

PS 6 School Parent Handbook

This guide is for novice and seasoned chess families and is intended to increase understanding of elementary school chess competitions. Although each chess game involves only two competitors, tournament chess is much more fun when played as part of a team and chess community. Players can support and learn from one another and socialize in between games.

Chess at PS 6

The PS 6 Chess Team was established several years ago and is coached by Michael Poukchanski. Any student at PS 6 is welcome to join the chess team regardless of grade or level. Chess is taught at PS 6 in 1st and 2nd grades. Additional opportunities to play chess or for parents to learn more about chess at PS6 include:

- **Afterschool chess classes:**

Classes are held on Thursdays and Fridays at PS 6. If interested, please contact Mr. Michael Poukchanski by email michael.poukchanski@gmail.com

- **Tournaments.**

The PS 6 Chess team will participate throughout the year in local tournaments, NYC and National Championships. Participation in all tournaments is open to everyone, regardless of the level and is a great way to connect with other PS 6 students and parents as well as expose your child to chess. PS 6 will host six tournaments during the school year. Please be advised that per the chancellor's regulations, any child who attends a chess tournament will be marked absent.

Tournaments Sections:

New York City is a great place to live if your child likes chess. Most tournaments are held weekly on Sundays at various schools around New York City. The tournaments are divided into a rookie, unrated and rated sections

Rookies Section: The PS 6 rookie section is a great place to start for budding chess players, since the "home" environment is familiar to your child and they will play with other children that they may know from school. This section is designed to invite children with limited knowledge of chess. It is also a great time for chess parents to get together and to meet Michael Poukchanski. The PS 6 rookie tournament usually lasts two to three hours. All participants will get a trophy at the end of the event. All chess boards and pieces are supplied by the organizers of the tournament.

Unrated Section: Once your child has played a couple of Rookie sections and/or comfortable with the game of chess you might consider the unrated section. This section is slightly more competitive. Each child plays four games and the tournament lasts about four to six hours. Even though the tournament is unrated the children will get points based on how many games they win, draw and lose and the children with the most points will get trophies. The top quarter of participants gets trophies. Other children will get a participation medal.

Rated Section: Your child needs to be a member of the United States Chess Federation (USCF) to play rated tournaments. You can register for a USCF scholastic membership online at www.uschess.org or at the registration desk on the tournament's day: you will receive a membership card in the mail. You will need the USCF ID number to register for rated tournaments, but you do not need to bring the card for the tournament. An annual USCF Scholastic membership costs \$17 for a child under 12 years old and provides your child with a subscription to "Chess Life for Kids" which is published every two months. A child in a rated tournament should bring a notation pad, pencils and a clock.

Ratings

Children get rated by the USCF when they play a rated tournament. The result of every tournament is sent to the USCF computers, which assess the comparative strengths of the player and rate them against each other using a statistical model. The assumption is that two players of equal rating should draw or split their games 50/50. A player 500 points higher than his/her partner should be able to win almost all his/her games. Your children will usually get their rating within 24-48 hours after playing their first rated tournament. The easiest way to find your child's rating (or any other rated player including opponents or chess coaches) is to go to the USCF website at www.uschess.org or use the link <http://www.uschess.org/datapage/player-search.php> and enter name or ID#.

Tournament Directors rely on the online month supplements which can be found on the website – see above. The deadline for rated tournaments to be counted for the next supplement is the 3rd Wednesday of the previous month.

You may also hear the term "Official" and "Current" rating. The official ratings are the ones from the Month Supplement and are posted on wall charts at tournaments. These ratings you will need to use when registering your child into a rating-based section tournament. The current ratings give an up-to-current-tournament picture of your child's rating change. It is the best indicator of what their current playing level is and it is updated every time your child plays a rated tournament. As mentioned above, these ratings become official for the next supplement after the 3rd Wednesday of the month, e.g., the last current rating by the 3rd Wednesday of August is becoming the official rating for the September month Supplement.

Local Tournament Registration and Participation:

These are some of the considerations to make when you sign your child up for a chess tournament:

- **Registration:** It is best to register online prior to the day of the tournament in order to save money and time. Most tournaments charge a higher fee to enter if you sign your child up on the day of the tournament and require you to show up earlier to ensure that your child can play the first game.

- **Section Selection:** Each school/organization run their tournaments slightly differently in terms of sections offered and rating cut offs. The section your child should play in is usually determined by their rating range. Generally, you can play up but not down, which means that your child can play in a more advanced section than they seem to qualify for but not in a less advanced section with a lower rating cut-off. If you are unsure of the appropriate section contact the tournament director before registering. The tournament organizer's contact information can usually be found on-line or on the printed tournament information.
- **Games:** Most tournaments will include 3- 4 games. The time allotted for each game varies by section and tournament. The time allotted for each section is usually listed on the tournament flyer.
- **Pairing Sheets:** At most schools pairings are posted on the walls for the rated and unrated sections prior to the start of the game. Most tournaments will make an announcement when a section's pairings have been posted. At PS 6, the pairings are posted on a wall and distributed via e-mail prior to the start of each game so make sure that you provide your e-mail at the time of registration. The pairings for the next game will be posted in 10-15 minutes after the last game of the previous game is over.
- **The Swiss system:** Most tournaments use the Swiss system for pairing of players in the unrated and rated sections. In the Swiss system a list of players are ordered by ratings, cut in half and the top half plays the respective player in the bottom half. The results of each round determine a score group within which the players will be paired together again in the same way. Players, by score, will be ordered, cut in half, and the players in the top part of each group will play the players in the bottom part of the group. Ultimately, consistent good performance will result in pairings with similar players until a tournament winner is decided. Players who are losing or having a rough time will get easier opponents with similar number of points giving all players a chance to win.
- **Time Controlled Games:** Time controlled games are required for rated games. In most tournaments time control is the number of minutes for an entire game/per player. Thus, if each player has a total of 30 minutes for all his/her moves then the total time allowed for the entire game is 60 minutes. It can be written as "Game/30" or "G/30" The time allotted each player varies by section. If both players bring a clock, the player who plays black gets to choose which clock is used. At some tournament clocks are required, at others they are required if either player wants one. Player need to bring their own clocks.
- **Notation:** Some tournaments strongly encourage that all players in rated games record their moves and at the higher levels it is mandatory. AT PS 6 children playing in the K-8 Under 400 rated section (U400) are encouraged, but not required to notate. Chess scorebooks are for players to write down in an abbreviated form each of their moves along with those of their opponents. Notating chess moves helps children to be focused, provides a record for settling disputes and is useful for coaches to the review the game

afterwards. Notation pads or scorebooks can be bought at most tournaments and at most tournament score sheets are provided.

- **Reporting Results:** In some tournaments the pairings sheets serve as a place to report results. Usually it is the winner who is responsible for reporting the result and posts the results on the pairings sheet. At PS 6, the results are turned in by having the children raise their hands once the game is over and the tournament director registers the results himself. Children should be sure they know how to post results in the particular tournament they are playing before they start.
- **Scoring:** For each game played with the player will get 1 point if the player wins, 0 points if the player loses and a draw/tie is $\frac{1}{2}$ a point. If the other player does not show up after a certain amount of time then you get a win by forfeit which is one point for the tournament result, but will not change your rating. If you don't show up you get a loss by forfeit, which is a "Zero" for the tournament, but doesn't affect the rating.
- **Bye:** If you arrange beforehand you can sometimes skip a round and get a "bye" for which the player can get $\frac{1}{2}$ point. Most tournaments allow only one Bye. If not listed, contact the Tournament Director to inquire if a bye is allowed in a particular tournament.
- **Special tournament rules:** Touch move is the most universal. If you touch a piece, you have to move it if you legally can. If you touch an opponent's piece you have to take it if you legally can. If you run out of time, you lose, except the situation when your partner has no mating material, e.g., if you run out of time, but your partner has only the King, it is a draw because your partner cannot checkmate you in any case.

Tournaments:

There are two big national tournaments: The National Scholastic K-12 Championship (December 4th- December 6th in Lake Buena Vista, Florida) and the 2016 Elementary Championship (May 6-8 in Nashville, Tennessee). There is also a Girls National Championship in the Spring of 2016.. In addition, the New York City Championship is January 9-10, 2016. Moreover, PS 6 hosts six chess tournaments for the 2015-2016 school year: October 18, December 13th, January 24th, February 28th, March 20th and April 17th.

PS6 Chess Team:

At PS 6, anyone who wants to play can join the chess team. Chess, like swimming, is fundamentally not a team sport, but the major state and national tournaments and some local tournaments give out team awards in addition to individual ones. In general, they take the scores of the three or four best scoring kids from a school and add them up for the team score. As many children as possible can register for a tournament. The four best are determined on the basis of performance. PS 6 has sent a chess team to the National and NYC and NYS

Championships in the past year and hope to do the same this year. The PS 6 chess team is about school spirit, developing friendships with other students and creating a chess community for our school. If you would like to join the PS 6 chess team please contact Coach Michael Poukchanski.

If you have any questions please feel free to contact the following parents:

For Kindergarten @ First Grade:

Please contact Carlie Patterson

E-mail: carliepat@msn.com

For Second & Third Grade:

Please contact Karel Ruy

E-mail: Karel@ruyklein.com

For Fourth and Fifth Grade:

Please contact Sun-Young Hong

E-mail: SHong@wje.com