



Sherwood Cheer Handbook of Expectations

Introduction

Welcome to Sherwood Youth Cheer! We are so excited to have you join our program. You will learn cheers, jumps, dances, stunting, and have opportunities to perform your skills during the season.

There are rules in place to make sure that, at all times, you are representing yourself, your team, our organization and our community with the highest level of respect and responsibility. These rules are for you; please read and understand them, and know what is expected of you at all times. Our rules represent your commitment to Sherwood Cheer and we thank you for being an important part of our cheer organization. Additional policies to be reviewed will be found on your Jackrabbit parent portal (ex. Parent Code of Conduct).

We are so excited to be adding a **Rookie Team** (3rd-8th grades) to our program. The Rookie Team is for new to cheer or beginner level cheerleaders. They will learn the basics and fundamentals of our sport in a less formal setting. The Rookie Team will learn cheers, dances, sideline material and limited stunting. Please review the infographic in the registration packet for inclusions and more detail specific to the team.

Time Commitment

Cheerleading is a commitment sport and we require cheerleaders to be at every practice, game, event and competition (if applicable) in its entirety. We do understand that emergencies happen, but you must understand this requirement before committing to cheer and when planning personal events.

Some of the many commitments are: fundraisers, camp, summer practices, games, competitions and other events. Other activities, family commitments, and social activities may often need to be rescheduled to provide for the responsibilities and obligations connected with this organization. Athletes should understand that only illness and out of the ordinary family circumstances are legitimate reasons to miss a cheer activity. Many times practices go a little longer than planned or the team is asked to perform at an unscheduled event. We do our very best to publish known events at the beginning of the season. Our schedules may change due to unforeseen circumstances. For example, inclement weather and school district schedule changes.

Our Sideline Season starts at the beginning of August. The first week of August is SYC Camp and is mandatory for all athletes to learn their season material. If our football teams make it to the playoffs, the Sideline Season will continue into November. SYC's Sideline Cheer season performances end completely by mid-November.

SYC also offers a Competition Season. Competition season begins in July and continues through mid March, overlapping with the Sideline Season. Athletes are required to participate in Sideline Season to be able to compete in Competition Season.

Academics

At SYC, we believe that school is a priority -- both attending classes and maintaining your grades. Your education comes first. At the elementary school level, we ask that our cheerleaders work hard in the classroom and must have passing grades. At the middle school level, you **must** maintain a "C" or higher in all of your classes.

Absences

All practices, games, events, and competitions (if applicable) are MANDATORY. Be aware that absences from practices, games, events, or competitions, even if excused, may result in removal from stunts and/ or line position.

On occasion, it is necessary to miss a practice and/or game. We understand that issues arise, and we ask that you notify your coach(es) if you need to be absent for any reason.

- **Excused absence:** an athlete who has missed school due to illness; a *graded (required)* school activity, family emergency (death in the family or similar). Your coach(es) must receive a *written* note, email, phone call or text from your parents no later than 9:00 a.m. of practice for illnesses. School activities need 1 week or more notice.
 - Absence due to illness means: athlete has a fever of 100.4 or higher and/ or contagious illness
 - Absence due to illness may require a doctor's note clearing athlete to return to practice
- **Unexcused absence:** being absent without notification to your coach by 9am for illness/ emergency or missing practice for any reason not listed above. Examples of unexcused absences: traffic, too much homework, feeling tired, don't have a ride, carsick, other appointments/ events or commitments. Absences will be unexcused if it is not communicated directly to your team's coach.
- **Benched:** If for any reason determined by your coach or the board you are "benched" from a game or practice, you are required to attend the next game(s) or practice(s) and sit on the sideline with your coach(es), in full uniform (game day) or practice attire, participating in cheers, for the entire game/ practice and support your team.

Team Expectations

Every athlete in the program is expected to arrive on time and in the correct attire (head to toe) to practices, games, events, and competitions (if applicable) with a positive attitude and ready to learn. As listed in the Athlete Code of Conduct (can be reviewed in Parent Portal), we also require our athletes to respect their teammates, staff, the facility and themselves. If those behaviors are not met, we will use the following process to align the athletes actions with the program policies:

- First: Warning
- Second: Meeting with parents
- Third: Dismissal from team
- Other consequences may be assigned at the discretion of the coach

Examples of infractions:

- Missing pieces to uniform or practice gear... Three occurrences will result in one unexcused tardy
- Arriving unprepared (Jewelry On, hair down, no shoes)... Three occurrences will result in one unexcused tardy
- Not letting coaches know by 9am if you are ill and will miss practice or event
- Unexcused tardy: Every late arrival, one minute to 5 minutes. Three late arrivals result in one unexcused absence. If a member is more than 10 minutes late without prior arrangement with the coach, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
- Unexcused absence from practice, game or event

- Three unexcused absences will require a meeting with coaches and president before returning to practice again
- Skipping classes in school: Will sit out at that week's game
- Disruptive behavior/attitudes at any practice, tumbling class, game or event
- Any action or behavior at the coaches' or board's discretion that is deemed unsafe or unlawful will be grounds for an automatic dismissal from the program

*Any dismissal from the program will be without refund no exceptions. If there is a balance on the account, it will be due in full immediately.

Practices

Monday - Tumbling

Tuesday/ Thursday - Team Practices

Wednesday - Rookies' Practice

Tumbling is included in the program fees. Location is dictated by your team placement. While it is not required, it is strongly recommended in order to progress through our program and your cheerleading career. Tumbling is essential to cheerleading. The weekly tumbling class is required for our competition teams.

Cheerleaders need to arrive to practice/ tumbling 5-10 minutes ahead of time so that you can prepare for practice: restroom, shoes on, check in with coaches, etc. Practice will begin on time and it is your responsibility to be ready to go on time. Being late affects the whole team.

For practice, each cheerleader will wear matching practice attire decided by coaches. This includes:

- Sherwood Cheer shirt
- Black shorts with no less than a 5" inseam
- Black no show socks and all black athletic shoes that tie/lace up (no Keds or metal)
- Hair in a high pony
- **ALL jewelry off**
 - **Headbands and ALL earrings/jewelry are considered "illegal"** by national cheerleading rules, however it is appropriate to use bobby pins and/or snap barrettes to pull back bangs and/or fly away hair that will not fit in a high pony.

Expected practice behavior includes, but is not limited to, the following ideal characteristics:

- Pay attention & follow directions
- Be a team player
- Be respectful of yourself, your teammates and coaches
- No arguing with each other or coaches
- No excessive talking with other athletes, friends or family
- Be on your "mark" at all times, and ready to listen and learn
- Goofing off & inappropriate behavior at practice will not be tolerated
- Phones/ electronics must be silenced and stored in bags
- Practice is very important and something we take very seriously
 - *We always have work to do at practice; cheers to review and new material and skills to learn.*

Game Day

Football games that sideline squads perform at take place on Saturdays (or Sundays, depending on teams) throughout September and October. Playoff games for older teams may run into November. Sherwood Youth Cheer Board and Coaches are not responsible for athletes outside their scheduled practice/warm ups and games, even if they are within the stadium.

- All athletes are to arrive 30 minutes prior to the start time of their scheduled game in full uniform and ready to cheer
- Meet the coach behind the stadium for warm ups
- Games are approximately 2 hours long
- At the end of each quarter, athletes will be allowed to approach the sidelines for water breaks
- If athletes need to use the restroom, you may do so as necessary, after notifying the coach
- The athlete's responsibility is to cheer, dance, stunt and perform for the entire game, start to finish. All personal belongings will remain on the sidelines while cheering for the game
- Phones/ electronics must be silenced and stored in bags
- Squads will meet after each game, off to the side of the stadium, to go over any notes, and be released to parents
- Teams may be asked to stay after the game to help clean the stands. This will be communicated in advance
- If athletes are to leave the game/field without their parents/ guardian -- alone or with another family -- their parents/ guardian **must** notify coach(es) prior to the game. There are no exceptions about departure procedures for athlete safety

Athletes are highly encouraged to attend the football games of other SYC squads. Athletes should sit in the stands together and participate in the cheers, chants and call-backs of the performing squad. **No one** will be allowed on the track between the performing athletes and the stadium, unless approved by the performing squad's coach. Athletes are also encouraged to attend the high school's Friday night Varsity football game to cheer on the Bowmen cheerleaders and experience the atmosphere.

Game Attire

- Athletes must arrive at each game in complete uniform, to be specified by their coach by the last practice of the week
- All uniform pieces and including warm ups must be brought to all games, in case the weather warrants a last minute change; all athletes will be required to wear matching uniforms during the game
 - **If an athlete is missing a piece of the uniform, they will be benched as determined by the coach**
- Bring a full water bottle to each game

Game Behavior

Game behavior is no different than practice behavior

Athletes behavior will be, but not limited to:

- On mark or in formation on the track
- Paying attention to the game
- Watching and learning/understanding the game
- Listening for cheers to be called
- Voices off between cheers
- Sportsmanship* is required

Competition Teams

The competition program is an optional add-on and additional cost. Some teams will practice during the sideline season. Competition Season July - Mid March. Routines are choreographed and performed for a panel of judges and a crowd. We compete against other local programs. There are two styles of competition: Game Day and Traditional.

- Game Day
 - Similar to football game material
 - Three sections: Band Dance, Situational: Offense/ Defense, Crowdleading
 - Less skills based; performance based
 - Great introduction to competitive cheer
- Traditional
 - Routine is choreographed to showcase skills
 - Tumbling: running and standing
 - Jumps
 - Stunting
 - Dance
 - Performance
 - Tryout required (we are a no cut program)
 - Cheer camp required

Stunting

State and National cheerleading guidelines say that **no stunting is allowed without a certified coach present!!!** *No exceptions*. Stunting with sideline cheer is a privilege that is earned after learning a series of progressions of technique from coaches and other professionals.

Uniforms

Sherwood Youth Cheer uniform is defined as:

- Top & skirt or uniform pants
- All black Cheer Shoes (no Keds or metal of any kind)
- Black No-Show Socks
- SYC warm up jacket
- Solid black leggings
- Poms or megaphone
- Hair Bow
- Bobby pins, as necessary; **no** other hair/head bands, clips, etc.
- No Jewelry
- Finger nails must be kept short with no nail polish, glitter, acrylic/gel nails or stickers
- If make-up is worn it must be natural looking

Uniform Responsibilities:

- Upkeep and care are the cheerleader's responsibility
- Uniform is to be worn in its entirety. This includes proper undergarments, hair accessories, socks, shoes, briefs, etc
- Do not lend out ANY part of your uniform - it is NOT a Halloween costume!
- REMEMBER: When you are in uniform, you are representing the program and your team
- We cannot replace your top, skirt, or warm ups
- Bow replacement will be a \$25 fee

Spirit Days

Spirit Days are each Friday at school before our Saturday games. On Spirit Fridays, SYC athletes are invited to wear their practice T-shirts or jerseys to school. We encourage SYC cheerleaders to participate and show their team spirit. **Do not** wear your current uniform or Game Day bow for spirit days.

Sportsmanship

Demonstrating great sportsmanship is expected of everyone. All athletes are treated equally, regardless of your age or experience. A constant positive attitude is required about ourselves, our teammates, our organization and our community.

Inappropriate Behavior such as (but not limited to) the following will clearly indicate that you are not making good choices or exercising great sportsmanship:

- Not participating completely at practices/games (coaches are trained in age appropriate expectations of teams and will hold those expectations equitably)
- Gossiping
- Being mean or unkind to one another
- Using inappropriate language in person or online or via text message
- Demonstrating behavior that isn't safe, respectful or kind
- Showing disrespect to teammates and/or coaches, including behavior via social media, text messages, etc.
- Using phones the prep time before practice, during practice, or during pick up times (unless communicating with an adult about transportation)

SYC reserves the right to refuse participation to any athlete at any time

Social Media

SYC does not tolerate any sort of bullying, hazing, foul language, or improper conduct on social media. This includes, but is not limited to: Group texts, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok. Respect for our teammates, program, schools, community, and sport is of utmost importance. This applies to athletes and their families.

Fees

A non-refundable registration fee of \$50 for your first athlete and \$25 each additional athlete will be due at online sign up. Uniform/ gear deposits of 75% of your total order are due at fitting. The uniform/ gear order cannot be exchanged or refunded. The balance is due at uniform pick up in early August. Team fees will be due by September 6th. All fees must be paid in full in order to cheer at your football games. If an athlete/ family quits or leaves the program for any reason (injury, illness, moving away, or disciplinary dismissal) they will be required to pay any remaining balance due in full. There are no refunds and no exceptions. These fees are separate from any Competition Team fees.

Financial Scholarships: Due to budget constraints this season, we do not have a scholarship fund. There will be many fundraisers available. Please consider participating in fundraisers and/ or help find business sponsors for the program to grow our scholarship fund again. If needed, please contact registrar@sherwoodcheer.org to arrange a different payment schedule for team fees.

Fundraising

There will be fundraising opportunities April through August to help offset the program and uniform fees. We will communicate those opportunities at the required parent meetings. Any amount not fundraised will be the responsibility of each family. Any fees for Fall 2024 not fundraised will be due on 9/6. Please consider fundraising in addition to your fees. Those funds go back into the program for scholarships and to buy new equipment.

We understand that reminders about fundraising can create a full email box. All families will receive information about new fundraising opportunities. If you would like to be added to the Fundraising Interest List, please fill out this form: <https://forms.gle/xY5Yagi3SoNBLXRv9>. You will get the reminders and additional information about individual fundraisers available.

Mandatory parent meetings:

- 4/17 - New and returning families
- 5/20 - Uniform fitting & fundraiser launch
- 7/8 - Competition Teams' Zoom
- 8/9 - Pre-season parent meeting & fundraiser launch

Parents

The Board of Directors and coaches ask that the following rules are followed by all of our families:

- Practices will be closed to parents unless volunteering or occasional team showcases
- Elementary school students will only be released from the gym/practices or stadium/games to a parent or approved adult, unless previous arrangements have been made with the coach.
- Allow and encourage your athlete to bring concerns or issues to their coach(es) or any board member, prior to parental involvement
- Your behavior reflects on the program. We ask our families to follow the same sportsmanship guidelines as our athletes. Any unsportsmanlike conduct may result in the family's dismissal from the program without refund.

Please note that we partner with Sherwood Youth Football Association (SYFA) and are utilizing school facilities and therefore must also abide by their rules and regulations. If you have any questions or concerns, you may always reach out to president@sherwoodcheer.org

The "24 hour" rule

We understand that at times there may be a situation that you or your athlete may want to address. We ask that you give it 24 hours, allowing time to think about the situation, discuss it with your athlete and determine the best way to approach it. If after 24 hours, you feel that the concern needs to be addressed with your child's coach or Director of Coaches, please request a meeting time for you and your child to talk with their coach or the Director of Coaches. Discussions just before or immediately after a practice or game will not be allowed unless previously arranged.

ANY questions, concerns or comments please know that we have an open door policy. You can contact the SYC President at President@sherwoodcheer.org

The SYC board reserves the right to modify or add additional expectations as we see fit, any changes will be communicated to SYC athletes and their parents.

Now that we have all of this covered... Let's get out there and CHEER!!!¹

¹ Revised March 29 2024