

WASHS CHEERLEADING PROGRAM HANDBOOK

Organization

The Waynesboro Area Senior High School Athletic Department, and the WASHS Cheer Coaches govern the squad and its handbook. The purpose/goals of the WASHS Cheerleading Program are:

1. Create school spirit, pride and loyalty
2. Promote interest in school activities and perform at school games and functions
3. Develop responsibility, teach self-respect, encourage honest effort, strive for perfection, and develop character
4. Teach teamwork and pride in quality performance through maintaining high standards, both on the squad(s) and in the classroom(s)

The Waynesboro Area School District Board of Education, upon recommendation from the Athletic Department, will hire the coaches. The coaches will be responsible for the daily running and activities of the cheerleading squad.

In the fall the WASHS Cheerleading Program consists of a Varsity squad, and potentially a Junior Varsity (JV) squad if the number of participants warrant a second roster, with each squad consisting of approximately 12-20 members each. Tryouts in the spring will determine who will be a member of the WASHS Cheer Program. Coaches will select what squad each athlete will be placed on, Varsity or JV, at the conclusion of summer practices. If you are cheering during the fall season, you are not permitted to be on any other team roster.

The winter season will consist of our Competitive Spirit Team. There will be a separate tryout for this squad held in the beginning of the fall season. Any cheerleader who participates on the Competitive Spirit Team may not be on any other winter sport roster and must participate with cheering at basketball games. All 9th through 11th grade members will cheer for the last half of the JV game and the entire Varsity game. 12th graders will only be expected to cheer during the Varsity games (but will have the same report time as the other members of the squad). The squad will also travel to various away games throughout the season.

Tryout Requirements

Each student trying out for the WASHS Cheerleading Program must provide the following prior to participating in open gyms and/or tryout practices:

1. A signed WASHS Cheerleading Program Parental/Guardian & Participant Agreement Form (last page of this handbook)
2. A signed WASD Parent Handbook Parent/Athlete Acknowledgement Form (handout)

The WASHS Cheerleading Program will hold open gyms prior to tryouts to provide an opportunity to practice various skills needed as a member of the

squad(s). Participation in open gyms is highly encouraged, but not mandatory in order to tryout.

Tryouts will consist of tryout clinics, where candidates will learn specific cheers, jumps, a dance and other skills that they will perform in front of judges on the day of tryouts. Points will also be given to individuals by the Coaches during the tryout clinics when candidates are able to demonstrate various levels of competency in stunting skills. Candidates will be evaluated in as many of the following stunting roles as they select; back-spot, base and flyer. Up to five points will be given based on skill, with a maximum of 15 points being added to individuals overall score.

NOTE: An Athletic Eligibility Grade Report will be run on all participants. Any "D" will result in a deduction of 5 points, any "F" will result in a deduction of 10 points (there are no maximums to these deductions, every low grade will count).

Candidates are to wear proper practice attire as outlined in this handbook under "Attire" to all open gyms and tryout clinics. On the day of tryouts, participants should plan on wearing plain/white t-shirts, blue shorts and sneakers. Squad results will be announced on a scheduled date following the tryouts.

Any student who has extenuating medical issues that keeps them from participating in cheerleading on the scheduled tryout dates must provide a medical note to the Athletic Department before tryout practices begin. A new tryout date will be determined by the coaches and the Athletic Director.

Any student who is unable to participate the day of scheduled tryouts due to a pre-approved educational trip, must turn in a copy of the signed approval form from the appropriate school administrators to the Athletic Department the Friday before tryout clinics begin. 1) If they are able to attend the three tryout clinics, they are expected to video tape their tryouts at the end of the third day for the judges to view and score their tryouts; 2) Students will not be permitted to attend the tryout clinics if they are unable to video tape their tryouts at the conclusion of the last clinic. An alternate time to learn the material and tape the material to be emailed to the judges for scoring will be scheduled by the coaches.

Students interested in trying out for the squad who move into the district after the initial tryout process may be permitted to schedule a tryout once all of the necessary documentation has been filed with the Waynesboro Area School District. However, performing/cheering at events will not occur until proper personal attire (as outlined in this handbook) for the uniform has been received (orders from the vendors can take up to 6-8 weeks).

Eligibility

All members of the WASHS Cheerleading Program must meet the eligibility requirements set forth by the Pennsylvania Interscholastic Athletic Association in regards to physical examinations, age & attendance, as presented in the WASD's Parent/Guardian-Student Athletic Handbook. This document can be

located for review at wasd.k12.pa.us/o/athletics and then select Athletic Dept Docs.

The Athletic Department runs grade reports on all student athletes twice a week. Wednesday the reports are preliminary information which gives Coaches a chance to review grades with their athletes and to encourage students to speak with their teachers in regards to any inaccuracies found in the report, or to arrange to complete and turn in any makeup work necessary. On Friday the final report determines the student athlete's eligibility for the upcoming week. A final grade report is also completed at the end of each marking period. At that point if there are any student athletes ineligible due to grade requirements, they will be suspended for 15 school days (not calendar days) for all sports the next semester. If need be, this suspension will be put into place from one school year into the next (ie: a 15day suspension identified at the end of the school year will be put into place the beginning of the next school year).

The WASHS Cheerleading Coaches have elected to hold the cheerleaders grade requirements to a higher standard than outlined in the WASD's Parent/Guardian-Student Athletic Handbook. These requirements will have any cheerleader with two or more reported grades of 69% or lower in any given class will be unable to participate in stunts during performances until the grade(s) are raised to 70% or higher. In addition, any cheerleader with a reported grade of 59% or lower will be suspended from participating at games and other scheduled activities until this grade is raised back to a 60% or higher. Any actions needed to address poor grades will run for one week, Sunday through Sunday, following the reports provided by the Athletic Department. Actions will not be lifted until the next grade report is provided by the Athletic Department. During the period of time it takes for the cheerleader to improve the failing grade, they will be expected to 1) attend all practices as scheduled and will work on completing class work to pull the grade back up to a passing standard; and 2) attend all events on the program calendar and sitting with the coaches during the games/performances. The only exception to this policy would be if a cheerleader is currently working with a teacher(s) to get missing assignments turned in and/or rescheduling make up dates for tests or quizzes and this plan has been communicated to the coaches.

Participation, Expectations & Consequences

Participation at practices, performances, community service/events and other squad related activities as scheduled by the coaches are **mandatory**. Any absences, other than illness or urgent extenuating circumstances, must be communicated to the coaches in advance for a decision to be made if the absence may be excused. Babysitting younger siblings or family members, participation at another sports team for a private entity, and work are not acceptable excuses for missing cheer activities posted on the program/squad calendar. Arrangements can be made for conflicting school events with the coaches' approval in advance. These arrangements will only be accepted for clubs/activities, or outside educational opportunities, that are sponsored by and scheduled with the Waynesboro Area School District and/or Franklin County Career Tech Center. Participation requirements are outlined in the WASD Athletic Handbook, and include PIAA mandatory practices that begin in August of each year.

If a cheerleader goes home sick after completing a full day of school may only be excused with an email from a parent and/or guardian to a coach explaining the situation. If a cheerleader is sent home for any reason by the school nurse, they may not participate at any scheduled events that day.

All squad members must attend each event in its entirety; **arriving late or leaving early (without prior approval) is not permitted and will be considered an unexcused absence**. All personal appointments (routine doctor's, orthodontist, dentists, hair appointments, etc.) must be scheduled outside of the scheduled activities. Please note: due to various reasons the schedules may need to be revised, and will be done so at the coach's discretion. It is the responsibility of the cheerleader to utilize the program/squad calendar provided by the coaches and ensure their attendance at all scheduled activities and/or request excuse from the activity. The first unexcused absence will result in a verbal warning, the second unexcused absence will result in a partial game suspension and a third unexcused absence will result in a meeting to determine if the cheerleader is able to remain on the roster. Suspensions will carry over to the following season if need be to ensure consequences have been met.

Each cheerleader must be knowledgeable of the material that is being performed. If a cheerleader misses a practice (excused or unexcused) it is the cheerleaders responsibility to learn the material. If the material is not performed to the coach's expectations during the practice prior to the performance, or a cheerleader is absent the practice prior to the performance, the cheerleader may not be able to perform that particular routine/stunt/cheer. This does not excuse the cheerleader's attendance or participation of the event, they are still required to be present with the other members of their squad, and in uniform.

Any violation of the WASHS Cheerleading Program Handbook could result in suspension, or expulsion, from extracurricular activities, as set forth in the WASHS's Parent/Guardian-Student Athletic Handbook. All infractions to this handbook will be reviewed by the coaches, and referred to the Athletic Director if needed. Extracurricular activities are a privilege, not a right, and this privilege can be revoked at any time with just cause.

Attire

Each squad member is expected to wear proper practice clothes consisting of sneakers, shorts/sweat pants, and t-shirt/tank top. No thin/spaghetti straps or crop tops will be tolerated. In addition, shorts are to cover the entire bottom and waist bands are not to be rolled. All clothing must fit properly and may not be oversized. **Hair is to be pulled back and there is to be no loose hair that will fall in or around the face while cheering.** *Fingernails, including artificial nails, 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.*

Performance uniforms and other equipment will be provided to each cheerleader. These items are to be returned clean and in good condition at the end of the season. You will be financially held responsible for any item that is not returned,

or is returned damaged. If a member is dismissed or resigns from the squad, the individual must return the uniform to the coach within one week. Failure to do so will result in an obligation being reported to the WASHS Administration Office and could affect the student's ability to participate in school related activities.

Additional personal items a squad member will be responsible to purchase include: footgear, briefs, bodyliner, warm-ups, practice gear, pom-poms, and bow. New cheerleaders to the fall season will also need to purchase a crate for football games. The coaches will decide on these items and the vendors that they are to be purchased from. Each squad member will have an opportunity to fundraise to defer the costs of these items.

Squad members are to report to each activity dressed in the attire as instructed by the coaches; and are to be clean and well groomed.

As stated in the WASD Athletic Handbook, issued equipment is not to be used for any activity outside of the practices and competitions of the school sport in which it was issued. This includes any item identified as a uniform of a WASHS Cheerleader (such as warm up jackets or pants, practice gear, spirit wear, etc.). Anyone who in violation of this rule will face disciplinary actions, which could lead up to immediate dismissal from the roster.

Behavior

Squad members should be leaders within the school & community. Squad members should maintain good personal appearance and habits that cannot be criticized. Each member must abide by the standards set by the WASHS Athletic Department as outlined in the WASD Athletic Handbook. All squad members are to be courteous, friendly, and respectful to the coaches, all other squad members, as well as members of the school's faculty/staff, student body, other teams, and visitors. The rosters for the Cheer Program are in place and active immediately following tryouts. The moment a cheerleader has been placed on an active roster, they are expected to conduct themselves as outlined in this handbook, and the WASD Athletic Handbook, until they have been removed from the roster due to the cheerleaders' desired season ending, the cheerleader deciding to step down from the squad, and/or dismissal from the squad by the Athletic Department. Tryout eligibility for the following year by a cheerleader who chooses to step down from the squad before the end of the season, and/or is dismissed by the Athletic Department, will be decided on by the coaches and the Athletic Director on a case by case basis.

How to address parent or student concerns regarding an athletic team and/or coach(es) can be found in the WASD Athletic Handbook. All participants and parents are asked to remember the following are **NOT** appropriate topics to discuss with coaches or other cheerleaders: playing time/positions/assignments; team strategy; play calling; other student athletes.

Captain(s)

Captain(s) will be selected at the conclusion of summer practices. All squad members will have the opportunity to nominate someone. The one criteria to be

nominated is that the cheerleader must have successfully completed both the fall and winter cheer seasons the previous school year. Nominees will fill out an application and have an interview with the coaches. The coaches will meet to review the applications, discuss the interviews and make the final decisions as to who will be designated as captain(s). Responsibilities of captains will include, but are not limited to:

1. Lead stretches and warm ups at the beginning of practice
2. Create duty lists for set up and clean up needs for practices, games, community events, etc.
3. Assist the coaching staff with disseminating pertinent information to the squad to ensure everyone is aware of upcoming activities as needed
4. Maintain a positive and constructive relationship with the coaching staff and be sure to reflect the decisions being made for the program in an honest and positive manner
5. Help ensure all necessary equipment is ready at games and practices
6. Call cheers & help the squad determine various stunts during football and basketball games
7. Maintain a good relationship with all squad members
8. Follow all rules and set a good example

Other members of the squad are expected to listen to these designees and follow their directions as instructed by the coach.

Lettering as a Varsity or JV Cheerleader

Following WASHS Cheerleading Program's Handbook will help develop superior student athletes within our community. Successful cheerleaders on the squads also have the ability of earning a Varsity or JV Letter. The criteria for doing so is as follows:

1. Letters will be given to those who successfully complete the fall season and the winter/competitive season
2. Must have proven knowledge and perform all material as asked
3. Must meet attendance expectations as presented in the WASD's Parent/Guardian-Student Athletic Handbook
4. Any in school or out of school suspensions from the WASD will result in a meeting including the High School Administration, Athletic Director and coaches to determine lettering and/or roster status

WASHS CHEERLEADING PROGRAM
PARENTAL/GUARDIAN & PARTICIPANT
AGREEMENT FORM

Parent/Guardian:

I have read and fully understand the rules and regulations, which will govern my child while participating in the WASHS Cheerleading Program. I further understand this is an extracurricular activity and that attendance at all practices, performances and other program related activities are a requirement in order for my child to remain an active member of the WASHS Cheerleading Program.

I give consent for my child, _____, to try out for the WASHS Cheerleading Program, and recognize the responsibilities and rules/regulations required to become a member of the squad(s). I understand my responsibility to purchase personal items required for my child to meet the uniform requirements of squad members and understand an outstanding balance with the WASHS Boosters Club for these items.

In addition, I give permission for my child to receive medical attention if needed during the tryout process, should I not be able to be reached in the event of an emergency.

(Name – printed)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Home phone number)

(Cell phone number)

(Email)

Cheerleader:

I have read all the rules and regulations that govern the WASHS Cheerleading Program. I acknowledge that should I make the squad(s), I will become a representative of the WASHS Cheerleading Program and of the WASHS Student Body and agree to abide by all of the requirements within this handbook the moment I am placed on an active roster.

(Name – printed)

(Signature)

(Date)

(Cell phone number)

I am interested in cheering for (circle all that apply):

Fall Season

Winter/Competitive Spirit Season