Washington Township Youth Cheerleading Association
Parent Handbook – 2025 Season

Welcome to the Washington Township Youth Cheerleading Association (WTYCA). The objective of our organization is to promote sportsmanship, self-esteem, dedication and courage and to provide an opportunity to experience cheerleading as a sport and spirit activity. Our Advisory Board consists of Washington Township parents and coaches with one common goal, to provide a fun and safe cheerleading environment for all who participate. This handbook contains our policies and procedures as well as general information. If you have questions, please contact your child's coach or one of the Advisory Board members.

2024 WTYCA Advisory Board Members
President - Kristle Christo
Vice-President & Facilities - Heather Finn
Treasurer - Alicia Deamer
Secretary - Lisa Marie Lowery
Football Liaison - Diane Freidel-Levin
Equipment Manager - Justine Martino
Assistant Equipment Manager - Alysha Onesti
Fundraising Chairwoman - Meghan Robertson

Please read this handbook in its entirety - you will be required to sign a form stating you have read, understand and agree to the policies and procedures.

IMPORTANT DATES:
EVENT DATE TIME LOCATION

Parent and Equipment Meetings
Wednesday, June 11th & Thursday, June 12th
Ages 5-9 6:00 • Ages 10-15 7:15
At least one parent/guardian will need to attend ONE of these meetings with their cheerleader.
All payments for equipment will be due at this meeting

1st Day of Practice

Week of August 4th. Days and Times TBD by coaches.
75s and 95s - Park in Lot D (near Ranger Station)
110s, 125s and Jr. High – Park in Lot C

Forms

Please print out the **Medical Release Form (this form will be emailed to you by your coach.)** This must be completed, and returned to your coach by the start of the first week of practice. Without the signed medical release your daughter will not be able to stunt, tumble or participate in the cheer activities.

Additional forms that will be emailed to you by your coach and will need to be printed, completed and turned in at the first week of practices:

Photo Release Form
Child Information Form
Parent Handbook Acknowledge Form
Code of Conduct Acknowledgement Form

Any equipment your daughter needs, must be ordered and paid in full at the meeting. We will not be placing additional orders.

Equipment consists of a cheer top (shell) and skirt, body liner and bloomers, warm up jacket and cheer sneakers that will be ordered and paid for at the parent meeting. Cheer bows, and a practice shirt are included in the price of registration. Samples are provided for fitting purposes. All items ordered are based on the **parent's final decision** on sizing. All equipment purchases must be made through WTYCA. Understand there will be no additional orders placed after the Uniform Fittings and the organization does not keep equipment in stock. **Additionally, no refunds for equipment (any equipment listed) will be made should your child decide not to cheer in the 2025 season.** Equipment must be picked up on the night designated by the Equipment Manager.

Cheerleaders are required to wear either Red, Blue, Gray or Black shorts to each of their scheduled practices with a practice shirt or red, white, blue or black tank top. There will be no exceptions. We would like all the girls to coordinate so they look and feel like a team. The girls will need to have their hair pulled up in a ponytail (if long enough) and should wear a cheer bow.
If there are any problems with uniforms/equipment, parents are to contact the Equipment Managers– Not the coaches, their contact info is wtycequipment@gmail.com.

Uniforms – Cheerleaders will rent one shell, body liner and one skirt, from WTYCA which they are responsible for. **The uniform consists of the shell, body liner, bloomers, bow, skirt and cheer sneakers. Uniforms must be kept clean and presentable. You will only receive your $100 deposit back if the uniforms are handed in on time, clean and reusable for the following season.**
Uniforms are only permitted to be worn to games and competitions. **Cheerleaders are NOT permitted to wear their uniforms to school, on Halloween, etc.**

There are NO refunds for any purchased equipment.

Fundraising – Our fundraisers are scheduled throughout the season and support the purchase of trophies, equipment, awards, charity, banquet, and more. Fundraising information will be distributed at the Parent Meetings.
Our one highly encouraged fundraiser is $50.00 per family and will cover the cost of the cheerleader's banquet ticket.

Practice – Practice begins the week of August 4th, 2024. Practices are scheduled Monday through Thursday at Washington Lake Park, Field 6, near the Ranger Station through the month of August. A coach may request a Friday practice due to canceled practices for inclement weather or attendance issues. Practices will be scheduled by the coach between the hours of 6pm and 8:30pm. The coach is responsible for making you aware of the scheduled days and times. After school begins, practice moves indoors and is scheduled one/three night(s) a week. Practice can last anywhere from 1 to 2 ½ hours for the remainder of the season or until the coach deems unnecessary. Your coach will provide you with this information in July regarding the August schedule. As the indoor schedules are received, this information will be shared.

Games begin in late August and continue through November with a potential for a Championship game in December. If the football team your child cheers for makes the playoffs or is in the Championship Game, they will be expected to cheer at those games. If a JV football team makes the playoffs or is in the Championship game, we will ask for cheerleaders to volunteer to cheer at those games. Please ensure your child has plenty of fluid as the practices can be intense and the weather extreme. You should give the bottle of water to your child so that they are not required to run back to you at break times.

The girls are to remain in the coaches view at all times. Encourage your child to use the bathroom before practice as this causes many unnecessary delays in the practice schedule. Once the practice begins, we ask that you not approach a coach until the end of the practice. This allows their focus to remain on the cheerleaders at all times. Cheerleaders must wear the designated practice gear. **No jewelry or hair accessories (with the exception of a practice bow) should be worn.**

Attendance – (Football Only) – Removal from the squad may occur after four (4) unexcused absences. Late arrival or pick-up from practice (15 minutes) will count as one absence. If your child is not picked up by the allotted time, the appropriate authorities will be notified. An unexcused absence is any absence that is not accompanied by a doctor's note for time missed. Personal, religious and school functions are based on the discretion of the WTYCA Advisory Board. Family vacations

and/or babysitting siblings etc. are considered unexcused and will be deducted from allowed days. A scheduled week vacation will be considered 2 unexcused absences for the week. The coach must be made aware of the vacation the first week of August. When games start, late arrival (15 minutes) without previous notice (1 hour pre-game) will result in your child not participating in the Hello cheer. Late arrival for game beyond 15 minutes, without previous notice (1 hour pre-game) will result in your child not participating in the Half- Time routine. This is for the benefit, safety and success of the girls and the program. Attendance is forwarded to the WTYCA President, Vice President and Secretary every Monday. Removal of a child from a squad due to attendance must be reviewed by the Advisory Board for a final recommendation with the final decision being escalated to the Sports Advisory Board.

Attendance- (Competition) – A commitment letter will be signed by each parent and cheerleader wishing to participate on competition teams. A child is not eligible to participate in the competition if the football attendance requirements have not been met. During the months of September, October, and November, only 2 excused absences can be incurred regardless of attendance in August. NO absences are permitted the week of the competition. Late arrivals will be handled the same way as football practices. Competition requires full dedication and all attendance requirements will be enforced. Attendance is forwarded to the WTYCA President, Vice President and Secretary every Monday. Removal of a child from a squad due to attendance must be reviewed by the Advisory Board for a final recommendation with the final decision being escalated to the Sports Advisory Board.

Parents – We appreciate your cooperation with not interrupting the squad while they are on the field. If you have questions or concerns, please contact the coach after practice/game or by telephone or email, not during a game or practice. If you have a problem that cannot be resolved with the coach, you may discuss it with one of our Advisory Board members by telephone or email. We ask that issues are not brought up while any WTYCA Board Member is on the field. At no time should anyone interfere with a practice or game. Interference will be subject to cheerleader removal from a squad. The coach is responsible for advising the WTYCA Advisory Board immediately following the incident. The board will review the issue and make a final determination on removal or suspension from future practices/games. Once indoors practices begin, parents are not permitted inside the gym other than for drop off and pick up. The areas used for practices are for the cheerleaders and coaches only. It becomes distracting

to the cheerleaders and coaches when others are in the room. **Additionally, if you need to update phone numbers or e-mail addresses, you must contact the coach and send an email to wtyouthcheer@gmail.com.**

Snack Bar – Cheerleaders are **NOT** permitted to go to the snack bar during a game. There will be no snack breaks during the football games. The cheerleaders will receive water breaks throughout the game and after the Half-Time routine is completed. No hot chocolate, colored Gatorade, colored water or any other item that will stain the uniform can be consumed while in uniform.

Behavior – Participants may be removed from a squad for use of foul language and/or attitude/behavior problems. One verbal and one written warning will be given to the parent or guardian. Immediate removal from the squad may occur if a participant is seen smoking while in uniform or found to be under the influence of drugs/alcohol. Once removed from the squad, participants will be placed on probation and monitored (if they return) the following year by the WTYCA Advisory Board. All decisions on dismissals may be appealed to the WTYCA Advisory Board in writing within seven (7) days. The same actions will be taken for Parental misconduct.

***Cheerleader Cell Phone Policy-** Cheerleaders are highly discouraged from bringing cellphones to practices, games, etc. If it is absolutely necessary for a cheerleader to bring a cellphone to communicate with a parent/guardian it must remain in their cheer bag for the entirety of the practice or game.

Code of Conduct - Washington Twp. Youth Cheerleading adheres to the "Youth Sports Code of Conduct", as approved by township council on October 3, 2002. The (Org) shall appoint a representative to sit on the code of conduct committee. A copy of this ordinance shall accompany the parent handbook, given out at signups. Also, all members of the (ORG) and parents of these members shall abide by the rules of conduct as set forth by the Adv. Brd. Failure to do so will result in penalty, and possible suspension and/or expulsion from the (ORG). The organization also strictly adheres to the approved Social Media Policy as passed by town council. https://ecode360.com/7665557

PARENT'S CODE OF CONDUCT - WTYCA

1. I will place the emotional and physical well-being of the children above any desire to win. I will help my child understand the valuable lessons sports can teach.
2. I will be a role model of good sportsmanship and character. I will help my child meet his/her responsibilities to the coach and the team.
3. I will do my best to make sure that the game is fun for all the participants. 4. I will lead by

example in demonstrating fair play and sportsmanship to all participants, coaches, parents, officials, recreation staff, and the public. I will treat them all with respect. 5. I will maintain a positive sports environment for all participants that is free of drugs, tobacco, alcohol and inappropriate language. I will refrain from their use at all Youth Sports activities and events.
6. I will only make positive and encouraging comments to players, fans and coaches from both teams. I will not interfere or coach from the stands.
7. I will strive to create a positive recreational experience for everyone involved in the Youth Sports Program.
8. I will remember that I am a Youth Sports Program parent, and will remember the game is for the children and not the adults. Accordingly, I will encourage my child to play sports by providing a supportive atmosphere without pressure.
9. I will abide by any and all Recreation Department rules and regulations and rulings set forth by the Sports Coordinator.
10. I will remember to be a good sport at all times, win or lose.

Player / Parent / Coach Conduct -All players, coaches and parents involved with Washington Township Youth Cheerleading shall abide by the conduct rules as outlined in the annual parent handbook, which is given to each participant when they sign up. These Regulations fall under the jurisdiction of the "Youth Sports Code of Conduct", As adopted by the Washington Township town council. The organization also strictly adheres to the approved Social Media Policy as passed by town council.

Volunteer Service Award – Junior coaches are eligible for a Volunteer Service Award presented at the Washington Township Senior Scholarship/Awards Night in June. Junior coaching is open to anyone with cheer experience grades 9 through 12. Placement will be determined on program needs. To receive an award, a junior coach must participate for a minimum of two (2) years with at least 50% attendance for practices and games. Award amount will be based on the percentage of attendance with a minimum of $50 and a maximum of $100 awarded per year. The maximum award amount for all years combined is $500. The scholarship amounts are determined by the availability of the junior coaches during games and practices. Attendance will be taken by the head coach and submitted to the Board Secretary every Monday during the season. The secretary will compile a master list of the attendance of all junior coaches. At the end of the season the scholarship will be evaluated based on the number of practices/games divided by the days present for the Junior Coach. This list will be reviewed by the Advisory Board every December for accuracy.

Veteran's Cup- The Veteran's Cup is an exhibition game between the Minutemen and a visiting town held in late August, just before the official start to the football season. The games are played at the field on East Holly Avenue. This is our home field. This is an excellent opportunity

for you and your squad to experience a real-game situation.

Pictures - Pictures will take place in August/September. A schedule, location and order form will be distributed by the coaches to each squad.

Waivers – A waiver of registration fees through Parks and Rec is based on a set criteria the Township has been instituted. The waiver of registration fees does not include a waiver for additional fees associated with the participation in cheerleading, such as equipment, sneakers, deposits, fundraisers, competition fees and banquets. If you believe you may qualify for additional fee reductions, please contact the President of the organization at least one week prior to the first parent meeting. The request will be reviewed without the use of a name with the Advisory Board for approval. Please note if a request is accepted, the organization will require full participation in the fundraiser and additional volunteering when needed. Deposits and banquet fees will NOT be waived for any reason.

Fees –If check payment is made for any fees and the check does not clear, you will have 7 days to rectify the situation or your child will not be able to participate in the cheer season. Rectifications must be made in cash or money order.

WTYCA COACH'S GAME PROCEDURES

We are providing our program game procedures below. Due to the nature of the game, what follows is not all inclusive and will be amended at the conclusion of each season as situations are presented. All Washington Township Youth Cheerleading Squads will adhere to the same guidelines. All adult coaches, team moms and team dads are responsible for having their Volunteer lanyard visible at all times. Sportsmanship is the key to success and a requirement for our Coaches and Cheerleaders. Cheerleaders are the responsibility of the coaching staff from the beginning of the practice/games until the end of organized program activities, practices and games. The coach or child's parent will accompany a cheerleader at all times including but not limited to going to the bathroom. Your child is required to keep their water with them or in the coach's circle. We cannot have children wandering around looking for parents nor can the coaches keep an eye on the girls if they are not in their immediate vicinity. Cheerleaders are required to be in uniform when on the field, top, skirt, cheer hair bow, white no show socks and cheer sneakers are required for all games. Cheerleaders are to have the complete uniform with them at all games. If a cheerleader fails to bring the required uniform, they will not be able to participate. The squad is to remain consistent. During the colder months, the cheerleaders may need gloves and headbands. Cheerleaders are permitted to layer up underneath the warm-up suits when applicable.

Cheerleaders are required to attend and cheer at all Varsity games. A Hello (if applicable) Halftime and sideline cheers will be performed during these games. Before the start of the game, the coach will speak with the other team's coach to discuss who will go first and where

the team will meet for Hello (if applicable), Halftime & End-of-Game cheer. The coach will decide if a Hello cheer will be taught and used at the games. The cheerleaders will walk across the field in a single file at the end of the game and shake or lightly clap the hands of the opposing cheerleaders. At no point are parents allowed on the field during games.

No food will be given to the cheerleaders at any time over the fence or on the field.

Cheering during the game on the sidelines

Face the field in a position to view where plays are headed. This is for the safety of the squad. Stand between the 5 and 25 yard lines

No stunting or tumbling on the sidelines

If a player is down on the field (possible injury), cheerleaders kneel on one knee and remain quiet until the player is back up. At that time, the player (home or away) is acknowledged with clapping/cheering.

Halftime

Routine can be 2 ½ minutes to 3 minutes.

Request that all spectators stay off the field while the girls perform (this includes boys playing football during halftime).

We face the other team, each team performs with the other squad watching quietly and acknowledging the performance positively. If time permits, the home team can then perform their routine to their fans.

Be mindful of the field conditions for stunting and general safety.

During the Third Quarter

Allow for sufficient water breaks.

Bathroom Breaks if needed

End-of-Game Cheer

At the end of the game, the cheerleaders will show good sportsmanship and line up to Cheer to the football team - wait for a pause in their end of game huddle. This is not required at all games. The coach will use their discretion.

recognize each other with a handshake/clap.

Weather

Cheerleaders are to be escorted off of the field when any sign of thunder, lightning or moderate to heavy rain are present. At away games, escort them to a safe sheltered area. No stunting or tumbling on the field if the ground is wet. Our number one objective is to keep the girls safe.