

Every Friday game day — fall and spring

Fall: Oct 9 • Oct 23 • Nov 6 • Nov 20

Spring: Apr 23 • May 7 • May 21 • May 28 • Jun 4 (playoffs)

Dismissal buses start pick-up for teams at 3:00 PM on EMPOWER game days at designated schools.

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EMPOWER New Haven

Season Two • 2026–2027

THE GUIDE FOR

FAMILIES

GUIDE



The Short Version — [read this first](#)

EMPOWER New Haven is a school-based soccer league run by New Haven Counts. This fall is a **preseason**: no score is kept, and the goal is development and fun.

Your four jobs

1. **Enroll your child.** Register on LeagueApps (or text 203-208-9249) and keep them in the After School program.
2. **Practice.** Your child attends the After School program at least two days a week to practice with the team.
3. **School on game days.** Your child rides the school bus (pick-up 3:00–3:15 PM). If they miss school and are not sick, bring them to the field and stay with them until their coach and team arrive. Never drop a child off unsupervised, and please do not make a habit of it.
4. **Be a kind, polite, silent observer.**

At the field, please do

- Cheer and celebrate goals and nice plays
- Give your child water, Gatorade or oranges at halftime
- Let the coaches run the team

At the field, please do not

- Talk to referees, during or after games
- Talk to coaches during games
- Talk to players during games, even your own child

No warnings

Disrespect toward coaches, referees, players or other parents means you are not allowed back at games. Your child may keep practicing, but their playing status is at risk until you meet with the Program Director and make written and verbal promises.

Emergencies

Thunder, lightning or a code red: we call all parents, and students go to the school bus platform and avoid touching anything metal. Games are called as soon as a field is unplayable or unsafe. If buses are short, we will tell schools and families about other ways to get to the fields. See Emergency procedures.

Key dates and contacts

Fall games: Oct 9, Oct 23, Nov 6, Nov 20 (4:00 and 5:00 PM). **Spring:** Apr 23, May 7, May 21, May 28, with playoffs June 4. Who plays whom and the bus schedule are posted at newhavencounts.io/empower every Sunday evening before game week.

Program Director: Lisa Pietrosimone. **Help Desk:** text 203-208-9249. Concerns about a coach or referee go to the Help Desk.

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For families of EMPOWER New Haven soccer players. Questions? Text the Help Desk at 203-208-9249.

1 Your four jobs

- **1. Make sure your child is enrolled.** Register on LeagueApps (or text 203-208-9249) and keep your child in the NHC After School program.
- **2. Make sure your child shows up for practice.** Your child needs to attend the After School program at least two days a week to practice with the team.
- **3. Make sure your child is at school on game days.** Buses leave from school, so a Friday at school is how your child gets to the field.
- **4. Be a kind, polite, silent observer.** You help most by cheering and letting the coaches coach.

Why it matters

Kids grow most when families handle the basics and let the coaches coach.

2 How to enroll your child

Enrolling takes two steps. Do both so your child can practice and play on Friday game days.

Quick way to register: text 203-208-9249

The flyer says it best: **TEXT TO REGISTER 203-208-9249**. The league is open to all New Haven students participating in a New Haven Counts After School program.

Step 1 • Enroll in the After School program

- Sign up through AfterSchoolHQ: <https://afterschoolhq.com/NHA>
- The program costs \$25 per week and is paid to the City of New Haven through AfterSchoolHQ.
- **Fee waiver (After School program only):** if your family does not already have one, request it from the City of New Haven at 475-355-0833. The waiver covers the After School program only, **not** the soccer league.
- Your child must attend the After School program at least two days a week to practice with the team.

Step 2 • Join the Friday game day roster (soccer league)

- Register on LeagueApps: [https://newhavencounts.leagueapps.com/leagues/soccer-\(outdoor\)](https://newhavencounts.leagueapps.com/leagues/soccer-(outdoor))
- Use code **ALEXION** at checkout to remove the league fee.
- LeagueApps is also where families receive league updates, so use an email and phone you check.

Need help?

Text the Help Desk at **203-208-9249** and we will walk you through it.

3 About the league

EMPOWER New Haven is a school-based soccer league for grades 3–8, run by New Haven Counts (NHC) in partnership with the City of New Haven and New Haven Public Schools. Our values are **Pride, Joy and Sportsmanship**. Your child is part of a team that practices at school and plays on Friday game days.

Fall 2026 • Preseason

Player development and fun. **No score is kept**, coaches are not encouraged to try to win, and players share playing time as equally as possible.

Spring 2027 • League Cup

The league becomes competitive, with school-versus-school and citywide pride. There are four regular-season game days and a playoff day on June 4.

4 Season at a glance

Season	Game Fridays	Notes
Fall 2026 Preseason	Oct 9 • Oct 23 • Nov 6 • Nov 20	Sept 25 game day was cancelled. No score kept.
Spring 2027 League Cup	Apr 23 • May 7 • May 21 • May 28	Regular season. Spring practices begin April 7.
Spring 2027 Playoffs	June 4	Single elimination across both divisions: seeds 1–4 at Clinton Ave., seeds 5–8 at Kimberly Ave. Every team plays at least two games.

All games are on Fridays at 4:00 PM and 5:00 PM. The league does not reschedule once the season begins — missed games are forfeits.

Fall: who is playing whom, and the bus schedule, are posted on our website, newhavencounts.io/empower, every **Sunday evening before each game week**. **Spring:** the full schedule is released at the start of the season (a tentative draft is in Appendix A). Final school bus pick-up times are being sent by text this week.

5 Game day, step by step

When	What happens
Before 3:00 PM	Students are released from class to the bus platform.
3:00–3:15 PM	Buses pick up students at their schools and take them to the fields.
3:30 PM	Coaches arrive at the field (they drive their own cars) and are on the clock until about 6:00 PM.
4:00 PM	First games begin. Two halves of 20–25 minutes, depending on start time.
5:00 PM	Second games begin, with a different opponent.
About 6:00 PM	Games end. Families pick up their children, and coaches finish for the day.

6 Fields, divisions and buses

North Division • Clinton Ave. Fields

- Celentano/East Rock
- Conte
- Edgewood
- Hooker
- Jepson
- Martinez/FAME
- Nathan Hale
- Ross Woodward

South Division • Kimberly Ave. Field

- Barnard
- Daniels/Truman
- Davis
- Highville
- Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross
- L.W. Beecher
- Mauro-Sheridan
- St. Martin

Location	On-site field coordinators
Kimberly Ave. Field (South)	Wanda Faison and Lisa Pietrosimone
Clinton Ave. Fields (North)	James Buxton and Erniel Cruz — reach them by texting the Help Desk at 203-208-9249

Field locations (tap to open GPS): Clinton Ave. Fields — [Clinton Avenue School, 293 Clinton Ave., New Haven, CT 06513](#). Kimberly Ave. Field — [Betsy Ross Arts Magnet School, 150 Kimberly Ave., New Haven, CT 06519](#).

Players who join a team on game days

Fair Haven athletes are welcome to join the Martinez/FAME team on game days. Troup athletes are welcome to join the Barnard team on game days.

Buses

- Buses run from each school to the fields. Buses have been instructed to pick up between **3:00 and 3:15 PM**.
- This is a **dismissal bus, not a field-trip bus**. No adult has to ride.
- Coaches may ride if they have a way to get back to their car at school. Most coaches drive to the fields instead.
- Satellite locations do not get a bus. For example, Barnard is a primary location and gets a bus, but the two Barnard-team players who attend ESUMS do not. Parents arrange transportation or carpooling from satellite locations.

7 Which schools have buses

These schools have a dismissal bus on game days. Buses are instructed to pick up between **3:00 and 3:15 PM**. Final pick-up times are being sent by text. Specific bus pairings and routes are not final yet and will be shared later.

Schools with a bus

North Division • Clinton Ave. Fields

- Celentano
- Conte
- East Rock
- Edgewood
- Fair Haven
- FAME
- Hooker
- Jepson
- Martinez
- Nathan Hale
- Ross Woodward

South Division • Kimberly Ave. Field

- Barnard
- Daniels
- Davis
- Highville
- Hill Central
- L.W. Beecher
- Mauro-Sheridan
- St. Martin
- Truman

Schools without a bus on game days

- **Troup** does not have a bus. Troup athletes can join the Barnard team on game days; families arrange transportation.
- **Clemente** does not have a bus.
- Satellite locations do not get a bus. Families arrange transportation or carpooling.

8 If your child misses school on a game day

If your child misses school on a game day

If your child is **not** sick (no symptoms, no fever), you may bring them to the field and stay with them until their coach and team arrive. **Never drop a child off at the field unsupervised.**

Please do not make a habit of keeping children out of school to go to games. If your child is sick, keep them home.

Missed games are forfeits. The league does not reschedule once the season begins.

9 How games work

- **8 field players plus a goalkeeper** per team (8v8 plus keepers).
- Each game has two halves of **20 to 25 minutes**, depending on start time. Referees and coaches have been told the timing.
- **No free-form substitutions.** Substitutions happen only at dead whistles (for example, out of bounds), and the referee leads them: the referee points to the sideline and calls for subs to come in.
- In the fall preseason, **everyone plays as equal minutes as possible**, and no score is kept.
- Every team plays two games on a game day, at 4:00 and 5:00, against two different opponents.

10 Sideline conduct

Please do

- Cheer, clap and celebrate goals and nice plays.
- Stay a calm, friendly observer from the sideline.
- At halftime, give your child water, Gatorade or oranges, then step back.
- Let the coaches manage the team. Kids learn best from one voice, not several adults at once.
- If your child is hurt and wants to come to you, that is fine.
- If you need to take your child home early, a quick message to the coach or coordinator is acceptable.

Please do not

- Do not speak to referees, during **or after** games.
- Do not speak to coaches during games.
- Do not speak to players during games — including your own child — other than cheering.
- Do not give instructions or coaching from the sideline.
- Do not raise playing time, strategy, questions or complaints at the field.

Respect is required, with no warnings

Any disrespectful behavior toward coaches, referees, players or other parents means the adult is **not allowed back at games**. There are no warnings and no second chances.

The child can keep practicing the following week, but **their playing status is in jeopardy for the following week** unless the parent completes the steps to restore it: a meeting with the Program Director, plus written and verbal promises that it will not happen again.

11 Emergency procedures

Thunder and lightning

All parents are called. Students go to the **bus platform** of the school and are told not to touch anything metal or anything attached to the building while we wait for parents to be reached.

At the fields, field coordinators will try to get inside and ask school staff whether we can shelter in the building.

Code red or a neighborhood safety concern

Handled **the same way as thunder and lightning**: parents are called, students go to the bus platform, and field coordinators try to get everyone inside.

Weather and field conditions

On game days we will call games **as soon as we learn** the field will be unplayable, or that conditions will make it not fun or not safe for students. Families are notified through LeagueApps and AfterSchoolHQ.

If there are not enough bus drivers

If the bus company has too many drivers call out, we will tell **schools** and **families** if other transportation to the fields must be arranged.

- **Home first:** all students go home on their regular school buses, then walk, drive or carpool to the fields.
- **Recycled buses:** one driver makes three stops, so students arrive at the field around **3:45, 4:15 and 4:45** instead of all at 3:45. Some or all of the 4:00 games may be cancelled.

Whatever challenge comes up, we will work to solve it and communicate the options.

What this means for you

- Keep your phone on and answer calls from NHC on game days.
- In a weather or safety emergency, plan to pick your child up quickly.
- If buses are disrupted, watch for a text with how to get your child to the fields.

12 Who to contact

Person	Role	Email (before game days)	Phone (game days)
Lisa Pietrosimone	Program Director, New Haven Counts	lisa@newhavencounts.org	203-843-7199
Wanda Faison	Program Manager, New Haven Counts	wanda@newhavencounts.org	203-606-6985

Email Lisa or Wanda **before** game days. Call or text them **on** game days. For anything else, text the **Help Desk** at 203-208-9249.

If you need to...	Contact
Questions about how things work (schedule, enrollment, buses)	Lisa or Wanda, by email
A concern about a coach or a referee	Help Desk, text 203-208-9249
Something urgent on a game day	The on-site field coordinator, or Lisa or Wanda by phone
Reaching your child's coach	Your coach's email address, shared with families. Coaches' phone numbers are not shared.

EMPOWER is a free or low-cost league, and NHC staff are responsible for the quality of coaches and referees. Parents are not asked to judge it, but every concern is welcome. Concerns about a coach or a referee go straight to the Help Desk at **203-208-9249**. Operational questions go to Lisa or Wanda.

13 Fees and what to bring

- **Costs:** the After School program is \$25 per week (City of New Haven fee waiver available, After School only). The soccer league fee is removed with code **ALEXION**. See How to enroll your child.
- **What to bring to every game:** water, athletic shoes or cleats, one light-colored shirt and one dark-colored shirt.
- **Some students are practice players.** They build skills at practice but do not play in games.

A Spring 2027 tentative schedule

Tentative — subject to change. Each team plays two games on each of the four regular-season Fridays (4:00 and 5:00), eight games in all: every team in its division once, plus one rematch. No team plays the same opponent twice on one day. Field numbers may change on game day.

North Division • Clinton Ave. Fields

Game	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
Apr 23 4:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Ross Woodward	Conte vs Nathan Hale	Edgewood vs Martinez/FAME	Hooker vs Jepson
Apr 23 5:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Nathan Hale	Ross Woodward vs Martinez/FAME	Conte vs Jepson	Edgewood vs Hooker
May 7 4:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Martinez/FAME	Nathan Hale vs Jepson	Ross Woodward vs Hooker	Conte vs Edgewood
May 7 5:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Jepson	Martinez/FAME vs Hooker	Nathan Hale vs Edgewood	Ross Woodward vs Conte
May 21 4:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Hooker	Jepson vs Edgewood	Martinez/FAME vs Conte	Nathan Hale vs Ross Woodward
May 21 5:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Edgewood	Hooker vs Conte	Jepson vs Ross Woodward	Martinez/FAME vs Nathan Hale
May 28 4:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Conte	Edgewood vs Ross Woodward	Hooker vs Nathan Hale	Jepson vs Martinez/FAME
May 28 5:00 PM	Celentano/East Rock vs Ross Woodward	Conte vs Nathan Hale	Edgewood vs Martinez/FAME	Hooker vs Jepson

South Division · Kimberly Ave. Field

Game	Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
Apr 23 4:00 PM	Barnard vs St. Martin	Daniels/Truman vs Mauro-Sheridan	Davis vs L.W. Beecher	Highville vs Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross
Apr 23 5:00 PM	Barnard vs Mauro-Sheridan	St. Martin vs L.W. Beecher	Daniels/Truman vs Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross	Davis vs Highville
May 7 4:00 PM	Barnard vs L.W. Beecher	Mauro-Sheridan vs Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross	St. Martin vs Highville	Daniels/Truman vs Davis
May 7 5:00 PM	Barnard vs Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross	L.W. Beecher vs Highville	Mauro-Sheridan vs Davis	St. Martin vs Daniels/Truman
May 21 4:00 PM	Barnard vs Highville	Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross vs Davis	L.W. Beecher vs Daniels/Truman	Mauro-Sheridan vs St. Martin
May 21 5:00 PM	Barnard vs Davis	Highville vs Daniels/Truman	Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross vs St. Martin	L.W. Beecher vs Mauro-Sheridan
May 28 4:00 PM	Barnard vs Daniels/Truman	Davis vs St. Martin	Highville vs Mauro-Sheridan	Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross vs L.W. Beecher
May 28 5:00 PM	Barnard vs St. Martin	Daniels/Truman vs Mauro-Sheridan	Davis vs L.W. Beecher	Highville vs Hill Central/Clemente/B. Ross

June 4 playoff day (tentative)

Teams are seeded 1–8 in their own division by regular-season record. The **top four teams from each division** (North and South) all play at **Clinton Ave. Fields**. The **bottom four teams from each division** all play at **Kimberly Ave. Field**. North plays South: the top seed in one division faces the fourth seed in the other, and so on.

Time	Clinton Ave. Fields • seeds 1–4	Kimberly Ave. Field • seeds 5–8
4:00 PM Round 1	Game 1: North #1 vs South #4 Game 2: North #2 vs South #3 Game 3: North #3 vs South #2 Game 4: North #4 vs South #1	Game 1: North #5 vs South #8 Game 2: North #6 vs South #7 Game 3: North #7 vs South #6 Game 4: North #8 vs South #5
5:00 PM Round 2	Semifinals: winner of Game 1 vs winner of Game 2, and winner of Game 3 vs winner of Game 4. Second games: loser of Game 1 vs loser of Game 2, and loser of Game 3 vs loser of Game 4.	Same format as Clinton Ave.: two semifinals and two second games for Round 1 losers.
6:00 PM Final	The final at the site, played as a third game that everyone can watch.	The final at the site, played as a third game that everyone can watch.

Single elimination. Teams that lose their first game are out of the title race but still play a second game, so every team plays at least two. The day runs until about 7:00 PM. Because teams travel to their playoff site, playoff-day bus routes may differ from the regular season.