**Clearwater High Cheer Team Handbook**

**CHS CHEER TEAM MISSION STATEMENT**

* Promote and uphold school spirit, unity, and pride.
* Represent the school to the highest degree.
* Always exemplify good behavior and sportsmanship (in and out of uniform).
* Promote friendship with teammates and other schools we interact with.
* Promote the development of lifelong values and skills.

Cheerleaders understand that teamwork and the maintenance of discipline are key to the success of the CHS cheer program. Cheerleaders are dedicated to promoting spirit, enthusiasm, and a positive winning attitude. Adherence to the cheer program rules and regulations is vital to achieving goals. All members realize that how they conduct themselves in or out of uniform directly reflects on the entire team, coaches, and school.

**ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS**

Students participating on the Clearwater High cheerleading Team must meet the following requirements:

* The student must maintain a grade point average (GPA) of 2.0 or higher.
* The student must have a current physical completed by the doctor on the district forms provided by CHS.
* The student must complete the necessary paperwork.
* The student must purchase all the essential practice and performance gear, and camp.
* The student must have transportation to and from all after-school practices.
* All cheerleading candidates and parents must sign a contract stating that they agree to and are aware of the time commitment, expense, and responsibility required to be on the team.

**ATTENDANCE**

Cheerleading is unlike any other sport. We do not have alternate team members to fill in when individuals are absent. Illness or extreme emergencies are the only valid reason for missing practices or games. You must provide documentation in order for this to be an excused absence.

* Clearwater High Cheerleaders must attend all practices and scheduled events. Excused absences will only be granted in the case of an emergency via written notification.
* Cheerleaders must attend at least four class periods of the school day to participate in after-school events. Cheerleaders must also follow the last practice before an event/game to avoid sitting out of a game.
* Cheerleaders must be at games (football, basketball) at the designated time. Students who do not drive must be picked up within 10 minutes after the game ends. Cheerleaders can call home near the end of the games to ensure a ride is coming.
* Cheerleaders must attend ALL football games and ASSIGNED HOME basketball games for both boys’ and girls’ teams.
* All Cheerleaders will be required to help roll mats and put away equipment after each practice and game. Cheerleaders are not to leave until dismissed. Leaving before dismissal may result in being benched for a quarter of the next game.
* If a Cheerleader participates in multiple sports, the practice time must be split equally. The cheerleader is responsible for informing both coaches about which sport will be reported to first. Participation in multiple sports or other school activities might remove the cheerleader from the opportunity to be considered for a captain.
* Lastly, the cheerleader's and parent's responsibility are transportation to and from practice, games, and events.

**PRACTICES**

* Practices are held on TUESDAYS and THURSDAYS after school from 2:15-4:00 unless said otherwise. Please do NOT schedule any type of appointments or be scheduled to work during those times.
* Cheerleaders should be changed and ready for practice BEFORE 2:15. At 2:15 cheerleaders are expected to be on the mat ready to begin practice. Tardiness due to visiting with friends, socialization, not using time wisely, etc., could result in getting benched during an upcoming game (coach’s discretion).
* The transportation must be arranged before the start of practice.
* Cheerleaders should wear shorts of appropriate length, the team t-shirt or tank top, and cheer shoes to each scheduled practice. Tuesday practice we wear our t-shirt, Thursday practice we wear our tank top. Hair must be worn up/tied back. All jewelry and piercing must be removed for practice. Failure to follow these requirements results in the inability to participate.
* Cheerleaders must have pom poms at every practice, even if we do not use them.
* Each practice will begin with stretching and light conditioning. Cheer practice, band dance practice, and stunting will comprise the main chunk of practice time. However, team-building activities will also occur during practice time.
* Please schedule all personal appointments around the Cheer practice schedule when possible.
* Cell phones will need to be silenced and put away during practice time!!! If a Cheerleader uses her phone to make calls/text messages, they will be benched at the next game. All parents will be provided with a contact number for the coach in case of emergencies.

**UNEXCUSED PRACTICES**

If a cheerleader has an unexcused practice absence, they will be benched for part of the upcoming game/performance. A parent must notify the coach through text message or written notes. The absence text/note should include the reason for the missed practice and must be signed by the parent or guardian. If absences are chronic, the consequence may be dismissal from the team. If a cheerleader is absent from school due to illness, they will be granted an excused absence from practice.

To do more performances and create more routines, EVERYONE needs to be at practice. Becoming a CHS cheerleading is a big commitment, and it expected to be present from the beginning to the end. We need cheerleaders to be fully committed through football AND basketball season, our season and training does not end after football. It is unfair for the others who show up to every game and every event to not be able to perform to their fullest potential due to absences.

**UNEXCUSED GAMES/PERFORMANCES/EVENTS**

If a Cheerleader has an unexcused game, performance, or event, the consequence may be dismissal from the team. If a Cheerleader cannot attend an event due to a church function, family event, etc., the coach must be notified of the absence by a parent through text, written note, or phone call. The absence text/note should include the reason for missing the event and must be signed by the parent or guardian. Approval must be requested at least two days before a scheduled event.

**CORRECTIVE ACTIONS**

All matters will be dealt with individually and may result in team dismissal. It is up to the coaches and AD's discretion.

* One unexcused practice = benched for part of the following upcoming game
* Two unexcused practices = benched one game
* Three unexcused practices/one unexcused game = Team dismissal
* Late arrival to practice = full team conditioning (push-ups, squats, running, etc....)
* Late arrival to game = 1/4 game bench/time out
* Two late arrivals to the game = 1/2 game bench/time out
* Habitual late arrival to practices and games = Team dismissal

**GAMES**

* Cheerleaders have the most extended season of all the athletics at Clearwater High. Cheerleaders cheer for football and girls’ and boys’ basketball. We do pep rallies, and various activities to show school spirit. During basketball, practice schedules revolve around games, so cheerleading usually takes up at least three days during the school week.
* All football games are mandatory for all cheerleaders for which team they are on (JV or Varsity)
* JV football games are on Wednesday nights, Varsity on Friday
* All basketball games are mandatory for which a cheerleader is assigned. These games happen throughout the week.
* While cheerleaders are expected to smile and wave at friends, a cheerleader’s purpose is to cheer, encourage the players, and “lead” the crowd. Please do not socialize during game time.
* During football season, friends must stay behind the fence and off the field.
* During basketball season, cheerleaders will be seated in a “block” formation. Friends may sit nearby but will not hinder or distract the cheerleader from their purpose.
* Cheerleaders will not be allowed to use cell phones during games. Phones must be silenced and stored in the cheerleader’s cheer bag.
* Cheerleaders must always conduct themselves appropriately when in uniform. People are very conscious of cheerleader conduct on and off the performance field! Inappropriate PDA and language are unacceptable in uniform (or anything representing CHS).

**HOMECOMING**

* BOTH JV and Varsity cheerleaders will be cheering at the Homecoming game. This is mandatory for everyone on both squads.
* If you are on Homecoming court, you are expected to wear your uniform the entire time. However, you may wear your sash, and you will be excused from the sidelines a little before halftime when court starts to line up.

**CONDUCT**

* By being a part of the cheerleading team, you accept that your actions are more prominent than those not associated with such an activity. Exemplary behavior is always mandatory anywhere in the community and at all school functions where you are recognized as a representative of CHS.
* Promoting good sportsmanship by way of example is always required. Members must not use foul language at school activities, games, parades, etc. This is especially true while in uniform and could result in dismissal from the team.
* Excessive public displays of affection are never considered appropriate, especially in uniform, at games, in school, around the community, and on social media.
* Due to social media, your presence can be seen everywhere - always remember you represent CHS. Any cheerleader caught posting inappropriate material while in uniform (this includes team shirts) or at scheduled cheer functions will be subject to disciplinary actions.
* Proper appearance is required at all times.
* Members must cooperate with all faculty members, team members, game officials, and coaches.
* Cheerleaders must display proper behavior in class. This includes being on time, not skipping, and not cheating.
* Set aside your differences for the benefit of the team and school. Gossiping about other cheerleaders, coaches or causing drama within the team will not be tolerated and could result in dismissal.
* Bullying at school, outside of school, or on social media is never accepted and could be grounds for removal from the team.
* Every attempt will be made to discipline fairly/equally and to make consequences known ahead of time.
* Positive Cheerleader character is essential to this athletic program! Cheerleaders should be leaders within the school and always set a good example. Each cheerleader must follow all school rules of the Student Code of Conduct as well as Pinellas County School Board Rules. Disrespect will not be tolerated – Disrespect toward a fellow Cheerleader, coach, teacher, faculty member, or toward a parent should never happen and could be grounds for dismissal.

**SCHOOL CONSEQUENCES**

* ISS (1st Offense) = suspended from cheer for a minimum of one week.
* ISS (2nd Offense)/OSS = Team dismissal All other matters will be dealt with on an individual basis and may or may not result in team dismissal. It is up to the coach’s discretion.

**CHEER UNIFORMS**

* JV Cheerleaders will be given a uniform that is property of the school. Any damages, stains, or failure to return the uniform, the cheerleader/parent will be financially responsible to repair or replace.
* Varsity Cheerleaders are responsible for buying their own uniform. The price is $200 and it is to be paid ASAP so that they come in before the first game.
* Cheerleaders must appear in full uniform at each function, ready to cheer. This includes top, skirt, shorts, and sleeves (when needed), socks, shoes, poms, and bows (and SMILES). Bra straps should not be showing at any point. Any cheerleader who shows up without a complete uniform will be benched.
* Bows are to be worn IN HAIR and NOT around ankles.
* Team athletic shoes must be kept clean.
* The uniform does NOT include jewelry – No necklaces, rings, bracelets, earrings, etc. Small simple studs for earing are acceptable.
* Nails, including artificial, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation. The appropriate length means the fingernails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands. We do not want other Cheerleaders scratched/injured during stunting.
* During cooler weather cheerleaders may wear their official team jacket. No other jackets, hoodies, sweatshirts will be allowed during games performances. This includes parades.
* Only the Clearwater High cheerleader is allowed to wear the provided uniform.

**CONSEQUENCES**

* Any expectations that a cheerleader fails to uphold will result in either team conditioning or individual punishment depending on the severity of the action.
* Multiple offenses will result in being benched for part of a game or a full game or team dismissal depending on the severity.

**GRADES**

* Cheerleaders must remain in good academic standing during our lengthy season. Cheerleaders who fall below a 2.0 during the second semester will be placed on “practice only” and could be removed from all games.
* ALL CHS cheerleaders need to be exemplary role models in the classroom. You are a STUDENT first, athlete SECOND. While the minimum GPA is a 2.0, you should be striving to do your best all the time!
* If you have an F in any class on a game day, you will be benched for game that day. If you are falling behind in a class, it is your responsibility to communicate with your teacher on how to bring your grade up before that game.
* We will be offering study tables after school on Fridays before football games and throughout basketball season on different days depending on games. Cheerleaders are REQUIRED to attend at least 5 during football season and at least 5 during basketball season. HOWEVER, you have one F or more at that current time, you are required to attend all of them until the F grades are brought up. Failure to do so will result in being benched for a game until the grade is above an F.

**SUMMER CHEER**

Summer practices give cheerleaders the opportunity to learn all material prior to the first football game. Videos of each cheer will be made available via DROPBOX. It is the cheerleader’s responsibility to learn all materials whether in person or by video prior to the first game. Failure to do so will result in being benched until all material is learned.

* We will have 2 practices in June followed by a week in July including our summer camp (Exact dates will be communicated as soon as possible)

**FUNDRASING/EVENTS**

* Throughout the year there will be numerous events and fundraisers. We will try our best to give the team enough notice to make sure they can attend. These events will be considered MANDATORY, unless stated otherwise. Failure to not show up to an extra without proper documentation will result in team conditioning and possible benching from a game.

**COMMUNICATION**

* All communication will be through the BAND app. The group will be created after tryouts.
* Coach’s numbers will be provided incase of emergencies and for parents to communicate.
* Cheerleaders are the team are encouraged to create group chats without coaches and encouraged to communicate with each other.

**FINAL REMARKS**

It is recognized that these rules and regulations are necessary to maintain morale, discipline, and effective learning. Consistent enforcement of these rules and regulations is also necessary to ensure the safety and general well-being of everyone. Participation in cheerleading is a privilege not a right and may be revoked by the school personnel when a cheerleader violates rules and regulations. We are the face of Clearwater High School, and your actions, grades, attitudes, and mindsets should reflect that!!

**ESTIMATED EXPENSES**

**JV AND ROOKIES AND RETURNERS**

Game day bow (please purchase an extra if you think you will lose it) - $10

October pink bow- $10

White high socks- $5

Pink high socks- $5

Practice shirt and tank top- $35

Warm up set with pants and jacket- $90

\*Sleeves- $25

\*Rain jacket- $45

\*Poms- $25

\*Backpack- $25

**JV ROOKIE TOTAL: $275 JV RETURNAL TOTAL (without extras): $155**

**VARSITY ROOKIES OR RETURNERS**

Uniform (returner can purchase if needed)- $200

NEW VARSITY sleeves- $112

Game day bow (please purchase an extra if you think you will lose it) - $10

October pink bow- $10

Practice shirt and tank top- $35

Warm up set with pants and jacket- $90

\*White high socks- $5

\*Pink high socks- $5

\*Rain jacket- $45

\*Poms- $25

\*Backpack- $25

**VARSITY ROOKIE TOTAL: $562 VARSITY ROOKIE (if you were on JV without extras): $457**

**VARSITY RETURNER TOTAL: $257**

**CAMP**

We will be doing an at home UCA camp this summer. It is a one day 6 hour camp. Camp will be MANDATORY and it is $100 per cheerleader.

**REQUIRED TO PURCHASE ON YOUR OWN- PRICE MAY VARRY**

Black athletic shorts

White cheer shoes- MUST be Chasse, Nike, Nfinity, or Varsity

**ALL EXPENSES MUST BE PAID IN FULL BEFORE WE CAN ORDER AND DISTRIBUTE ITEMS. We want to be able to order everything and get everything handed out sooner rather than later. It does not have to be paid in full all at once.**

**ACTIONS THAT MAY RESULT IN EITHER TEAM OR INDIVIDUAL CONSEQUENCES**

The following actions are basics rules that must be upheld by everyone on the team. Depending on the frequency and severity, disciplinary action will be either team wide or for the individual if they do the following:

* Leave practice early
* Improper practice attire/not wearing cheer shoes/not having poms (wrong shirt, jeans, crocs)
* 1-15 minutes late to practice or game
* Chewing gum or eating at practice or game
* Wearing jewelry at practice or games
* Cellphone use at practice (water breaks are for water, please go the two hours disconnected so we can stay focused)
* Cellphone use at games (half time is okay but MUST be put away at 3 minutes left)
* Improper attire on game day to school (full uniform OR jeans with warmup jacket/CHS cheer shirt)
* Improper uniform at game (includes bow, skirt, top, shoes and socks)
* Bow in hair NOT on ankle
* Excessive talking in line up at game
* Being asked multiple times to stay in formation
* Failure to perform required tasks (such as mat duty, getting signs/megs/shirts for games)
* Not in line up and ready to go 1 minute before game starts
* Returning late after half time