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| North Paulding Cheerleading Constitution and Handbook |
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| **2023-2024** |

This can be amended at any time. If the Constitution is amended, communication will be sent out on Remind 101.

**Purpose and Mission**

The purpose of North Paulding cheerleading is to promote and uphold school spirit, to develop a sense of sportsmanship among the students, and enrich the lives of students through the sport. Our mission is to build character, discipline, self-esteem, integrity, and a feeling of accomplishment in every athlete. We will help students grow and mature, both physically and emotionally, resulting in citizens who embody the NPHS ethical principles. We believe learning these qualities in high school prepare you to succeed later in life. These guidelines are made so we can have fun, be safe, work hard, and develop character qualities that make us successful. Excellence is expected.

**Expectations**

**Section 1: Athlete**

- Must enjoy learning and performing stunts, jumps, cheers, chants, and dances.

- Promote and maintain positive relationships with faculty, administration, and student body, and work cooperatively with the band, athletic teams, and all school organizations.

- Show the highest level of respect. Disrespect will not be tolerated. Disrespect may result in disciplinary consequences.

- Adhere to all rules and regulations of the North Paulding School Handbook

- Participate in ALL games/competitions, regardless of holidays or breaks

- Participate in ALL fundraisers

- Attend summer camp(s), practices, and conditioning sessions

- Maintain high academic and moral standards

- Attend all practices

- Represent the school with spirit and pride and various functions

- Keep a positive attitude

- Do not publically (verbally or electronically) criticize North Paulding Cheer or teammates

- Because positive sportsmanship is a must, quitting or being removed from any squad after tryout results have been posted will result in a dismissal from the program and they will not be allowed to try out the following year. Cheerleaders that do not complete the committed season with the Program will not have the opportunity to try out the following season. Cheerleaders that do not complete the committed season with the Competition Program will not have the opportunity to try out the following season. The only exception to this would be if an athlete is on probation because of failing grades. Once the grade become passing, it is up to the head coach to decide if they will be able to participate.

**Section 2: Parents- you are an extension of the program, so we expect parents to act in a manner that reflects positively on the program.**

* Review the expectations with your athlete and be sure they understand there will be consequences for unacceptable behaviors
* Provide transportation to and from various events required by the team, if necessary
* Support your athlete and team by attending games or competitions
* Help support the Megaphone Booster Club.
* Volunteer in areas where you can make a difference and help keep the program running.
* Participate in fundraisers
* Support the decisions made by the coach even when it does not fall in the favor of your specific athlete.
* Parents should never approach a coach from another program, judges, or administration from another school if they are in disagreement with a competition or event’s result. This reflects poorly on the program and is unsportsmanlike behavior.
* **Athletes needs to personally notify THEIR COACH of any schedule conflicts well in advance**.
* Give positive support to their children through success and failure.
* Refrain from negative comments aimed at the opposition, officials, or coaches.
* **Allow the coaching staff to do their job without interference**.
* **Coaches do not discuss other athletes with parents**. We will only discuss your athlete. If there is a conflict with another athlete, the coaches will address the issue with their parents or cheerleader.
* **Parents should not discuss cheerleading related issues while the coach is on their own personal time**. They work very hard and they need this personal time outside of cheerleading.

-**Coaches *WILL NOT* discuss issues directly after games, competitions or practices.**

-The coaching staff will communicate to each athlete their role on their particular team.

- Competition: **Understand that coaches *WILL NOT* discuss alternate positions.** IF there are concerns, the athlete will first discuss in person with their coach. Refer to Concerns/Problems for the procedure process if necessary to go further.

**It is mandatory that parents and athletes follow the rules and expectations of the North Paulding Cheerleading Handbook as well as those of the North Paulding Student Handbook and GHSA and the NFHS Guidelines. Failure to do so will result in consequences.**

**Section 3: Commitment**

Being a member of a Cheerleading team requires major commitment from athletes and their families. We encourage athletes to be well-rounded students and to be involved in multiple extracurricular activities; however, it is important that the athletes understands the necessity of time management. Your commitment to North Paulding Wolf Pack cheerleading comes first. Work or absences due to all-star events will not be excused. Cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices, games, and camps. Please make note of the dates on the calendar. It is your responsibility to keep up with these dates. **Excused and unexcused absences will be addressed by each coach involved.** All athletes are expected to report on the first day of practice and for the duration of the tryout period as well as the entire season of the sport. Without prior approval, if a non-school related activity conflicts with participation on a school sponsored team, the coach will have the authority to remove the athlete from the team for failure to support his/her commitment to the school sponsored program. In addition, coaches may remove athletes they feel are not keeping with the philosophy of the team.

**Section 4: Behavior**

1. **School Behavior**- Each athlete is expected to be a leader by maintaining good behavior in all classes and activities. If an athlete is disciplined by a teacher or administrator for any reason, the coach will reference the discipline policy and apply appropriate consequences. Cheerleaders must follow ALL school rules, including the dress code. It is expected that athletes should report any issues to the coaching staff before a teacher notification.
2. **General Behavior**- The following behaviors are NOT allowed by North Paulding Cheerleading standards. Violations will be evaluated by the coaches and appropriate consequences will be given. (Consequences may be, but not limited to: benching, suspensions, and removal from the squad.): {*see Consequences/Discipline Policy}*
* Profane language
* Undesirable or immoral behavior
* Instigating conflict
* Bullying
* Posturing to Fight and/or Fighting
* Over display of affection
* Plagiarism
* Forgery
* Skipping
* Stealing
1. **CHEMICAL USE- A zero tolerance policy** for chemical use will be strictly enforced. Such usage violates legal and ethical standards and imposes unreasonable long term health risks on the user. Disciplinary action will be taken against any athlete that participates in the use of, distribution of, or association with other persons in use or possession of any illegal drugs including alcohol. Discipline will range from suspension to permanent dismissal from the NPHS Athletic Program and all sports associated with Paulding County Schools.
2. **Squad Behavior-**
* Always have a positive attitude
* Do not argue as a squad in public
* ***Do not wear jewelry while cheering at any time. Body piercings are included***
* Respect of coaches, boosters, and other cheerleaders is expected
* Fingernails should be kept short sport length and should not have color on them. No artificial nails
* Keep hair neat and away from face
* Do not make excuses
* Refrain from chewing gum while in uniform or at practice
* Be willing to sacrifice time, interests, talents, and personal feelings or opinions for the good of the team
* North Paulding Cheerleading must be first priority. **Do not accept a job or take on another task that will interfere.**
* Public display of affection is not allowed
* Cheerleaders are required to carry their full uniform to all games and cheerleading activities. This includes but is not limited to: uniform, bloomers, warm ups, jacket, bow, socks, cheer shoes, rain gear, poms, etc.
* Cheerleaders **are required to have proper practice clothes at every practice**. This includes: t-shirt, shorts, or pants (proper pants), socks, cheer shoes, hair tie, etc.

**You will have extra conditioning, sit out at events, suspended, or removed from the squad for failure to follow any of the above expected behaviors.**

**Requirements**

**Section 1: Participation** As participation in North Paulding cheerleading is a privilege and not a right, North Paulding Cheer is authorized to set higher standards for participants than would be set for those students who choose not to participate in these activities. Important goals of the program are to give students direction in developing character, self discipline, responsibility, pride, loyalty, leadership, teamwork, respect, and healthy living habits. Additionally, each cheerleader will be expected to complete 15 community service hours. The hours must be appropriately logged and returned to coach before the banquet.

**Section 2: Academics** Cheerleaders will be expected to maintain academic eligibility. Simply stated: grades come first! Cheerleading will never be an acceptable reason for grades to falter. Grades will be checked at random by the head coach for each person in the program. Failing one or more classes during or concluding the semester may result in the following consequences: attend a study hall with the academic teacher until the grades are brought up to passing and being benched.

**To be eligible to participate, practice, and/or try out in interscholastic activities, a student must be academically eligible. Although coaches and the athletic department will look at this information, it is the responsibility of the athlete and their parents know be aware of the athlete’s academic standing.**

* **1 or more failing grades – probation (4 ½ weeks to bring it/them up)**
* **1 failing grade after probation – no practice or games until it is brought up. If still failing after an additional 4 ½ weeks (13 ½ weeks), cheerleader will be dismissed from the team**
* **2 or more failing grades after initial probationary period, cheerleader will be dismissed from the team**

**Attendance**

**Section 1: General Expectations**

Cheerleaders are expected to be at practice in their practice clothes unless absent from school. **Athletes need to communicate with their coach in advance if they need to miss practice due to an appointment or other commitment.** No other non-school activity may interfere with cheerleading practice. An agreement must be made between the teacher/coach for simultaneous school related activities.

-football and basketball Sideline cheerleaders are expected to attend all games, including **pre and post season**, as well as **tournaments.** You may not miss a game for other events. You complete the season from start to finish or you do not get recognition for it. If you are a varsity cheerleader you will not letter.

-Competition cheerleaders are expected to attend **every** competition, even if the cheerleader is an alternate**. If you try out with a skill and make a squad you are required to maintain that skill or be replaced with an alternate.** You may not miss practices or competitions for other events.

-Additionally**, the squads are expected to attend all other required activities** including, but not limited to: fundraisers, team building activities, pep rallies, community service, and all other school functions to show unified school spirit to other teams at North Paulding.

**Section 2: Absences**

The coach will determine if the absence is excused or not. A cheerleader who must miss a practice and who is NOT absent from school MUST discuss the situation with the coach prior to the absence and is responsible for obtaining all information discussed at practice. If you are absent from school, please notify the coach of the absence. This must be done well in advance unless it is an extreme emergency. Do not let a coach know at the last minute. We all have to travel to different places for practice, so be considerate of everyone’s time when missing.

1. An unexcused absence of practice may result in the cheerleader doing additional conditioning or dressing out but NOT participating at the following event (competition, game or pep-rally).
2. **If a cheerleader is sick and claims that she cannot practice as a result, written documentation** or email must be provided within two practice days, signed by a parent or guardian, explaining the situation in order to possibly excuse the absence. However, in general, if you are well enough to be at school, you are well enough to be at practice. If they miss practice without an excuse, they risk being removed from the team.
3. **Cheerleaders who do not dress out for practices will be counted as absent** (unexcused) and **will not be able to cheer at the next event** (game or pep-rally). This holds true for alternates as well.
4. If a cheerleader is absent from school on the day of a game, they may not participate and is responsible for informing the coach. To be considered present, they must be at school for 2 periods or leave after 12:00 pm.

**Section 3: Tardiness**

**“If you are early, you are on time. If you are on time, you are late. If you are late you are in trouble!”**

1. Athletes who are late to practice, a game, an event, or the bus will receive the proper disciplinary consequence as tardiness is disrespectful to all parties involved.
2. Students are considered late if they are not properly attired when the practice/game/event time is scheduled. If you are late for the bus, you will be left and there will be disciplinary consequences to follow.
3. What on time means: In the designated area at the assigned time. This means being fully dressed in specific attire, shoes and socks, with hair pulled back, and absolutely NO jewelry.

**General Information**

**Section 1: Eligibility and Squad Breakdown**

An athlete may participate only if all of the following requirements have been met:

1. Current physical, Code of Conduct, and proof of insurance are turned in to the coach. Please do not give them to any other person.
2. All equipment from a previous season of participation is turned in or has been paid for.
3. Students must be eligible in accordance with the Constitution and By-Laws of the Georgia High School Association (GHSA). See [www.ghsa.net](http://www.ghsa.net) > Constitution and By-Laws

**Junior Varsity teams** are an advanced developmental program available for students in grades 9-11. The focus is on learning new skills, improving ability, and practicing at a more advanced level so the athlete can transition to the varsity level.

**Varsity teams** are advanced programs for grades 9-12. Skill and ability are at a high level. These athletes are the leaders of each program in and out of the athletic arena

**Section 2: Lettering Policy**

Athletes who participate in Varsity Cheerleading have the opportunity to earn a letter. In order to earn a letter, a cheerleader must:

Uphold guidelines outlined in the handbook and finish the season in good standing. Cheerleaders who quit the squad, stop coming to practices and events, or are dismissed forfeit their right to any cheerleading award (including lettering).

1. Participate in the required percentage of all squad activities including practices, games, performances, or any other squad activities scheduled by the coach outlined in the school’s athletic handbook.
2. Maintain athletic and academic eligibility for the duration of the season (including post season).
3. If the athlete is an alternate, they must compete in at least 2 competitions to be eligible to letter.

**Section 3: Alternates (Competition ONLY)**

Alternates are required to attend **ALL** cheerleading activities including practices, community service activities, competitions, pep-rallies, etc. Alternates are required to be in full uniform or designated clothing at all activities. Alternates should be prepared to step in at any time to fill another cheerleader’s spot. If they do not come to practices unless they are excused, they will be removed from the team.

**Section 4: Bullying**

North Paulding High School enforces a **zero-tolerance** policy for all types of bullying, including in and out of school, in person or online.

**Section 5: Internet Safety**

Members of the North Paulding Cheerleading Program shall refrain from posting questionable material, including pictures and dialogue on the internet and will monitor to the best of their ability what their friends post about them on their pages. Cheerleaders with pictures of themselves in compromising situations will result in benching, probation or removal from the team. Cheerleaders will not have pictures of themselves with any form of alcohol/drugs/tobacco in the background or foreground of the picture as well as not posting any pictures of a sexual nature.

**Section 6: Uniform**

You will be given a uniform to use for the duration of your season. This uniform is the property of North Paulding Cheerleading. There is a non-refundable usage fee for the uniform. The cheerleader is responsible for any damage of the uniform. To clean the uniform, wash on a low, gentle cycle and laid flat to dry. **Do not dry clean the uniform. The uniform should not be cut during alterations**. No one other than the cheerleader to whom the uniform was issued should wear the uniform.

**Consequences and Discipline Policy- this starts at the time of being placed on a team.**

The discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the North Paulding Cheer Program. Cheerleaders will receive **one** warning prior to receiving demerit per season on Level I.

**Level I: One Demerit Each**

* One tardy to practice or pre-game/pre-competition time to meet without prior communication with the coach.
* Failure to be in complete uniform as specified by coach (at school, games, performances, practices)
* Wearing jewelry, wearing long nails that are longer than athletic length in practice, game, or performance, and hair must be above the waist and pulled up away from the face at all times. . THIS IS A GHSA POLICY.
* Being disruptive, horsing around, or talking excessively during a game, practice, or activity
* Eating during practice or games (with the exception of half-time)including hiding food in warmup jackets and eating while on the sidelines
* Other infractions at coach’s discretion, which include disrespecting teammates or coaches.

**Level II: Two Demerits Each**

**The discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the North Paulding Cheer Program. Cheerleaders will not receive a warning prior to receiving demerits on Level II.**

* Inappropriate language, being disrespectful towards cheer coaches, teacher, administrator, or team members
* Unexcused absence to a game/practice/performance
* Leaving a game/sideline/practice/performance without permission of coach
* Walking out of practice out of anger or frustration without permission
* Refusing to work or pay attention to practice
* Unsportsmanlike conduct at a game or performance
* Use of cell phones without permission- coach can hold the phone if there is an emergency. All other phones will be placed in a secure location with the coach.
* Academic dishonesty
* Assignment to ISS (2 demerits per day)
* Other infractions at coach’s discretion that reflect poorly on the North Paulding Cheerleading Program.
* **Immediate removal from NPHS Cheer Program for the remainder of the school year.**
* Alcohol, drug use, smoking or vaping
* Deconstruction or vandalism of school property
* OSS- 10 points a day will be deducted from your scoresheet the following year.
* Expulsion-(10 days or more) will be an automatic 100 point deduction from your total tryout score.
* Stealing
* Intentionally Harming another cheerleader verbally or physically
* Total of 5 demerits **Per Team**

**Consequences:** For Level I and Level II demerits, consequences will be at the discretion of the coach based on number of demerits given and reasons for demerits. Consequences may include but not limited to: conditioning, being benched, conference with parents and coach to discuss a discipline plan, or removal from the squad. **10 points** per demerit will be deducted from your final score on your next tryout season.

* Seniors, if you receive more than 3 demerits, receive OSS or miss a game without prior approval from the coach, you will not letter for that season.

**In cases of extenuating circumstances, the coaches have the right to administer the appropriate consequences which can include suspend and/or dismissal from the cheerleading program.**

**Financial**

All financial obligations are handled by the Booster Club. All payments should be made to the North Paulding Megaphone Club. Members will be expected to participate in group fundraising activities in which all money earned will be contributed to the general cheer fund to help alleviate group costs (banquet, meals, gifts, etc.)

**Fundraising**

Each cheerleader will be expected to participate in fundraisers decided upon by the coaches, squads, and/or booster club. Fundraising is the responsibility of the cheerleader, not the parents. Please remember that our program would not exist without fundraising! All Competition Athletes are required to work the Rumble at the Den Competition. All sideline cheerleaders are required to work the kiddie camp in the summer an All-varsity football cheerleaders are required to work the middle school camp during the summer.

**Concerns/Problems:**

If you have a concern and/or problem concerning cheerleading, please follow the chain of command listed below:

 **1st Cheerleader to Coach**

 **2nd Parent to Coach**

 **3rd Parent/Head Coach**

**4th Parent/ Head Coach to Athletic Director**

 **5th Parent/Head Coach to Principal**

Individual concerns/problems should be handled or addressed outside of the cheer setting. Please send an email and the coach will respond within 48 hours. Please do not expect the coach to neglect the team during scheduled practice times. Please do not call the coach at home or on the cell phone out of school/practice hours. Only call during emergency situations. Please note: Coaching/cheerleader issues should not addressed with a booster club member. Booster clubs are created to support the squad and coaches; Coaches coach and boosters support. Boosters are not a part of the discipline process.

Each Coach will have office hours where you as a parent or athlete may contact them, please allow 48 hours for the coach to respond. In the past we have had issues with parents and athletes texting at inappropriate times. If you need to speak with a coach, you need to schedule a meeting time with them. Please do not interrupt teaching time, games or practices and expect a meeting at that time. Coaching and teaching times are valuable to the students and athletes. Please do not contact coaches during practice times unless it is an emergency. They are focused on the athletes during that time. Unless it is an emergency, it can wait.

It is our responsibility as coaches and mentors to our athletes to ensure that they are preparing to leave North Paulding as confident, independent, and successful young adults. We do expect them to learn responsibly while being a part of our program. We do hold them accountable for knowing the rules, schedules, and events that they will be participating in at all times. Parents may communicate with coaches via Remind 101. You may send a message to the coach and they will respond like a text message. As coaches we have GroupMe as a way of communication between us and them. If your athlete does not have their phone because of discipline at home, it is their responsibility to make sure to ask someone on their team to get information they may have missed. If this is an issue, you can also reach out to your coach to make them aware that they are without a phone for a period of time. We are here to support your athlete, but we also want to build responsibility with them.