ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

Running Club

TOOLKIT

A step-by-step guide to launching and running a parent- or teacher-led elementary school running club.

Table of Contents

#	SECTION	PAGE
1	**Getting Started** *How to organize a new elementary school running club*	2–3
2	**Material Purchasing Checklist** *Items to purchase for a successful running club*	4
3	**Principal Email** *Sample email to send to a principal to start a running club*	5
4	**Practical Guide** *How to run and maintain a successful running club*	6-7
5	**Sample Registration Form** *Ready to adapt form for student registration*	8-9

Getting Started

> *The following steps are a guide to creating a parent-led or teacher-led running club at your local elementary school.*

STEP 1 Identify a Teacher or Community Champion

A committed lead adult (or adults) is required to:

- Coordinate communication
- Lead meetings with administration
- Recruit volunteers
- Oversee implementation

STEP 2 Initial Principal Outreach

Action: Send a brief introductory email (see Principal Introduction Email Template) and request a 20–30 minute meeting.

Objective: Secure administrative approval for a pilot program.

STEP 3 Principal Meeting

Topics to address in the meeting:

1. Program Structure

- 6-week duration, once in the fall and once in the spring
- 2 sessions per week
- 30–60 minutes per session
- Target grade levels (often based on volunteer manpower)
- Maximum enrollment

2. Supervision Plan

- Adult-to-student ratio (1:8–10); higher ratio may be needed for 2nd grade and below
- Background check requirements: register here
- Volunteer roles: course set-up, lap tracking, funding and supplies, emails and promotions

3. Safety Protocol

- Clearly defined running area
- Check-in/check-out process
- Emergency contact access
- First aid plan
- Weather modification plan

4. Liability & Compliance

- School district waiver requirements
- Insurance coverage clarification
- Volunteer registration process
- District-level approvals (if required)

5. Facility Use

- Designated space (field, track, playground loop)
- Storage (if needed)
- Indoor backup option
- Bathroom access

Outcome

Administrative approval contingent upon compliance requirements.

STEP 4 Teacher Alignment

Purpose:

- Obtain a faculty sponsor for the club. The sponsor must be present at school during club activities. The PE teacher is the typical first contact in this process.
- Confirm space boundaries and student capacity
- Gain internal advocacy

STEP 5 Secure Funds for Running Club Administration

- Funding is not requested from the PTA since grant support can be obtained from the Fort Collins Running Club.
- Apply for the FCRC Grant Application
- Once grant funds are awarded, purchase necessary supplies (see Running Club Supply List).

STEP 6 PTA / PTO and Fort Collins Running Club Coordination

Purpose:

- Volunteer recruitment from both PTA/PTO and Fort Collins Running Club — request volunteers in the FCRC newsletter
- Parent communication distribution

STEP 7 District Compliance Confirmation

If required:

- Complete volunteer registration
- Encourage completion of Safe Sport training
- Free: rrca.org/education/abuse-awareness-training
- Safe Sport for Volunteers ($10): uscenterforsafesport.org/courses (#empowered-families)
- Submit student waiver for approval
- Confirm insurance documentation
- Confirm facility scheduling

Approval must be finalized before public launch.

STEP 8 Public Announcement

Only after principal approval, compliance confirmation, and volunteer minimum secured.

Announcement should include: program overview, registration instructions, safety structure, and enrollment limits.

Administrative Approval Flow



Material Purchasing Checklist

> *Grant-supported — up to $500 per year.*

Step 1 · Before Purchasing

- ☐ Principal approval secured
- ☐ Volunteer minimum confirmed
- ☐ Final enrollment cap determined
- ☐ Grant approval confirmed (amount: $_____)
- ☐ Reimbursement process clarified
- ☐ Receipts required? (Yes / No)
- ☐ Tax-exempt documentation needed? (Yes / No)

Step 2 · Core Safety Equipment

- ☐ 8 Bright Field Cones
- ☐ 2 Whistles
- ☐ 1 Portable First Aid Kit
- ☐ 3–4 Clipboards
- ☐ Printed & Laminated Boundary Map
- ☐ Attendance Binder or Folder
- ☐ Popsicle Sticks or Markers for Lap Tracking
- ☐ Volunteer Lanyards (optional but recommended)
- ☐ Program T-Shirts (confirm final count first)
- ☐ Stickers or Mileage Tokens for end of season awards
- ☐ Storage container and/or portable wagon

Step 3 · Storage & Sustainability

- ☐ All items fit in one storage bin
- ☐ Label bin with school name
- ☐ Inventory list printed and placed inside bin
- ☐ Equipment reusable for next session

Principal Email

A ready-to-adapt template you can send to introduce the running club to your school principal.

Subject: Parent-Led Elementary Running Club Proposal

Dear [Principal Name],

My name is [First and Last Name], and I am a parent at [School Name]. I am reaching out to explore the possibility of starting a parent-led elementary running club at our school.

The goal of the program would be to promote health, confidence, and community through a structured, age-appropriate running program. The secondary benefit would be to help your students learn a lifelong self-regulating tool. The program would be about 6 weeks in the fall and spring, held [before or after school], and organized and supervised by parent volunteers with the support of a faculty sponsor from the school. Teachers are welcome to actively help as well, but our hope is to create a program that would not burden teachers who are already so busy.

Importantly, there would be no cost to the school. The Fort Collins Running Club offers a community grant of up to $500 per year to support elementary running clubs which would cover equipment and program materials. The intent is to minimize any burden on school staff while maintaining a strong focus on safety and supervision.

I would appreciate the opportunity to meet briefly (20–30 minutes) to discuss whether this initiative could align with our school's policies and priorities. I am committed to ensuring that all district requirements, supervision standards, and liability considerations are fully addressed.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,
[First and Last Name]
[Phone Number]
[Email Address]

Practical Guide

The following guidance is for running and maintaining a running club at your local elementary school. These suggestions are based on feedback from successful elementary school running clubs in Fort Collins.

Program Structure Options

- After School: 2×/week, 45–60 minutes
- Before School: 1–2×/week, 25–30 minutes
- Drop-in Morning: Flexible arrival

Season Options

- Fall (September–November) — consider the heat and how you'll manage 90-degree days
- Spring (March–May) — plan for cold days with possible snow and rain; decide when you will cancel and how you will manage snow and muddy conditions
- Seasons usually last 6–8 weeks long

Staffing

- 1 adult per 15 students
- Use teachers, volunteers, or older students
- Obtain parent volunteers by requesting them on the runner registration form

Registration

- Cap participation based on supervision
- Use paper permission slips or Google Forms to collect registration
- Consider an optional fee to off-set costs ($5/runner)
- Promote through school newsletters, teacher emails, or a paper flyer sent home

Running Setup

- Loop around playground or field so you only need to measure once
- Ideal lap distance: 0.1–0.25 miles
- Consider a longer option if you have enough volunteers or teachers (e.g., 2–3 miles off campus)
- Consider fun route alternatives every few weeks to keep it interesting — intervals on and off effort, A-skips or grapevine for a few laps, sprint sections, low-stakes races, run the loop backwards

Lap Tracking Options

- Paper lap cards — marked for each lap when they pass
- Popsicle sticks — handed to students as they pass, counted at the end and recorded
- Hand marks — marked for each lap when they pass
- Tablet/chip recording — higher-tech option that automatically records as students pass by. While cool-sounding, it is quite costly and not necessary for this age; only recommended if implemented at very low cost through outside donations

Incentives System

- Milestones: 5K, 10K, Half Marathon, Marathon
- Charm necklaces for lap milestones
- Special challenges (run 1 mile nonstop)
- Recognition (certificates, shirts, announcements)

Safety Considerations

- Clearly marked course
- Water access — ensure students bring a water bottle filled to practice
- Bathroom access — plan who accompanies a student if they go into the school after hours
- Weather plan — can practice be moved inside? If not, when will parents be notified of cancelled practice?
- Emergency contact list — all students must provide 2 emergency contacts at the time of registration

Weekly Session Plan

5 min	5 min	20–30 min	5 min	5 min
ARRIVAL	WARM-UP	RUN / WALK	COOL DOWN	RECORD & CELEBRATE

A simple, consistent rhythm that keeps kids moving, safe, and engaged.

Sample Registration Form

A ready-to-adapt form you can send home to parents for registration.

Come Run with Us!

What	***** School Running Club** We are asking for **donations ($5-$10 suggested)** to cover The cost of the student incentives and a hat or shirt! You may pay in cash, check, or on School Pay.
When	**Mondays** and **Wednesdays** beginning Monday, September 8th and ending Wednesday, October 30th
Time	2:25 - 3:15pm
Who	3rd, 4th, and 5th graders
Where	Meet outside ***. We will run on the playground. Long run students will run with an adult around ***.
Why	To grow a love for running and get better than you were the time before. Be healthy and fit! Set goals! Have fun running with friends, family, and Olander teachers! Earn incentive charms for every 5 miles you run and rewards as you reach 50, 100, and 200 miles.
Pick-up	**IMPORTANT** - If your child isn't walking or biking home by themselves, an adult **must meet your child at the field.** Please make sure your child checks out with an adult **before** leaving. This way we know where your child is at all times. *If there is a change to your child's attendance, please email all of us as well as the front office.*
How to Sign-up	Turn in your permission form to *** ASAP. You must have a signed permission form to run with us. The LAST DAY we will take permission slips is Friday, September 5th, 2025.
Emails	[Include all emails parents should have]

Please keep this page of the form for future reference and return the next page for registration!

Return this Form for Registration

Pick-Up (check/fill out all that apply!)
___ My child has my permission to walk/bike home by themselves
___ An adult will pick up my child (adult names) _____
___ My child will be going to after school care

****Please check which day(s) your child will be attending Running Club. If they are absent, please notify each of us <u>and</u> the front office.****

___ Mondays ___ Wednesdays

Parent Volunteering (only fill this part out if you **<u>can</u>** volunteer)
Wanted! Parent Volunteers: We always need extra adults to motivate kids, run with kids, and record laps. Please fill out the following if you can help. We will reach out the week before our start date to let you know how we could use your help.

I _____ am available to help on (**circle** all that apply):

Monday **Wednesday**

I would like to help by (**check** all that apply):
___ walking/running with kids ___ passing out sticks/recording laps
___ running with students on the long run (2+ miles)

Email (please write neatly) _____

Phone Number _____

(Optional) Music Device Permission
Please note that students are responsible for their own devices and are expected to follow the rules.

I give my child _____ **in grade** _____ permission to use a device to listen to school appropriate music while running.

I _____ will use my device appropriately. I will keep **one** earbud in and one out so I can hear directions. If I misuse my device, I know I might not be able to use it for the rest of the year.

Thanks,
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