

2025

ACA Optimist Club Cheerleading Program Rules, Policies and Guidelines



VP of Cheer:
Anglea Box
Acaocheer@gmail.com

THE CLUB SHALL BE KNOWN AS ARLINGTON COMMUNITY ATHLETICS OPTIMIST CLUB, AN AFFILIATE OF OPTIMIST INTERNATIONAL, HEREAFTER KNOWN AS THE ACA OPTIMIST CLUB OR ACAO.

Section I – SIGN-UPS AND PLACEMENTS

1. Number of Cheerleaders

- a. Teams or squads will consist of a maximum of:
 - i. 5U : 12 cheerleaders
 - ii. 7U : 14 cheerleaders
 - iii. 9U : 16 cheerleaders
 - iv. 11U : 18 cheerleaders

Any team that has 16 cheerleaders MUST have 3 approved sponsors.

The cheerleading squad is required to have a minimum of 2 sponsors. Any exceptions to the number of cheerleaders on a squad or number of sponsors must be approved by the ACAO Board of Directors. **Exceptions to be approved by the ACAO Board.**

2. Squad Registration

- a. Cheerleading registration is done by a pre-planned sign up date, set by the ACAO Board.
- b. The **non-refundable** registration fee of \$75.00 is due at the time of registration. This fee will include a t-shirt for pink out.
- c. Registration and payment must be completed online by parent or legal guardian.

3. Squad Placement

- a. A cheerleader will cheer for the team that coincides with his/her “U”/age group for the cheer season they are registering for.
- b. Squads are not finalized until ACAO closes the squad roster. The squad's name and colors will NOT be finalized until the ACAO football teams are finalized. In the case of a football team that does not form, the ACAO will work with the participants registering for that squad's name and place the cheerleaders on the nearest squad with availability.
- c. The ACAO tries to accommodate all requested squad placements from participants. Everyone should remember that all participants are placed on a squad that represents a football team, **not an individual school name**. Again, ACAO groups participants together by age.
- d. Participants are highly encouraged to sign up for the squad they cheered for the previous year.
- e. If a participant who cheered for one of the squads moves out of the city of Arlington and into an adjacent town, the participant can still register with the ACAO and request the same squad they cheered for in the previous year or a different squad. However, it is the parent's/guardian's responsibility to provide transportation and attend **ALL** practices, games, and events.
- f. If a participant voluntarily quits during the cheer season, they are required to sit out for the next cheer season before being allowed to return to ACAO to participate.

Section II – UNIFORMS

1. Uniforms

- a. The cost of the full uniform will not be more than \$300.00. This means that the sponsor can collect less than the maximum amount above to pay for the squad's uniforms, so long as the full uniform worn meets the requirements of the ACAO (see uniform requirements below). If uniforms will be re-used the individual only buys what is needed to complete the uniform with sponsor's approval that the uniform fits

properly. All uniform money is due at the first parent meeting. **All expedited fees incurred must be paid by the person needing the expedited order.**

- b. **Sponsors have all and final say in uniform pieces as mentioned above.**
- c. Monetary Donations can be accepted up to \$300 per girl. Any money left over from donations **will not** be allowed to be returned to the parent.
- d. A cheerleader's name can appear on any part of the uniform or anything else that is worn or carried onto the field as long as the child's parent/guardian has given written consent to the squad's sponsor. The squad **MUST** have 100% parent consent to include the name, or the name cannot appear anywhere on the full uniform. This is required for protection of the participants and for privacy reasons.
- e. Uniforms must be neat and clean
- f. All participants must be in full uniform to take the field. A participant may be benched until all uniform requirements are met. Full uniform is defined as shell, skirt, boy shorts style bloomers, socks, aerobic-type shoes, hair bow and proper undergarments. **Sponsors WILL check each week to ensure their participants are in full uniform.**

2. Accessories

- a. **NO** mums are allowed to be worn while cheering.
- b. **NO** "fake" nails, tips, artificial or acrylic nails may be worn.
- c. **NO** jewelry can be worn, except medical tags as it can be dangerous. This includes jewelry worn on any part of the body. If the child's ears were just pierced, then the child must cover their earlobes with either sport covers or Band-Aids.
- d. For the protection of the participant, **NO** hazardous hair or shoe ornaments (i.e. bells, beads, metal tips) can be worn.
- e. **NO** makeup or body glitter will be allowed while cheering except at Pink Out. Temporary spirit tattoos may be allowed at discretion of sponsors. No exceptions, unless the ACAO Board notifies the sponsors otherwise.

Section III – GAME PROCEDURES

- a. Cheerleaders are required to attend all the games and must attend the entire game.
- b. Cheerleaders should arrive at least 30 minutes prior to the scheduled game time to allow enough time to ensure that everyone has all pieces of their uniform, properly stretch out and get situated on the field.
- c. Participants are **NOT** allowed to eat food or drink anything other than **WATER** during the game.
- d. Cheerleaders must remain cheering during the game. They **ARE NOT** allowed to sit in the
- e. stands, sit with parents, or run around. They must always pay attention to the game.
- f. Cheerleaders are not allowed to leave the game area unless accompanied by their parent/guardian or sponsor. Cheerleaders and coaches should remember to bring water to the game or event. **NO** participant will be allowed to go to the concession stand during the game or at half time. Squads are expected to remain as a group during the game. f. Field monitors, sponsors and coaches are the **ONLY** parents/volunteers allowed on the field. **This is for insurance/liability reasons.**
- g. Cheerleaders should remain on the sidelines behind the referees, marking lines and yard markers. Cheering at the same time as the other squad is permitted if it is in a good sportsmanship-like manner.
- h. If a player or cheerleader is injured on either team or squad, immediately kneel until the injured party is removed from the field. Clapping and cheering after the injured gets up and leaves the field is highly encouraged to show good sportsmanship and encouragement to the injured
- i. Appropriate music is allowed during half time or time-outs.
- j. **NO** squad may have a mascot on the field at any time. A "mascot" is defined as anyone not registered with ACAO to cheer for the scheduled game. With the exception of an

entire squad that was invited to cheer with the scheduled team. For legal reasons, only participants in the ACAO program can cheer on the field at halftime.

Section IV – PRACTICE RULES

Practices are CLOSED to visitors.

1. Location

- a. Practices should be held on gym-type floors, grass, or mats.

2. When and How Long?

- a. **Sponsors will set a definite schedule of practice indicating time, date, and place for their squad.** Sponsors are required to notify all the parents/guardians, coaches, and all squad members of all meetings and practices.
- b. Except for competition practices, practice can be held for up to **2 hours a week.**
- c. Sponsors, Coaches and cheerleaders should arrive at practice on time.
- d. **NO** participant will be allowed to leave practice for any reason without the sponsor's permission and then only with proper supervision.
- e. Each participant/coach should bring their own water to practice. **No soft drinks**

3. Practice Attire

- a. Everyone should wear proper shoes to practice. **NO** sandals, **NO** unlaced tennis shoes, **NO** bare feet or flip flops, and **NO** boots.
- b. Everyone should wear proper clothing to practice including proper undergarments (bras and underwear). **NO** jeans, tight fitting pants, wind shorts, very baggy short/pants or short pants with large pockets. **NO** baggy or see-through shirts.
- c. No sports bras at practices without a shirt over them
- d. Always remember to dress for the weather. Layer your clothing in cold weather and bring a jacket or gloves.

4. Competition Practices a 30 days prior to competition, squads are allowed to increase practice hours. For 5U and 7U, squads may practice an additional 2 hours per week for a total of 4 hours. For 9U and 11U, squads may practice an additional 4 hours per week for a total of 6 hours.

- b Game day practices are allowed one month prior to competition

Section V – STUNTING AT GAMES AND PRACTICES.

GUIDELINES

- 5U and 7U: Thigh Stands or Shoulder Sits. **NO CRADLES**
- 9U: Prep level stunts or 2 legged full extensions. A front spot is required for full extensions. **NO BASKETOSSES, NO TWIST DOWN CRADLES**
- 11U: ANYTHING GOES! **NORULES**

Stunting is NEVER allowed on concrete or asphalt or during rain as it is dangerous.

Jackets are never to be worn while stunting.

Pay strict attention when performing stunts of any kind. Injury can occur if a participant is not giving their full attention to a stunt.

Section VI -ATTENDANCE AT GAMES AND PRACTICES

- a. **Limit of 2 pre-approved excused absences per season.**
- b. Excused absences are limited to illness, death in family, school function, religious holidays or academic required programs. Anything else must be pre-approved by sponsor only
- c. Leaving practice or a game early or arriving late is considered an absence.
- d. All participants are expected to participate fully in the activities of their squad. A participant may have to make difficult decisions regarding activities conflicting with the squad's practices and games, i.e., dance, sports, gymnastics. Cheerleading is a team sport and **NO REIMBURSEMENT** of any kind will be made if a child decides to quit or do another sport instead of cheerleading. **If a participant voluntarily quits during the middle of the season they will be required to sit out for the next season before being able to return to the ACAO program.**

Section VII – BEHAVIOR AND CONSEQUENCES

EXPECTED BEHAVIOR

1. Good sportsmanship conduct must always prevail. This includes games, practices, meetings, fundraising events, or ACAO events. Participants and coaches are required to be respectful and courteous to everyone including sponsors, coaches, parents, football teams, other squad members, and other ACAO squads. Do not criticize, condemn or complain. Sportsmanship is your most important attribute. Do your best to maintain a good attitude at practice and games whether your squad is winning or losing.
2. Be thoughtful of others by not gossiping, using foul language or obscene gestures, not showing negative facial expressions such as rolling your eyes or giving dirty looks. Disruptive and disrespectful behavior WILL NOT be tolerated, and a disciplinary form will be sent home with a signed copy turned into the ACAO VP of Cheer. The participant being disciplined may ultimately be removed from the squad by the ACAO Board of Directors.

CONSEQUENCES

1. Only ACAO Board members or sponsors can administer any and all disciplinary consequences related to any participants, parents, or coaches.
2. Behavioral - consequences for misconduct or rules broken:
 - a. 1st time: sit out 10 minutes practice / game and parents are notified.
 - b. 2nd time: sit out 20 minutes practice / game and parents are notified.
 - c. 3rd time: will sit out one half and will not perform during halftime of the next game; participants must remain on the bench with the team during that time.
3. Sponsors are required to notify the ACAO VP of Cheer if you experience continuous behavioral problems or the problem cannot be resolved.
4. Tardiness - consequences for late arrival or early departure:
 - a. 1st time: written warning sent to parent or guardian.
 - b. 2nd time: sit out one full quarter of the game and the parent or guardian is notified.
 - c. 3rd time: will count as an unexcused absence and should be reported to the 1st Vice President of the Club.
5. Three (3) unexcused absences from both practices and games will result in removal from the squad or not returning to the squad in the next year.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Any violations of the *ACAO Social Media and Conduct Policy* will be subject to disciplinary action. Coaches and Sponsors will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Coaches and Sponsors will strive for consistency in assigning punishment for extracurricular code of conduct violations but will also exercise sound professional

discretion. Violation of any of the below mentioned rules by a participant of the *ACAO Program* will be subject to disciplinary action. All 9U and 11U cheerleaders and parents will be required to sign a copy of the social media policy provided by the sponsor.

- ACA Optimist Club follows all AISD guidelines for bullying. Should something occur outside of cheerleading, caused by bullying, and the ACA Optimist Club is advised, **IN WRITING**, this will result in immediate termination and a result of not being placed back on the squad for the year following the incident which occurred.
- At all times, participants will refrain from posting, submitting, sending, or publishing any inappropriate, derogatory, sexually suggestive, sexually explicit, or any form of negative comments, photos, texts, etc, to **ANY** social media or any electronic, public, or private entity which includes, but is not limited to: **FaceBook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, YouNow, Kik, personal email accounts, personal web pages, personal or private chat room, personal texting/cellphone accounts, etc.** Sending any form of inappropriate photos, comments, etc, will not be tolerated regardless of who the intended recipients may be. Violations will result in suspension, benching, or removal.
- All participants are expected to attend with an open mind and positive attitude.
- All participants are expected to be loyal and show respect to their sponsors/coaches/and teammates. Each participant is expected to listen and follow directors without questioning the coach or sponsor.
- NO Gossiping, negative comments, foul language, obscene gestures, or bullying • Cell phones must be turned off during practice and games.

Section IX- Scholarships

- a. Any participant who has applied for ACAO scholarship/financial aid and is approved will receive an amount determined by the Scholarship Committee, which will be used toward the **uniform fee only**. Applicants who meet the specific qualifications, defined by the ACAO for scholarship/financial assistance and who are approved or denied by the ACAO will be notified via email with a copy of such notification to the sponsor.
 - i. Scholarship applications are due within 10 business days of registration
 - ii. Scholarships will be paid out on a first come, first served basis.

Optimist Members, Optimist Clubs, Optimist Districts, Optimist Youth Club Members and Optimist Youth Clubs are named insureds. Volunteers who are NOT Optimist Members are NOT named insureds.