



Waukesha Youth Football Cheerleader-Parent Handbook

WYF Cheer Contacts

Director for West Youth Cheer
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About WYF Cheerleading

WYF Cheer is a not-for-profit organization and was created in 1990 to fill a void in the Waukesha School District for elementary (5th grade only) and middle school aged student athletes wishing to learn and compete in the exciting sport of youth cheerleading. Our adult leaders and coaches are volunteers with children in the program, or who have graduated from the program as cheerleaders themselves.

WYF's funding of our cheer program comes from annual registration fees, and raffle ticket and fundraisers. Although WYF Cheer is the feeder program to Waukesha West High School we are not supported by school funds or property taxes.

WYF is a no-cut sport for 5th-8th grade student athletes and there are no try-outs to participate in WYF Cheer. WYF Cheer believes in offering a disciplined program to any athlete that wishes to learn the fundamentals of cheerleading and experience cheerleading in an emotionally and physically safe environment.

Our Goal and Mission Statement

WYF Cheer is a community-based, non-profit, volunteer-driven organization with the goal to instruct, promote and compete in the sport of cheerleading for the youth of the Waukesha School District. The goal of WYF Cheer is to offer student-athletes in grades 5-8 an athletic, no-cut sport which develops safe and healthy cheerleading skills for the purposes of cheering at WYF football games, competing in local competitions, participating in community events, and ultimately developing their character and athletic cheer skills. WYF Cheer wishes to provide all athletes the opportunity and option to grow the Waukesha West cheerleading squads as they reach high school age.

It is our mission to provide a physically and emotionally safe and disciplined cheerleading program where all participants involved show respect for one another. We strive to teach our athletes the value of commitment, hard work, integrity, leadership, self-confidence, a positive attitude, and a love for the sport of cheerleading.

Cheerleading Philosophy

Cheerleading with WYF Cheer is a serious endeavor and an athlete must have the qualities necessary to be a member of this demanding activity. Athletes work together for a total of approximately six months.

Practices are twice per week, plus games, competitions, WYF Youth Night at West High School, fundraisers, and optional community events. Some athletes have difficulty juggling this schedule, academics, and pressure of competition. Individuals must be mature for their age and focused. Some athletes have difficulty being only one part of a whole. There are no “stars” in WYF Cheer.

It is important that each member of the team overcomes diversities in personality and character to support one another and work together. If any individual is unable to reach this goal, it may be necessary for the director to dismiss her to avoid damaging the cohesiveness and safety of the team.

Cheerleading is not a social club. It is a very demanding sport that requires discipline and focus. Each athlete must be able to maintain this level of commitment to ensure success and safety for themselves and the team.

If we are to maintain the high standards in place, we must ask that each athlete and parent who wishes to undertake the privilege and responsibility of being a WYF cheerleader make a serious commitment to our program. **We request that participants put cheerleading first before all other extracurricular activities (including other sports, scouts, clubs, drama, musicals, etc.),** but not before family, church and school functions (like band and choir concerts and/or religious classes). Family, church functions and school will and should always come before cheer.

Attendance and Communication

Cheerleading is a unique sport where if just one member of the squad/stunt group is missing it affects the whole team. Attendance is taken at each practice, game, and competition. When the need arises for you to contact a coach for whatever reason, it is the responsibility of the parent of the cheerleader to contact the coach or director of her respective squad.

If your cheerleader is going to be late to practice/game or miss a practice/game due to an illness, please text that coach/director.

If you know of an upcoming family function or vacations, scheduled doctor appointments or school-sponsored events, please refer to the table below for a notification timeframe:

| Reason for Absence | Timeframe to give the coach notice |
|--|---|
| Family Vacation | 2 weeks |
| Scheduled Doctors/Orthodontist/Dentist Appointment | 48 hours |
| School Events (choir & band concerts) | 48 hours |
| Church retreats, functions, VBS, etc... | 2 weeks |
| Girl Scout Camp | 2 weeks |
| Family Dinners (birthday or special occasion) | 48 hours |

*Failure to give notice according to this timetable will result in one unexcused absence.

- One unexcused absence is considered a warning.
- The second unexcused absence will result in the athlete sitting out one game in full uniform sitting next to their coach.
- The third unexcused absence could result in the athlete being dismissed from the squad/program.

*If you are injured, you will only be excused from practice or a game with a valid medical excuse from a doctor.

*If there is more than two “no calls/no shows” to any practice, game or competition a conversation between the cheerleader, parent(s), coach/director will take place to determine what the problem is and a solution to it. It is possible that the outcome could be dismissal from the WYF cheer program without a refund.

Team Practices, Football Games & Competitions

Team practices for Waukesha West WYF Cheer teams are held two times a week on Monday and Wednesday from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. @ Waukesha West High School.

Practices begin mid-July and run to the end of our competition season in December. (Date, time and location are TBD)

Cheering at the junior football games is an important part of our program and defines our competitive program as a recreational cheer program. WYF cheerleaders will cheer at all home football games and away games, which are held on Saturdays from early September through late October. A schedule with game locations and times will be given to parents via Team Snap when schedules are available later in the summer.

Athletes are expected to arrive “performance ready” 30 minutes prior to game start to warm-up and review their cheers. All athletes are expected to cheer for the entire football game. **All cheerleaders are expected to cheer at all the football games in order to compete later in the season.**

Competitions

Competitions are the cheerleader’s time to shine! They will compete against other teams in the same age and skill level categories. We will participate in three local competitions throughout the season. Competitions are held on Saturdays or Sundays.

We strongly encourage parents, family and friends to attend our competitions to help show support for all our teams. All athletes will be expected to be present and show support for all junior teams and for the North, South and West High School teams if they are competing as well. The support of our high school teams is important and promotes sportsmanship throughout the program.

All competitions and their awards ceremonies are mandatory for all team members. Missing a competition or awards ceremony without prior permission from your squad director or coach is considered an unexcused absence.

Financial Obligations

Recreational cheerleading, while not as costly as some youth activities, still requires some costs outside of the registration fee. WYF Cheer prides itself on maintaining an exceptional staff and program. Our fees are in line with other area youth cheerleading programs, in fact, we consider ourselves “the best deal in town” with the services our families receive in return for their registration fee. We do our best to keep costs down by not creating unnecessary expenses and shopping around for the most affordable options. Athletes and families can do their part to keep costs down by doing things like following policies for care instructions and proper use of uniforms, poms, and competition signs, and making installment payments on a timely basis so the program can take advantage of early bird discounts when registering for competitions.

Families must be financially prepared to plan for all of the following expenses. This includes but is not limited to annual registration fee, shoes, tumbling classes (optional), no-show white socks, and a sport bra. Refunds, discounts, or credits are not given for vacations, absences, or cancellations. If for whatever reason you should decide to leave WYF Cheer, there are no refunds for monies paid.

Cheer Uniforms

The complete uniform consists of the following pieces: shell, skirt, boy cut briefs (bundies), white body-liner top, white sports bra, white cheer shoes, no-show white socks, hair bow, and poms.

WYF will provide the shell, skirt, briefs, midriff top, bow and poms. The shell and skirt are to be returned at the end of the season. Parents are responsible for the purchase of cheer shoes, no-show white socks, and white sports bra.

Please take care of your uniform: pre-treat any stains that may occur. All pieces of the uniform should be washed in cold water with like colors with a mild detergent and line/air dried. Please do not place them in the dryer.

All uniforms are expected to be returned in like new condition with no stains, rips, tears, or obvious shrinkage or discoloration. Should a uniform be deemed unusable or is not returned within the guidelines listed above or is not returned at all you will be charged \$150.00 for the uniform.

All cheerleaders are expected to behave in an appropriate “lady-like” manner when in her cheer uniform. Cheerleaders are expected to come to all games in their complete uniform (shell, skirt, midriff, bundies, bow, white no-show socks, cheer shoes, poms). When the weather is either very warm or very cool, your coach/director will advise you as to what pieces you should or should not wear to that game.

Please do not wear your uniform anywhere outside of a game or competition. Please do not wear your uniform to school or as a Halloween costume.

WYF Cheer Program Rules

Code of Conduct

All athletes will demonstrate courtesy, responsibility, dependability, compassion, honesty, and good will at all times. At football games, competitions, parades, WYF Youth Nights, or any other situation where the athlete is representing WYF Cheer, the athlete will conduct herself accordingly. Good sportsmanship is essential and mandated. Positive attitudes, words, and actions are always expected.

Team members must fully understand their roles as WYF Cheerleaders. They are highly visible symbols of WYF Community, and therefore must always conduct themselves appropriately. They should do nothing which will bring embarrassment to WYF, and most importantly, to themselves and their families. This is true regardless of the circumstances. Being a part of the WYF family is an honor and a privilege.

Appropriate conduct is mandatory. This includes social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc.) and message boards!

No Bullying Policy

WYF Cheer is committed to providing a physically and emotionally safe environment for all athletes, coaches, and volunteers, free from harassment, intimidation or bullying. WYF Cheer reserves the ability to determine appropriate conduct for its athletes.

Sportsmanship and team unity are very important to our organization. Our mission is to provide a physically and emotionally safe environment where all participants show respect to one another. Any instance of suspected bullying will be dealt with immediately by the director or coach. When requested, parental involvement and support is required to promote a safe environment for all members of the squad.

Be courteous and considerate to all teams and athletes. This includes other cheerleading programs and other WYF teams. Please don't speak negatively about any person, decision, or result. This includes social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc) and message boards!

Any claims of bullying will be investigated, and during that time, the athlete(s) involved may be temporarily not permitted to participate in practices, games or competitions.

WYF Cheer reserves the right to immediately suspend or dismiss any athlete that engages in harassment, intimidation or bullying, but is not limited to, practices, football games, appearances, or competitions, regardless if the athlete is wearing her WYF Cheer uniform or not.

WYF Cheer reserves the right to immediately suspend or dismiss any athlete if her parent, parents, siblings, relatives, friends, or acquaintances should, for any reason, engage in harassment, intimidation or bullying a coach, director, staff member, another athlete, judges at competitions, referees at games, other teams, etc.

Athletes are hereby warned not to engage in sending notes, verbally or non-verbally, text, emails, post messages or updates on Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, wirelessly, etc. that can be construed as harassment, intimidation or bullying.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying means any intentional written, verbal, or physical act, when the intentional written, verbal, or physical act:

- Physically harms an athlete or potential athlete
- Damages an athlete's or potential athlete's property
- Has the effect of substantially interfering with an athlete's or potential athlete's participation in WYF
- Has the effect of being severe, persistent, or pervasive that it creates an intimidating or threatening environment for an athlete or potential athlete
- Has the effect of substantially disrupting the orderly operation of the organization.

Harassment, intimidation or bullying can take many forms including: slurs, rumors, jokes, innuendo's, demeaning comments, drawing cartoons, pranks, gestures, physical attacks, threats, or other written, oral or physical actions. This includes social media (Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, etc) and message boards!

"Intentional acts" refers to the individual's choice to engage in the act rather than the ultimate impact of the action(s).

Corrective discipline, suspension, dismissal, and/or referral to law enforcement will be used to change the behavior of the perpetrator and remediate the impact on the victim. This includes appropriate intervention(s), restoration of a positive climate, and support for victims and others impacted by the violation. False reports or retaliation for harassment, intimidation or bullying also constitutes violations of this policy.

Drugs and Alcohol – Zero Tolerance Policy

The health and safety of WYF athletes is extremely important. Squad members should never engage in activities that relate to drug or alcohol possession or use. Drugs and alcohol have no place in an athlete's life.

In accordance with the Code of Conduct, WYF Cheer maintains a **Zero Tolerance** policy regarding an athlete's drug and alcohol use in addition to smoking or vaping of any kind.

All WYF Cheer squad members must maintain absolute sobriety, and never engage in activities related to smoking, vaping, or drugs and/or alcohol which would tarnish the reputations of the athlete, their family, the squad, or the WYF organization.

Any athlete engaging in activities involving smoking, vaping, or drugs and/or alcohol, including the possession of or consumption of these, will face severe consequences. Matters will be taken to the WYF Board of Directors and reviewed. Consequences could include suspension and expulsion from the squad.

Discipline Procedures

WYF has a "three strikes" discipline policy. Situations that include, but are not limited to tardiness, dress code violations, disrespect, bullying and negative behavior face consequences.

In addition, all situations involving disrespect, bullying and negative behavior will face the following consequences:

1st offense: Counseling with the Director, coach, athlete, and parent.

2nd offense: Counseling with the Director, coach, athlete, and parent, and one full week suspension from all WYF activities (including competitions and events).

3rd offense: Dismissal from the program.

Violations that may result in immediate dismissal

- Undesirable behaviors, as determined by director, related to but not limited to harassment, intimidation, bullying, fighting, lying, stealing, the possession or use of drugs and/or alcohol, or other inappropriate actions committed by an athlete in the WYF Cheer program.
- An act committed by an athlete that would, in the opinion of director and co-directors, harm the reputation of the WYF Cheer program.
- School suspension.
- More than 3 absences during the season without a previously made arrangement with the Director.

The WYF Board of Directors reserves the right to make determinations on which transgressions are deemed severe enough for dismissal from the program.

There will be no refunds of any monies paid into the program at the time of dismissal

Safety Rules, Regulations & Expectations

While we strive to provide the safest possible environment for our athletes, injuries and/or illnesses may occur. WYF Cheer is not liable for any expenses or illnesses resulting from participation in our program. Every athlete must have their own insurance coverage to defray medical or other expenses.

Team members may not attempt gymnastics tumbling or stunts, or partner stunts without proper instructions, adequate facilities and equipment, sufficient supervision and spotters. Team members will not use equipment without coach supervision.

WYF Cheer coaches and athletes will follow the safety guidelines of the National Federation of High Schools and American Association of Cheer Coaches and Administrators at all times. All athletes and parents are encouraged to review the NFHS and AACCA rules.

Fingernails must be cut to fingertip length and should not be visible over the tip of the finger when holding up your hand and viewing it from the palm side. Hair styles for games will be determined by the coaches or captains at practice the week before the game. All longer hair should be pulled up and off the shoulders. Only flat hair clips are allowed. No bobby pins. Bows must be worn for all games and competitions.

You may not wear **jewelry** of any kind. This includes body jewelry, rings, watches, bracelets (wrist and ankle of any kind of material), earrings, necklaces, hard plastic headbands or “athletic type” headbands smaller than an inch in width.

Please come to all practices, games, and performances well hydrated and always eat a small snack prior to practice (preferably one that is protein based). Please bring a water bottle (or two) to all practices and always eat and rest properly before all practices, competitions, and games.

Team Practice, Football Games & Competition Attendance Policy

Summer Attendance Policy: End of July through End of August

All team practices are important and must be attended by all team members. During this time the only absences that are excused are absences due to:

- Family events and vacations
- Illness to the team member and/or immediate family members which require travel and attention.

Excessive summer absences could result in a team member being removed from a stunt group for safety reasons. The team member will still have an active role in their competition routine, but it is possible they may not be part of stunting.

Competition Season Attendance Policy: September thru December

All team practices, football games and competitions are mandatory and must be attended by all team members. During this time the only absences that are excused are absences due to:

- Family vacations (please do not plan vacations on competition days)
- Illness to the team member and/or immediate family members which require travel and attention.
- Required school obligation which is for a grade (i.e., chorus/band/orchestra performances. NOT study/homework time or extracurricular school clubs/activities or intramurals).

No matter what the reason or when it occurs, for an absence to be considered excused, all athletes must inform the Head Coach or Director according to the timetable at the beginning of the handbook. The only exception would be an emergency, but documentation may be required to verify the situation.

Unexcused absences are given two warnings throughout the year. This DOES NOT mean that each athlete is entitled to two “free absences”. All absences affect the team in a negative way and decrease the chance for success for that team. A third unexcused absence, or excessive excused absences, may result in an athlete being moved out of his or her spot in their routine, removal from a stunt group, removal from a competition or performance, or dismissal from the program.

Excused and/or unexcused absences that occur within the final two weeks prior to a performance and/or competition may result in an athlete being moved out of his or her spot in the routine or in the withdrawal of the respective team member from their team’s performance and/or competition.

Absences – both excused and unexcused – are counted on a per practice basis. For example, if your family goes on a one-week vacation departing Monday and returning on Sunday, and your athlete misses two practices (i.e. Monday and Wednesday), that counts as TWO absences.

Safety is the cornerstone of the WYF program, and all athletes in stunt groups are expected to have perfect attendance during the entire competition season. Any athlete assigned to a stunt group that is absent from practice can be removed from their stunt group at any time. Athletes not assigned to a stunt group will still have an important role in the competition routine and are still valued members of their team.

When participation is missed due to a prolonged illness or injury, the athlete must present a doctor’s release to the coach/director upon return. **Sitting out of practice due to an athlete’s failure to provide a doctor’s release is counted as an unexcused absence.**

WYF Cheer does not permit, nor condone, any group practice outside of the regular practice schedule. Any gathering by a team or members of a team outside of a WYF Cheer practice, game, competition or WYF Cheer appearance is considered a non-sanctioned WYF Cheer event. WYF will not be held liable for any injuries, damages or issues that arise during the non-sanctioned WYF event. All financial, insurance and supervisory responsibility is assumed by the adult who has organized the non-sanctioned event and WYF will not assume any responsibility whatsoever.

Sometimes, especially when approaching competitions, additional practices are scheduled. Extra practices may be scheduled but they are optional. Communication will be sent to team members and parents prior to any extra practice events. Please keep in mind that absences from additional practices will not be considered excused or unexcused, but the absence does negatively impact the rest of the team. Missing additional practices may result in an athlete being moved out of his or her spot in their routine, removal from a stunt group, removal from a competition or performance.

The implementation and enforcement of all attendance-related issues is entirely at the discretion of the WYF Cheer Director and the president of WYF.

Tardiness

Tardiness to practices, games or events shows a lack of respect and creates an inconvenience for the rest of the team. Athletes must be prepared to begin practice at the time practice is scheduled to start. All practices start promptly at 4:30pm. If you are “on time” you’re late.

Athletes will arrive “performance ready” at football games 30 minutes before the game begins. Athletes that arrive late to football games will sit out for one full quarter before joining their squad in the chant line.

Extremely early arrival and late departure to WYF Cheer practices also shows a lack of respect and creates an inconvenience for WYF Cheer coaching staff. Athletes should arrive no more than 10 minutes prior to practice start time and be picked up no more than 10 minutes after practice ends. WYF Cheer will provide supervision of athletes no more than 10 minutes before the official arrival time and no more than 10 minutes after the official event end time.

Dress Code for Practices and EVERY Time the WYF Uniform is Worn

Team members are to practice good personal hygiene. Athletes at this age should also consider anti-perspirant.

Jewelry creates an unsafe environment for stunting and tumbling. No jewelry of any kind is permitted in practice or performance. Hair must be pulled up and back off the face and shoulders using a pony elastic band. No bobby pins, feather hair extensions, hair wraps and glitter “bling string” are permitted at practice, football games, or competitions.

Approved cheer shoes must be worn at all practices, events, and competitions.

No candy or gum will be allowed during any practices, games, events or competitions.

Practice Attire & Expectations

Team members will always be dressed appropriately for practice. Appropriate practice attire consists of: “Soffe” type shorts or shorts with an elastic waistband only, t-shirts, long-sleeved t-shirts, sweatpants with elastic waistbands only (no drawstrings or pockets), crew-neck sweatshirts only (no hoodies, zippers, pockets or strings). Practice clothes should “fit” not being overly tight or too loose.

Please do not come to practice in spaghetti strap/cami-style tank tops, short-shorts, cargo-type pants/shorts, jeans, denim skirts or shorts, or a dress. No buttons, zippers, snaps, rhinestones on

clothing. No Nike PROs or spandex only type shorts. Nike PROs and bundies must always have a pair of short over them. No sandals or flip-flops and no jewelry of any kind.

If a cheerleader comes to practice without the proper practice, game, or competition attire they will not be able to participate until a parent can bring them. This will result in an unexcused absence if the appropriate attire is not met.

Make up: Make-up that follows the following criteria is permitted: natural mascara, light/natural lip gloss, and very light blush is acceptable, but not necessary. Sparkles, glitter, lipstick, eye liner and eye shadow are prohibited.

Nails must be trimmed short so that when looking at the palm of the cheerleader's hands, you do not see the nails. Acrylic/press on/" fake" nails are not permitted at any time. **During football season**, nail polish is permitted if it is "fresh", i.e., no chips, half on, half off, etc. During competition season, no polish is permitted whatsoever, only plain, natural non-polished nails.

Tattoos – whether permanent, henna or any other type of tattoo must be covered up and not visible to the casual observer.

At no time is just a sports bra and shorts/spandex to be worn. A t-shirt or tank top with 1-inch or wider straps must cover up the sports bra and shorts must cover "Nike Pros"/spandex at all times.

Ear-Piercing

Athletes are not permitted to wear earrings or any other type of piercings at practices, games, competitions, appearances, or any WYF Cheer event whatsoever. If an athlete has recently pierced her ears, she will need to remove her earrings before every practice, game and competition.

Refusal to remove earrings will be considered an unexcused absence, even if the team member stays to watch and observe the practice. Placing medical tape over the earrings is not an acceptable solution.

Games & Competition Attire & Expectations

Absolutely NO food or drinks other than water may be consumed while in uniform! Eat something prior to arriving to a game. If parents and their cheerleaders wish to stay for additional games, please plan to bring extra clothing for the cheerleader to change into after their scheduled game.

Games are played outdoors. Fall weather is unpredictable. Be prepared!

When participating in an outdoor WYF Cheer event, athletes are permitted to wear black leggings, tights, yoga pants or sweatpants underneath their skirt to stay warm. Remember the no-strings or pockets rule!

Athletes are also allowed to wear hats, jackets/coats, mittens/gloves and scarves in very cold or inclement weather. The preferable color for these items is black (for the pants) and your school color (Royal Blue).

When in uniform, be sure not to be placed into inappropriate situations that could reflect badly upon the program, yourself, and your family. WYF Cheer reserves the right to prohibit an athlete from

participating at practice, or in a game, competition, or any other WYF Cheer event if she is in violation of the Dress Code Policy.

Communication with Directors, Coaches or Other Concerns

Any coaching concerns and/or complaints that you may have should be directed to the director of the appropriate squad. If the issue is not resolved, then please contact Steve Fleischmann, President of WYF, at GBWINS@aol.com

Please do not confront the coaches during a practice in person.

Under no circumstances should a parent or cheerleader use e-mail addresses or social media to vent, belittle or demean the WYF program, any director or coaching staff, any cheerleading program participant or their family, or any potential program participant or their family. Also, e-mail addresses should not be used by parents or cheerleaders for personal use.

WYF Cheer Contacts

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**WYF staff is not responsible for any lost or stolen items at practice, games or competitions.

**Some additional costs may be incurred during the season.