



## NORTH ALLEGHENY SPORTS NETWORK

### CHEERLEADERS BOOKLET

Dear Parents,

Welcome to North Allegheny Cheerleading! It is important to you, as parents, that you are aware of certain information and costs so that both you and your child can have an enjoyable season. This book was compiled to provide information and promote discussion among the Boosters, the Athletic Office, the coaches, parents, and potential cheerleaders. It is by no means all-inclusive of everything a parent needs to know about high school cheerleading, but it gives an overview of some of the most frequently asked questions. A signed policy form, found on the last page of this handbook, must be signed by the athlete and parent/guardian prior to any cheerleader trying out.

Please review the information in this booklet with your athlete. Keep it handy for future reference.

Sincerely,

*The North Allegheny Coaching Staff and The North Allegheny Cheerleading Boosters*

#### **Eligibility Requirements**

- Middle School squads will consist of students entering 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup> from their respective middle school.
- Freshmen squad will consist of students entering 9<sup>th</sup> grade only.
- Junior Varsity will consist of students entering 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> grades.
- Varsity will consist of students entering 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, or 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Varsity athletes must have a standing backhandspring.
  - Varsity competition teams will include 9<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, and 12<sup>th</sup> graders selected by the coaching staff.

*\*\*All squad members MUST have a completed Physical by a physician 1 week prior to the official start of the season.*

#### **Academic Eligibility**

All candidates must meet the PIAA academic requirements as follows:

1. The student athletes must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the principal as a full-time curriculum.
2. The student athlete must be passing at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent thereof as of each Friday during a grading period. Failure to meet this requirement will result in the loss of a student's athletic eligibility for the following week beginning Sunday through the following Saturday.
3. The student athlete must have passed at least four full-credit subjects or the equivalent thereof during the previous grading period. Eligibility for the first grading period is based on final grades for the preceding year. Failure to meet this requirement will result in a loss of athletic eligibility for the first fifteen school days period.

## How much time does cheerleading take?

- **Varsity cheerleading** has the biggest commitment of time at approximately 20+ hours per week between practice time and time spent at interscholastic contests. The full Varsity squad cheers for all football games and all home boys' basketball games, and portions of the squad will cheer at away boys section games and some girls' basketball games, and other events. This includes regular season games and ALL playoff games. Their attendance at the events is at the discretion of the cheerleading coaches and the Athletic Director in cases where the sports' schedules conflict.
- The **Junior Varsity squad** will attend all home J.V. football, boys basketball home games and some girls' basketball home games. The J.V. squad may be asked to fill in at Varsity events should a conflict arise in the Varsity schedule. Other events may be scheduled as well.
- The **Freshmen squad** will attend all home Freshmen football, boys basketball home games and some girls' basketball games. Other events may be scheduled as well.
- The **Middle School squads** will attend all home football and boys basketball home games, and some girls' basketball games. Other events may be scheduled as well.
- Cheerleading begins immediately after try-outs in May and ends in February / March, following basketball and cheer competitions. During the summer, all cheerleaders must make every effort to attend all practices. Cheerleaders must also attend a summer camp and high school cheerleaders must help coach a mini-camp.
- **The official season begins on August 15, 2022.**
- During the school year, the cheerleaders will typically practice, pending coach's schedule, at least twice a week, or more during the competition season (if on a competition team).
- We may also perform upon request at pep rallies and charitable functions to represent the school.
- Other weekly responsibilities can include sign making, locker room decorating prior to home game days, and volunteer events.
- Some of the listed activities/games may have full squad or half-squad attendance requirements.

**All scheduled appearances of the Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshmen cheerleaders are strictly up to the coach's discretion, not the Booster organization.**

## How much does cheerleading cost?

- Please see the 2022 – 2023 estimated cost sheet for a breakdown of costs associated with being an NA Cheerleader. Costs are estimates and returning cheerleaders typically have lower costs. Please do not let costs deter your participation – payment plans can be confidential and applied by cheer boosters or the athletic office.
- **Booster Fees**
  - Parents are encouraged to become members of the Cheerleading Boosters. This cost and dues can vary year to year based on squad needs and are at the discretion of the Cheerleading Booster Board. Please see the "Boosters" section of the booklet for further descriptions of the goals of the Booster organization.
- **Competition Team Fees**
  - The Varsity competition squads will be expected to enter cheerleading competitions. Squads are projected to compete in several local competitions throughout their season. The Varsity squad should be expected to attend the WPIAL Championship, the PIAA Championship, UCA regional competition, and UCA national competition in Florida. The Varsity Gameday squad is projected to compete in several local events in the fall and winter, as well as UCA Regional and UCA nationals in Florida.

- Non Varsity competition teams (JV or Middle School) will be expected to enter local cheerleading competitions in the fall and early winter. Costs associated with these teams are minimal compared to varsity competition squads.
- Although competitions can be expensive, parents can reduce their share by participating in fundraising activities. We are planning to include more fundraising opportunities to offset competition costs. If you do not wish to participate in fundraising for competition expenses, you will be asked to pay directly for your fees. An estimated cost of the 2022-2023 competition season for each squad will be listed on the 2022 – 2023 cost sheet.
- Summer Camps
  - Each squad will participate in a summer camp to improve their cheerleading skills. Mandatory camp begins August 15, 2022 for all squads. You can expect to practice everyday (excluding weekends) until the start of school. A more detailed calendar of camp week will be provided closer to the start of camp. Not attending or being late to one or more days of camp will result in your athlete being benched for the first football game.
- Clothing
  - Each cheerleader will incur clothing costs related to uniform requirement. Price is estimated on the 2022 – 2023 cost sheet. Please note many items are the same from year to year to try to keep the cost down.

## **Cheerleading Boosters**

Without every parent contributing to the Booster organization, it would not be a success. The cheerleading Boosters in the past have provided money for choreography camp, mini-camp expenses, tumbling mats, school uniform expenses, UBO donations, post-prom party donations, and senior cheerleader scholarship(s), to name a few. Boosters pay for coaches' needs (sound system, etc.), the end-of-the-year banquet with gifts for all the cheerleaders and their coaches, and other expenses as they arise. It is expected that we all help to make this program a great one.

## **Fundraisers**

Fundraising activities fall into three categories. The first type of fundraising benefits the Booster organization – i.e., mini- camp. This money goes towards a pre-determined goal. The second type of fundraising benefits the operating costs of the organization and future needs of the program. The final and 3rd category is a team-fundraiser that would benefit the needs of a specific team (i.e. Cost of Nationals for the Varsity comp team). All fundraisers need maximum participation to appropriately support the growth of the program. If you do not wish to participate in fundraising, you will be asked to pay directly for your fees.

## **Uniforms**

- Wearing an NA Cheerleading uniform is a privilege and should be treated as such. Appearance and behavior should reflect positively on our school district when the cheerleader is in uniform.
- Public display of affection while in uniform is strictly prohibited.
- The school provides the specific uniform items that are free of charge to the cheerleaders for their use during the year.
- Replacement charges will be charged to the individual cheerleaders for lost or damaged uniform items. Damaged uniform items can include but are not limited to unauthorized alterations, permanent stains, burns, tears, foul odors, or theft. The uniform replacement must be paid for and ordered prior to the banquet and the upcoming season's tryouts.
- The uniforms will be sized to the cheerleaders prior to the start of the season.
- Any alterations made to the uniform without the consent of the Coach & Athletic Director will result in the parent being required to reimburse the school for the full amount of the uniform.
- All uniforms should be machined-washed only and hung to dry. (Dry cleaning the uniform takes out the

VISA treatment.) Only the Varsity wool jacket requires dry cleaning.

### **Absences and Attendance**

- The cheerleader or her parents will communicate absences for medical reasons, summer vacations, family weddings, or death in the family to the coach as soon as they are known. Absences must be alerted to the coach at least two weeks in advance of the event expected to be missed for it to be excused, with the exception of last minute illness or family death. Absences not told to the coach in writing via email or BAND message less than two weeks in advance will be unexcused.
- The following reasons will be considered as an excusable absence: a death in the family, family wedding, school related event, illness, and college visitations.
- Traveling during the summer months and Christmas break will also be excused absences, as long as the coach is made aware of the travel at least two weeks prior to the missed practice or event.
- Unexcused absences from practice and or games will not be tolerated. Unexcused absences may lead to suspension from squad and or immediate dismissal. An unexcused absence the week of a game or competition will result in the athlete being benched for the upcoming event.
- Doctor, dentist and non-medical (hair, nail) appointments made during team tumbling practice, practice or games times will count as an unexcused absences. An unexcused absence the week of a game or competition will result in the athlete being benched for the upcoming event.
- Family dinners, birthdays and pre-scheduled appointments will NOT be excused absences.
- An unexcused absence the week of a game or event will result in a one game suspension at which the athlete must attend the game, but will sit with the coaches. They cannot cheer again until this one game suspension, sitting with the coaches in full uniform and warm-up for the full game, is served.
- An excused absence the week of a game or event may result in that athlete having to sit out specific cheers, pregame, quarters and performances.
- Tumbling is a team practice, not an optional practice. Missing this may result in being benched from the game that week as well, as the scheduled tumbling practice can turn into team practice at any time.
- All cheerleaders must be prompt to all practices and games and be fully dressed and ready by the start of their meet time. Not being ready to go for meet time will count as an absence and will result in the athlete having to sit with the coaches during the game. Missing a uniform piece will also result in the athlete having to sit with the coaches during the game.
- Repeated unexcused absences can result in dismissal from squad.

***Mandatory practices start on August 15, 2022 and will run all week until school starts, Schedule TBD closer to camp week. Plan for all day.***

***UCA Home Camp for High School - 8/16 & 8/17 MS 8/18 & 8/19***

### **Injuries**

- If an injury occurs during the season, a doctor's note must be presented to the coaching staff and athletic trainer with specific directions as to what the cheerleader can and cannot do and they cannot return until a clearance note is given to their coaches and athletic trainer.
- If a cheerleader is injured during the season, as long as medically able, they are expected to attend all scheduled practice, tumbling, games, competitions and events. Additionally, injured athletes must attend the teams' events in uniform / warm- up and sit with the coaches and continue to support the team.

### **Squad Placements**

- Earning a position on the Varsity, Junior Varsity, Freshmen & Middle School cheerleading squads is a **privilege**. Your position on these squads is dependent on attendance, consistent effort, hard work, and a positive attitude toward cheerleading. Disrespecting your spot on the team, coaches or another individual may result in dismissal from the team. Team positions can change at any time.
- Varsity cheerleaders who fail to meet the required criteria may be placed on the JV cheerleading squad or sit out of Varsity events until Varsity criteria have once again been met. Cheerleaders can move from one team to another based on ability or behavior at the coaches' discretion.
- Team members will be tested WEEKLY on the skills they exhibited at tryouts. Failure to maintain these

skills can result in removal from the team at coaches discretion or movement to another team. This can happen at anytime throughout the year.

- If a cheerleader is removed from the team or voluntarily quits their team, they would not be eligible to tryout for the next year. *(For example, if a Freshmen cheerleader quits her team, she would not be eligible to tryout again until she is going into her Junior year.)*
- If a cheerleader is removed from the team or voluntarily quits their competition team, they would not be eligible to tryout for the competition team the next year. *(For example, if a Freshmen cheerleader quits the Varsity comp team mid season, she would not be eligible to tryout for a competition team again until she is going into her Junior year.)*

### **Game, Event and Practice Expectations**

- Cheerleaders must be in school by approx. 10:30 a.m. to participate in practices or games (varies by school).
- Cheerleaders will wear proper attire to school on games days decided by the coaches and captains.
- Nails must be at an appropriate length and neutral in color. This will be monitored by coaches. Failure to have nails at an appropriate length and neutral in color will result in the athlete sitting for the entire game or practice.
- Cheerleaders will be prohibited to wear jewelry of any kinds at practice or games due to safety reasons. This includes but is not limited to earrings, apple watches, necklaces, and other piercings. Failure to remove jewelry will result in the athlete sitting for the entire game or practice.
- Cell phones are prohibited during practices & games unless a coach approves use. Please keep phones on silent and inside your bag at all times.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for being on the field/court at their meet time designated by their coach, and back in the stands or field at least 1 minute before the end of half-time intermission, unless otherwise noted by their coach.
- Cheerleaders must demonstrate respectful attention during the National Anthem. They should be standing in a proper formation that the coach approves. No laughing or talking will be permitted during the National Anthem or school anthem.
- Chewing gum is prohibited at games and practices.
- Eating or drinking on the track or on the bench during games is prohibited.
- It is each cheerleader's responsibility to be dressed completely in the expected attire and bring appropriate weather gear. Missing any piece of a uniform at a game (Bow, Top, Skirt, Socks, Shoes, Poms etc) may result in that athlete sitting the game.
- Only high school squads can use the NA Cheer Backpack for travel and games. No other backpacks please.

### **Cheerleader Expectations**

- High School cheerleaders will have a weekly practice over the summer and a weekly tumbling class. Day/time TBD.
- Middle School Cheerleaders will have practices over the summer to develop cheers, motions and skills for the upcoming season.
- All Cheerleaders are expected to learn game material (sidelines, dances) by **August 15, 2022** using the NA Cheer TicTok channel. This will be posted in BAND groups after tryouts. Failure to know your cheers and dances will result in being benched until you know them
- All cheerleaders will begin their Mandatory Practice week on August 15, 2022 and will continue until the start of school, excluding weekends. Families should prepare these dates in advance of the season so that all team members are present to begin the season. Missing a day of mandatory camp week will result in being benched for the first game, where an athlete is required to attend but sit with the coaches the full game.
- Cheerleaders will work together as a team for the good of the squad and pay attention to the directions of their coach/captains.
- If the cheerleader receives an in school suspension they are permitted to practice but not participate in contests or in cheer competitions. If the cheerleader receives an out of school suspension then she will not

be allowed to practice or cheer at school events. In addition, if the out of school suspension falls on a practice day or event/game day this amounts to an unexcused absence and may lead to additional sanctions including dismissal.

- Use of alcohol, drugs, Juul, tobacco and other illegal products are strictly prohibited. If a cheerleader uses and or is determined by school or law authorities to have used alcohol or drugs that student may be suspended or dismissed from the squad. This includes being associated with drugs and alcohol in social media posts. This policy will be strictly enforced.
- Each cheerleader must maintain a positive online presence that would not reflect poorly on the athlete, cheer program or North Allegheny School district. Social Media presence is closely monitored for all athletes and a negative presence can be cause for dismissal from the team. This includes all social media accounts and 'fake' accounts that belong to the athlete.
- Harassment (physical, verbal, emotional, etc.) of another student or team member will not be tolerated.

**Failure to follow these rules will result in disciplinary action being taken by the coaches or the Athletic Department. Other issues may arise during the school year that this booklet does not address, and rules may be added at the coaches' discretion.**

### **Expectations of the Parents**

- Arrange to have your child to practice on time and picked up promptly at the end of practice.
- Arrange to have your child to games on time.
- Safety of the girls is always our first consideration. Parents must understand that injuries are always a possibility in the sport or cheerleading.
- All parents are strongly encouraged to be members of the Cheerleading Boosters organization, participate in fundraising activities, and pay all cheer expenses promptly.
- All parents are expected to follow the chain commands for complaints.
  1. Kaylee Kenz
  2. Dana Thomas
  3. The Athletic Office

### **Grievances**

- If you have a complaint about the squad, take it to the coach.
- If you have complaints with the Booster organization, take them to the Booster president.
- If your complaint is not resolved to your satisfaction, you should contact the Head Coach, Cheerleading Coordinator, or the Athletic Office.
- Constructive criticism, expressed to the right people, makes the team better. Destructive criticism will not be tolerated and may result in dismissal from the squad.
- Please discuss problems or concerns with your coach before or after practice by appointment only, not during practice sessions or a game. Please do not approach a coach directly after a practice or game if you do not have a scheduled appointment.
- Please respect your coaches time. Extensive messages via BAND will not be tolerated. Phone calls or in person appointments must be scheduled if there is an issue.

### **Coach's Responsibilities**

- The squad expects that coaches will provide instruction and practice so that each girl can improve her cheerleading skills in a safe way.
- The coaches will correct mistakes in a positive and productive manner.
- The coaches will monitor attendance and participation at practices and games.
- Coaches will be available to answer questions and discuss any concerns expressed by cheerleaders and/or parents at a scheduled time.

# North Allegheny Cheer Policy Agreement Form

By signing below, I hereby acknowledge that I have completely read and fully understand the 2022 – 2023 North Allegheny Cheerleading booklet and agree to all listed in this book.

This signed paper must be turned in on the first day of tryouts. Athletes cannot tryout without a signed policy agreement form.

Athlete Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete Grade for the Upcoming Season: \_\_\_\_\_

Athlete Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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Parent / Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Relationship to Athlete: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent / Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_