and with a positive attitude.
- Know and embrace your role on your team. It is your coach's job to put you in a position to help you succeed. It is your job to succeed in that position.
- While on the sidelines during practice or games, you must remain engaged in the game and ready to play. Helmets must remain on with chinstraps buckled.
- Respect the game, your team, the opponent, and the officials.

Off-Field Expectations:

- Dedicate time each day to studying and completing school assignments.
- Ask questions of your coaches and teammates.
- Stay positive and address problems with your coaches and teammates as they arise.
- Prepare yourself physically by eating healthily and getting enough sleep.
- Communicate with your coaches.

Our team enforces a strict Zero Tolerance Policy against bullying. Engaging in bullying behavior toward fellow athletes will lead to immediate suspension and may escalate to permanent removal from the team, depending on the severity of the incident.

Parent Expectations

Parent involvement is vital to a successful football season. Parents are expected to support a positive and encouraging atmosphere at both practices and games. Jr Bulldogs follows the **24-Hour Rule**. Football is an emotionally charged game. Parents are required to wait 24 hours after a game or practice to address criticism, playing time, or similar issues with the head coach.

The primary contact for issues or concerns is always your athlete's head coach. If you feel your concerns are not being addressed, please reach out to the Director of Football.

During games and practices, only coaches and players are allowed on the field. Our organization can be fined for having uncertified individuals on our practice or game field. Out of respect for the coaches and for the safety of our athletes and spectators, families must remain in the designated viewing areas surrounding the practice fields.

We uphold a strict **Zero Tolerance Policy regarding alcohol consumption**. This policy extends to all areas, including parking lots, at both home and away games.

Violation of this policy will result in immediate removal from the premises. Furthermore, individuals found drinking may face additional consequences as outlined in the Jr Bulldog Code of Conduct, up to and including being banned from future games.

Parents are expected to abstain from coaching their athletes from the sidelines. If sideline coaching is observed, you will be given a warning. If sideline coaching continues, you may be asked to leave the practice area.

Jr Bulldogs is a 100% volunteer-run organization. Jr Bulldog Leadership and coaching staff put in countless hours to create a good experience for all our members. As a member of this organization, parents are expected to treat coaches, board members, and other volunteers with respect at all times.

Coach Expectations

You can expect that the Jr Bulldog coaching staff will place the emotional and physical well-being of all athletes ahead of any personal desire to win. Coaches will practice good sportsmanship and maintain the proper perspective for youth sports. They will provide proper support to all players, fellow coaches, parents, and officials to provide a positive sports environment. At no time will a member of the Jr Bulldog coaching staff condone the use of any weight reduction or performance-enhancing substance of any kind. They will not criticize, demean, or use profane language toward players, parents, coaches, or referees.

Attendance

Practice Attendance Policy

Attendance will be taken at the start of practice. Players are expected to arrive at practice on time, dressed, and ready to play. Participation in practice is essential for the safety of the athlete and their teammates. While Jr Bulldogs encourages participation in a variety of sports and extra-curricular activities throughout the year, commitment to our program and the team is understood to take precedence over all other commitments during the fall season.

Any absence other than illness requires at least 48 hours' notice to the Head Coach. No-show, no-call absences are unacceptable and will be considered unexcused absences. An absence due to illness requires the Head Coach to be notified at least 2 hours before practice so that they have efficient time to adjust their practice plan based on the absence of your child.

If there are school events that conflict with practice, share those dates in advance.

Unexcused absences may result in reduced playing time, with excessive absences resulting in a potential inability to participate in an upcoming game, up to removal from the team.

Game-Day Attendance Policy

Attendance at all season and post-season games is mandatory. Athletes are expected to arrive at the game location on time, in full game-day uniform. The league requires a weigh-in, 1 hour before the game kicks off. Failure to arrive for weigh-in will result in the inability to play. Tardiness at games will not be tolerated. Any absence other than illness requires a *minimum* of one week's notice. Please notify your athlete's head coach of any game-day absence as soon

as possible so that they can adjust that week's practice and game-day plans based on your child's absence from their position.

Examples of Excused absences

- Injury (still needs to attend and watch practice)
- Serious illness
- Death in the family
- School event
- Religious obligation
- Family commitment (i.e. vacation) previously discussed with Head Coach

Equipment and Uniforms

Each athlete will receive the following items on loan from Jr Bulldogs: helmet, shoulder pads, and practice jersey. Jr Bulldogs maintains this equipment and ensures that it meets all safety standards. Athletes are expected to handle equipment responsibly. Verify before leaving practice or a game that you have all your equipment. All loaned items must be returned to Jr Bulldogs at the end of the season. If equipment is not returned, a \$300 equipment fee will be charged to the credit card placed on your athlete's file.

Each athlete must provide their own mouthguard, protective cup, football cleats, and water bottle. No athlete will be allowed to take the field without a mouthguard.

Volunteer Hours

Jr Bulldog Football and Cheer depends on the support of its volunteers. Each family with a single athlete in the program is required to complete a minimum of four (4) volunteer hours. Families with more than one athlete in the program (cheer or football) must complete four (4) hours for their first registered child and two (2) hours for each additional child in the program. For example, if you have one athlete in competitive cheer and two athletes in football, your family must complete a total of eight (8) volunteer hours. These hours may be satisfied by serving as security or in concessions at Jr Bulldog Home Football Games, or fulfilling other duties designated as official volunteer hours by the Jr Bulldog Board. All hours will be satisfied if a parent serves as a coach, team parent, or on the Jr Bulldog Board.

This requirement will be strictly enforced and must be honored for your family to remain in good standing with the organization. If your hours are not completed by the end of the season, a \$350 fee will be charged to the credit card placed on your athlete's file.

Injuries

Our goal is to teach athletes the fundamentals of football in the safest way possible. All athletes 10 and older must complete a baseline concussion test. If a concussion is suspected, an athlete may not return to play without a doctor's clearance to play.