



COACHES' HANDBOOK

2024 Season

I. COACHES...

- A. Will teach each cheerleader the rules and fundamentals of cheerleading.**
- B. Will stress the fact that Cheerleading is a group effort.**
- C. Will treat all cheerleaders equally.**
- D. Will not physically or verbally abuse any cheerleader.**

II. TIME COMMITMENT

A. Practices & Games

Required to attend 90% of weekly practices and games. Must notify the Director of Cheer (DOC) **1 week before** if unable to attend a practice or game.

B. Mandatory Events

Required to attend all of the following events:

1. Cheer Camp
2. Host Parent Meeting
3. Squad Pictures
4. Homecoming Parade
5. Postseason Playoff Games

C. League Events

Required to have at least one (1) coach per squad attend the following events:

1. League Fundraiser
2. Spirit Night
3. League Pep Rally
4. End of Year League Party

III. COACHING TIPS

- A. **Consistency:** in communication, schedule, and responses to situations.
- B. **Set expectations:** make expectations clear and realistic.
- C. **Be positive:** create a light and fun atmosphere.
- D. **Be a role model:** demonstrate how to respect each other while having good sportsmanship.
- E. **Emphasize teamwork:** encourage players to work together by emphasizing the importance of communicating, and supporting each other.
- F. **Celebrate successes:** teach the squad to celebrate each other's successes and support each other through mistakes.
- G. **Encourage leadership:** have older cheerleaders refocus their teammates when needed.
- H. **Consider their needs:** pay attention to when cheerleaders need water or a break.
- I. **Keep things simple:** avoid giving too much information at once. Try using short catchphrases to convey coaching points.
- J. **Basics first:** focus on the basics first when introducing something new.
- K. **Be inspiring:** ask leading questions, suggestions, or instructions to help cheerleaders discover their own answers and skills.
- L. **Value Input:** ask for parent and cheerleader input when making plans and setting goals.
- M. **Reinforce positive behavior:** focus on their strengths & encourage persistence.
- N. **Provide constructive feedback:** recognize strengths and areas for improvement to help boost confidence and motivation.
- O. **Get parents involved:** speak with parents first when having a behavior issue with a cheerleader and ask for advice or guidance.
- P. **Collaborate with parents:** ask parents to help with tasks if needed to better focus on cheerleaders.
- Q. **Communication:** avoid jargon that cheerleaders might not understand. Make sure parents and cheerleaders understand what you're saying and why.

IV. COMMUNICATION

A. Notify the Director of Cheer immediately by BAND private message if...

1. practice day(s), time(s), or location(s) change.
2. practice is rescheduled/canceled for any reason; please attempt a makeup practice during the same week.
3. games are delayed/rescheduled/canceled for any reason.
4. a cheerleader has missed an excessive amount of practices or games without communication or excuse.
5. there are any conduct and/or behavior issues with a cheerleader or parent.
6. an emergency situation comes up that will affect coaching responsibilities.

B. Coaches' BAND Group

1. Director of Cheer (DOC)
 - a) **Sundays at 5pm:** Weekly updates, reminders, new information, or announcements
 - b) **Fridays at 5pm:** Game Day updates
 - c) **Exceptions:** Pertinent information or an immediate response is needed
2. Director of Events (DOE)
 - a) Event information will be posted with enough time to relay information to parents.
 - b) A parent "script" and electronic information sheet will be given to share.
 - c) Please read every detail and be prepared to answer questions from parents.
 - d) Please ask or verify if unsure about specific details.
3. Game Day Thread Post: Please only comment below that thread.
Saturday - Game Day Updates: A Post will be made for Game Day updates, i.e, game time, delay, or location changes.
Saturday - Game Day Pictures: A post will be made for Game Day pictures, please add pictures or videos that can be shared on PYCA's social media.

C. Communication APPs

1. **TeamSideline app:**
 - a) All football game schedules with times & locations will be automatically uploaded
 - b) All practice times & locations will need to be added & updated by coaches
 - c) Take attendance on app for all practices & games
 - d) **TeamSideline is not preferred for squad chats or other communication**
2. **BAND app:**
 - a) Coaches will be given a squad link to send to their cheerleaders.
 - b) Scheduler: add the practices, games, and events for parents
 - c) Feed: create posts for event information or sharing pictures & videos
 - d) Albums & Files: create albums & files to help keep everything organized
3. **Avoid other forms of communication:** text messages, emails, or direct messages

D. Parent BAND app Chat Tips

1. Keep chat messages short and to the point.
2. Send a Practice Reminder on Practice Days.
3. Send upcoming Game Day information early in the week with:
 - a) Game time, location, meeting time, and meeting location.
 - b) What to bring (i.e., snack rotation or spirit throws).
 - c) What to wear (i.e., pink out items).
4. Send Event Information
 - a) Create a post first with all information and answer questions in the comments.
 - b) Use chat only for reminders so information is not lost.
 - c) Create an event using the event scheduler.
 - d) Please ask or verify if the answer to their questions is unknown.

E. First Time Contacting Parents

1. Once rosters are received, coaches have four (4) days to reach out to parents.
2. Use email first and then text message to contact all parents.
3. Use the email "script" (posted on BAND) by changing the underlined information.
4. After multiple attempts by email, text, and phone call, if a parent is not responding, notify the DOC before the parent meeting.

F. Parent Meeting

1. Once rosters are completed, we will post a specific week to schedule the parent meeting.
2. All Meetings will be hosted at the Kroger Patio by Starbucks between 4pm – 7pm
3. A board member must be present at the parent meeting to assist and pass out uniforms.
4. Check parent contact information and report any changes to the DOC.
5. Ensure parents understand the participation rules they signed during registration.
6. Each parent must receive an information packet that includes:

★Practice Schedules	★Game Schedule (if applicable)
★Practice Expectations	★Game Day Expectations
★Upcoming Event Schedule	★Uniform Expectations
★Fundraising Info – New	★Squad & League Materials Info – New

★A template has been made and will be posted on BAND soon★

G. Football

1. Coaches should introduce themselves to the head football coach and team mom before the first game.
2. Develop a professional relationship with the football team mom to keep up-to-date with game info, event info, and any changes.

V. PRACTICES

A. Schedule & Location

1. At least one (1) practice a week with a maximum of two (2).
2. Maximum of two (2) hours. Recommended: 6:15–7:30pm (1 hour & 15 minutes)
3. Parents/Guardians must be present and stay on location for the full practice.
4. Keep accurate attendance for each practice by marking attendance in TeamSideline by the end of practice.
5. Practice locations:
 - a) Hunter Park
 - b) Decker Field (only if your Football Players are there too)
6. Locations & Times are first come, first served.
7. Once the practice schedule is decided, coaches will notify the DOC to reserve their spot.

B. Leading & Planning

1. Plan to teach a variety of cheers and chants at each practice.
2. Plan engaging games or competitions to motivate and encourage cheerleaders.
3. Create a practice timeline and set goals to achieve.
4. A half-time or spirit dance is optional; per coach discretion and cheerleader capability.
5. Rewarding cheerleaders for doing a good job with candy, stickers, ect. is optional

C. Practice Safety

1. **Warm Up:** Stretch 5 minutes before practice and spread-out arms-length apart.
2. **Texas Heat:** Check the **Zelus WBGT App** before each practice.
 - a) Sign Up for App under organization: TX UIL Class 3
 - b) Click the for safety references and recommendations
 - c) If the number is greater than 92, delay practice (20–30 minutes) until a cooler WBGT level is reached.
 - d) If temperature does not lower within a reasonable amount of time, cancel practice and attempt to reschedule a makeup practice during the same week.
 - e) Cheerleaders need to bring their own water bottle to practice.
 - f) Plan to have multiple water breaks and keep hydration a priority.
3. **Shoes:** Cheerleaders need to wear cheer shoes or tennis shoes due to potential stunt work, dance moves, and/or ants.
4. **Important Note:** Hunter Park – Cheerleaders must stay away from the lake

VI. GAMES

A. Schedule & Locations

1. Football regular season is 9 weeks with at least 1 BYE week.
 - a) **September 7th** – First Season Game
 - b) **October 5th** – Starts Pink Out Games
 - c) **November 2nd** – Last Season Game
 - d) **November 9th & 16th** – Postseason Playoff Games – **Mandatory** – If the football team advances, cheerleaders must attend to cheer for their team. Plan ahead!
 - e) **November 23rd** – Superbowl Game – **Mandatory** if the football team makes it!
2. Football will determine the schedule of all games and locations.
 - a) **Home Games:** Granbury Middle School
 - b) **Away Games:** Aledo, Brock, Azle, Mineral Wells, Springtown, or White Settlement
3. All Stadiums in the League
 - a) Entrance fee for spectators – \$8 fee for Adults & Free for Kids
 - b) No Outside Food & Drinks for spectators
4. Check Coaches' BAND group before games for updates on time & location changes.

B. Coaches Expectations

1. Coaches should be at the field before cheerleaders – 45 minutes prior to game start time.
2. Communicate to parents a meet up spot and a 30 minute call time prior to game start time.
3. Clean up all trash and belongings before leaving.
4. Coaches must verify that all cheerleaders are handed off to their parents/guardians.
5. Coaches should be last to leave after verifying that all cheerleaders have been picked up and all trash has been removed.
6. *Tentative* Gate Monitor Volunteer sign up/rotation – **more information to come**

C. Cheering & Game Participation

1. **Before the Game**
 - a) Squads must be lined up on the field 15 minutes before scheduled kick-off.
 - b) Create a tunnel with two (2) lines on either side of the run-through banner for football players to run through.
 - c) Perform cheers, chants, or a dance to build spirit & excitement.
2. **During the Game** (use coach discretion when needed)
 - a) Squads must stay as a group at all times.
 - b) Cheerleaders must remain on the track & cheering the whole game.
 - c) Cheerleaders must pay attention to the game & cheer accordingly (D-Fense!).
 - d) Cheerleaders **are not** allowed to leave the game area unless accompanied by their parent/guardian or coach (bathroom runs).
 - e) Cheerleaders **are not** allowed to be in the stands, sit with parents, or run around.
 - f) Cheerleaders **are not** allowed to go to the concession stand (including half time).

3. Half Time

- a) Cheerleaders must remain with the squad and coaches either on or off the track.
- b) Parents can be asked to volunteer or use a rotation to bring snacks for everyone.

4. Promote Good Sportsmanship

- a) Demonstrate, explain, and lead by example for cheerleaders and parents.
- b) When a football player on either team is hurt, the squad must "take a knee" until the injured player gets up.

5. Captains or Spirit Leaders (optional)

- a) Coaches may use Captains/Spirit Leaders each game, by rotation or reward-based.
- b) Coaches will receive two (2) white poms - the selected Captain will use one (1) White pom & one (1) Gold (or Pink) pom

6. Other Optional Items

- a) **Half Time Performances:** Cheerleaders can perform a dance routine or cheer
- b) **Stunts:** Keeping safety in mind, cheerleaders can do basic stunts and cartwheels.
- c) **Spirit Throws:** Parents can be asked to make Spirit throws (cellophane bags of candy) for each game. Cheerleaders can throw into the crowd after each touchdown or periodically throughout the game. Spirit throws can also be used as gifts for the opposing team's cheerleaders and for football players after the game.

D. Game Safety

1. **Warm Up:** Stretch for 5 minutes before each game and spread-out arms-length apart.
2. **Texas Heat:**
 - a) Cheerleaders need to bring their own water bottle to games.
 - b) Plan to have multiple water breaks and keep hydration a priority.
 - c) Cheerleaders can use cooling towels & misters to stay cool.
 - d) Squads can use a canopy for relief during breaks & halftime - canopies are not permitted to be set up on any stadium tracks!
3. **Texas Inclement Weather:** We cheer always: rain, shine, or snow!
 - a) Cheerleaders can wear rain boots and raincoats in the rain.
 - b) Cheerleaders can use umbrellas and cheer sitting down to help stay dry.
 - c) Cheerleaders can wear black long sleeves and black tights in cold weather.
 - d) Cheerleaders can wear sweatshirts and jackets in Granbury colors in cold weather.
4. **Delayed or Canceled games:**
 - a) Football & Referees will determine if games are delayed or canceled at Game Time.
 - b) Message the DOC as soon as possible with any game updates.
 - c) Canceled games will be rescheduled and it is required that squads attend rescheduled games - typically played later in the day or on a week day.
5. **Coaches are the ONLY parents/volunteers allowed on the field:**
 - a) This rule MUST be followed as it can lead to disqualification of the football team.
 - b) If someone is on the field without an approved badge, notify Granbury Youth Football Association (GYFA) immediately.

VII. UNIFORMS

A. Policy & Expectations

1. Pirate Youth Cheer Association assumes responsibility of ordering, separating, and distributing uniforms to cheerleaders.
2. Parents will sign off on each item received and notate any issues to be corrected.
3. Uniforms cannot be returned or exchanged because of incorrect sizing due to growth of child or error of judgment from parent.
4. Coaches will assume responsibility of distributing uniforms to cheerleaders who miss the parent meeting.
5. Coaches will ensure their squad's parents are aware that the parents will bear the responsibility and/or expense of alterations.
6. Uniforms must be kept neat and clean
7. All cheerleaders must be in full uniform to take the field.
8. Cheerleaders may be benched until all uniform requirements are met.
9. In the event of inclement weather, exceptions to the full uniform rule may be made. (see game day procedures)
10. Uniform Embroidery is optional – must be placed on the bottom right side of the skirt in glitter gold embroidery to match the G on uniform top (contact All About Sports).

B. Full Uniform Requirements

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|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| ★Bow | ★White Socks |
| ★Uniform Shell Top | ★White Cheer Shoes |
| ★Uniform Skirt/Shorts Bottoms | ★Megaphone |
| ★Correct Under Garments | ★Pom Poms (1 Purple & 1 Gold) |
| →Bloomers for Skirt | |
| →No Bra Straps Showing | |



Due to the uniform's cross back design, no bra straps are allowed to show.
Options: No Bra, Bra Clip, or Custom Sports Bra (optional item purchased with uniform package – more can be ordered, but correct size will not be a guarantee)

VIII. SQUAD MATERIALS

A. Squad Items Provided to Each Cheerleader

Beginning of Season	Pink Out
★Custom Purple Bow	★Custom Pink Bow
★Purple No Tie Shoelaces	★Pink Out Tattoos
★Stainless Water Bottle	★Pink Pom (1 per cheerleader)
★Pom Pom Name Labels	Game Captain or Game Spirit Leader
★Purple Cooling towels	★White Poms (2 per squad)
★Megaphone Decals	

B. Squad Items Leased to Coaches

All the equipment listed below shall remain the property of Pirate Youth Cheer Association. Coaches will assume responsibility & will return after the season:

- ★Run Through Banners
- ★First Aid Kit
- ★Pink Poms (1 per cheerleader)
- ★White Poms (2 per squad)
- ★Purple Cooling towels (1 per cheerleader & 1 per coach)

1. The total replacement value is approximately \$360.00 per squad.
2. Upon the end of the season, listed items will be returned to the Materials Director in the same condition in which the items were received.
3. If the listed items are not returned, regardless of the reason, myself and my co-coach(es) will provide compensation of \$360.00 due by November 30th to replace the equipment.

C. Optional Coaches Items for Check Out

Coaches have the ability to check out the following items:

- ★Speaker & Microphone
- ★Wagon

D. Optional Cheerleader Seating

NOTE: Purchasing and/or decorating is the parent's responsibility.

Option 1	Option 2
Bucket Seat Lid: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B077N42JRC?ref=ppx_yo2ov_dt_b_product_details&th=1	Purple Chair: https://www.academy.com/p/academy-sports-outdoors-logo-armchair?sku=purple
White Bucket: https://www.lowes.com/pd/Encore-Plastics-5-Gallon-General-Bucket/3694238	Black Duffle Bag: https://www.amazon.com/dp/B011J60VWU/ref=twister_B07CK4WGV4?encoding=UTF8&psc=1

IX. LEAGUE FUNDRAISING & SPONSORS

This season, our goal is to provide all squads with the “extra” items (listed under squad materials). To recoup the cost, we are strongly encouraging all cheerleaders to participate in fundraising and collecting sponsors. All funds raised or received from sponsors will be used by the league to purchase squad items.

A. Fill My Bow - Social Media Post

1. Goal: \$100 per cheerleader
2. Money Collected by: September 14th

B. Sponsors

1. Goal: at least one (1) per squad
2. Sponsor Information Submitted by: August 30th
3. PYCA will hang a game day banner at GMS with sponsors' logos.
4. Donations can be taxed exempted through 501c3 - *ask for paperwork*

C. Bake Sale - Pending

D. Spirit Night - Pending

E. Collecting & Turning in Money

1. PYCA will only accept Cash or Checks made out to Pirate Youth Cheer Association.
2. Coaches assume responsibility for all money received from cheerleaders and sponsors until it is turned into PYCA's treasurer.
3. The treasurer will set meeting times & locations for coaches each week to turn in money.
4. Squad Money Tracker Form: <https://forms.gle/U1kJpMfjUpT9c6EL6>
 - a) Submit one (1) form for each cheerleader or sponsor as money is received.
 - b) Sponsor section includes contact information, website (optional), and logo (optional).
(1) Note: To be included on the banner, encourage sponsor's to provide their logo.
 - c) This form is designed to keep a record of all money received from individual cheerleaders and sponsors.
5. Coach's Deposit Form: <https://forms.gle/xAdWxnPHCUKrZKde6>
 - a) Submit this cash count and check deposit form before meeting to turn in money to PYCA's Treasurer.
 - b) This form is designed to create an electronic deposit sheet to calculate totals and ensure all money is reported accurately and is accounted for.

X. BACKGROUND & BADGE POLICY

A. Background Checks & Badges

Pirate Youth Cheer Association covers the cost for the background check and the first badge.

B. Reimbursement or Replacement

1. If a coach decides to quit after background checks are completed or anytime during the season, then they will need to reimburse PYCA \$25 to cover the cost.
2. If a coach loses their badge, then they will be responsible for paying for a replacement.
3. These policies are in place to help PYCA manage their resources and keep a steady coaching team for cheerleaders.

XI. BEHAVIOR & CONSEQUENCES

A. Good Sportsmanship

Must always prevail! Maintain a good attitude at practices, games, meetings, fundraising events, or PYCA events. Coaches are required to be respectful and courteous to everyone including participants, parents, football teams, other coaches, other squads, and PYCA board members. Sportsmanship is the most important attribute. Please remember that you represent PYCA!

B. Be Thoughtful

Do not criticize, condemn, or complain. Do not gossip, use foul language, obscene gestures, or show negative facial expressions, such as rolling eyes or giving dirty looks. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior WILL NOT be tolerated.

C. Cheerleader Behavior Issues

1. Problems with a participant must be addressed first with the parent. If the problem continues, the parent must be advised of the consequences if the problem isn't corrected (i.e., sitting out a portion of the next game).
2. If the coach is unable to resolve the problem, the coach must notify the Director of Cheer of the situation immediately. The coach will provide the DOC all written documentation regarding the issue (i.e., letters, dates/times the parent was contacted, etc.). Afterwards, the coach and the DOC will contact the parent to resolve the issue.

D. Consequences

The participant, parent, or coach being disciplined may ultimately be removed from the squad by the PYCA Board of Directors. Only PYCA Board members can administer any and all disciplinary consequences related to any participants, parents, or coaches.

XII. SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

A. Guidelines

All members must adhere to any provided member guidelines (Code of Conduct, Member Handbook, etc.) when using social media in reference to the Pirate Youth Cheer Association.

B. Keep Accounts Separate

Members are expected to keep personal and Pirate Youth Cheer Association–affiliated social media accounts separate.

C. Stay Transparent

When speaking about or on behalf of the Pirate Youth Cheer Association, be transparent about your relationship with the organization.

D. Posting to Social Media

Members are PROHIBITED from posting the following:

1. Negative sentiment about Pirate Youth Cheer Association or any post that garners a negative public reaction.
2. Any information that is considered confidential or copyrighted without explicit, written permission.

E. Ask for Help

Members should seek the help of the DOE if they find themselves in a potentially antagonistic online conversation, if they come across any questionable content regarding the Pirate Youth Cheer Association online, if a parent contacts them on social media, or in any other situation in which they are uncertain about what to do, including basics like what is permissible to post and who needs to approve posts.

F. Disciplinary Action

Be aware that content, information, or activities that are publicly posted by members on social media, on- or off-hours, that violate Pirate Youth Cheer Association's policies, may result in disciplinary action.

1. I understand that I represent the Pirate Youth Cheer Association in all online activities.
2. I understand that what is done on any social networking websites should not reflect negatively on my fellow coaches, parents, board members, or Pirate Youth Cheer Association.
3. I understand that I am responsible for how I represent myself and the Pirate Youth Cheer Association via the internet.
4. I understand that I may be disciplined for any use that is in any way disruptive to Pirate Youth Cheer Association and adversely affects or interferes with the performance of my organization-related duties, or that negatively impacts any athletes' achievement.