



South Fayette Township Youth Cheerleading Association



STANDARDS OF PARTICIPATION

Each parent/guardian and cheerleader makes a commitment when you choosing to sign up for youth cheer. This commitment is the key to a positive team experience. As cheerleaders and parents/guardians, it is our responsibility to encourage this dedication by adhering to the rules set forth below.

APPEARANCE:

- **Cheerleaders are responsible for owning all pieces of the mandatory uniform requirements**
- **Vest, skirt, half-shirt, socks, green hair bow, pink hair bow, rain poncho, warm-up, briefs & headwarmer** are purchased through the association.
- **Briefs** are to be worn at ALL times.
- **Shoes** are purchased through the association **EVERY YEAR** and should only be worn with the cheerleading uniform to cheer events only until the season concludes. Be sure to wipe off cheer shoes regularly to keep neat and clean.
- **Gloves and Pom-Poms:** will be provided one time only by the association. If you need a replacement, you must purchase it through the association.
- **Hair** is to be pulled back away from the face at all times.
- **Jewelry:** small post earrings are the only permitted piece of jewelry.
- **Small S.F. temporary tattoos and gems** are permitted to be worn on the cheeks or arms.
- **Please keep all uniform pieces neat and clean.** Be sure to hang up the rain poncho after it has been used so that it can dry properly and fold it neatly when dry.
- **Cheer Practices:** Dress appropriately and have hair pulled back away from face.
- **During games,** the uniform combination will be worn as directed by each squad's coaching staff. All cheerleaders are to be uniformly attired.
- **During events such as Youth Night,** the uniform will be worn as directed by the SFTYCA Board of Directors.
- **All other uniform pieces not directed to be worn need to be kept in a tote bag and brought to all SFTYCA games & events.** Be prepared for weather changes!
- **Only approved uniform pieces can be worn during games and events, as listed above.** No substitutions and/or additions (such as socks, gloves, hats, scarves, etc.) are permitted.
- **During the month of October, we will have a "Pink Out".** The pink hair bow is required to be worn in place of the green hair bow required to be worn during the games in October.
- **On Fridays during football season,** the uniform can be worn to school at the discretion of the cheerleader.

CONDUCT:

- Show respect for others. It is OK if someone has a different opinion than yours.
- Be polite to everyone and use good manners.
- Treat everyone equally. Do not be rude to others.
- Always show good sportsmanship.
- Be respectful and helpful to other cheer squads.
- Be a “Good Sport”. Have fun cheering even if your team does not win.
- Listen to your coaches and follow their direction.
- **DO NOT practice mounts, stunts, tumbling, or flips without a Coach.**
- In the event that a football player gets injured, immediately stop cheering and be silent. Kneel down until the injured player has left the field. [If it is not possible to kneel (example: muddy field), cheerleaders should stand still instead.]

The following will **NOT** be tolerated:

- Not listening to a coach.
- Undesirable, inappropriate and/or vulgar language.
- Bullying.
- Pushing, kicking, pinching, or hitting others.
- Yelling remarks to the opposing team.
- Chewing gum.
- Eating while cheering.
- Leaving the cheering area.
- Use of electronic devices.
- Practicing mounts, stunts, tumbling, or flips without a coach.

FOOD AND BEVERAGES:

- Chewing Gum is prohibited during all cheerleading activities, including practices.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for bringing a clear drink in a plastic bottle with them to all practices and games.
- We kindly ask parents to feed your child BEFORE coming to an event, as cheerleaders will not be able to eat once games and practices begin.
- Cheerleaders are not permitted to eat concession stand food while with the squad.
- Cheerleaders are not permitted to leave a function to get something to eat.
 - ❖ Diagnosed medical conditions will be the only exception.



GAMES:

THE “FIFTH” QUARTER:

- Cheerleaders are required to cheer the entire game, including the “fifth” quarter, a.k.a. overtime.

GAME CANCELLATIONS:

- Come sunshine, rain, cold, snow – football games will be played. Please be mindful of this and come prepared. *If the football teams play, the cheer squads will cheer.*
- **In the event of extreme weather ONLY**, game cancellations will be left up to the discretion of your squad’s coaching staff. Please check your email before leaving for the game and/or contact your Coach Manager.

CHEERING SCRIMMAGES:

- Scrimmages are by definition “a practice game” and are meant to instruct and to be used as a learning tool. Therefore, we will **NOT** cheer pre-season scrimmages.

CHEERING PLAYOFF GAMES:

- Each squad is assigned one or more teams to cheer for throughout the regular season. We will do our best to have squads follow these teams into playoffs. However, please be mindful that this may not always work out. Cheerleaders will cover ALL PLAYOFF GAMES FIRST. Consolation games will ONLY be covered if we have squads available. **Hence, your squad may be assigned to cover a team during playoffs that you have not cheered for in the regular season.**

SHOWCASE:

Each year in August, every squad will participate in Showcase. The Showcase is the annual fundraiser for SFTYCA. It is a fun opportunity for the cheerleaders to perform their routines for one another and family/friends and it also serves as our first dress rehearsal before the games. Showcase is a MANDATORY event.

PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- Deliver your child on time for practices, games and events.
- Provide or arrange transportation to and from any cheerleading event.
- Send your cheerleader with a plastic water bottle filled with water only. Sugary drinks attract bees and can cause staining on uniforms.
- Prepare your cheerleader for various weather conditions: sunscreen, rain ponchos, gloves, etc.

-
- Check your cheerleader. Is she wearing the correct socks? Does she have all cheerleading uniform pieces and accessories packed in her tote bag? Is her hair out of her face? Is she wearing her briefs?
 - The hair bow is part of the uniform and has to be worn.
 - If you need to bring any item down to the sidelines, be sure to give it to a coach to give to your cheerleader.
 - Discuss with your cheerleader that they are not to leave the sidelines during a game or practice to visit with you or any other spectators.
 - During games, parents (and other spectators) should not stand down at the fence but remain in the bleachers. Extra people easily distract the girls and coaches.
 - Do not approach the coaches during a game unless absolutely necessary.
 - **SUPPORT THE COACH.** If a problem arises, please discuss it privately with the coach and never discuss the problem in the presence of a cheerleader; doing so undermines the respect due to the coaches and coach managers. **Please read the SFTYCA's By-Laws concerning complaints and/or issues.**
 - Cooperate with the coach at all practices. If your child and/or others are distracted by your presence, please consider taking a walk, sitting in your car for a while, etc.
 - Notify the coaching staff if you are unable to make a practice, game, or event.
 - Please remember that all coaches, coach managers, and board members are volunteers that give freely of their time for your child's enjoyment and enrichment.
 - Willingly volunteer your time. Volunteer duties will vary from year to year and will be communicated to you by the Board or Coaches. If you are unable to fulfill your commitment, please find a suitable replacement and notify the Board/Coaches as soon as possible. This is a "volunteer" organization and your help is always greatly appreciated.
 - **Stay informed by checking for emails weekly.** We will communicate all information as soon as schedules are made and commitments are confirmed.
 - Check out the SFTYCA website, <http://tshq.bluesombrero.com/sftyca>, frequently.
 - **Communicate with your coaches and the Board of Directors. Remember, we are all on the same team, working to make the season a success.**
-

IMPORTANT: Please review:

Registration for the 2024 season requires the following requirements and are acknowledged on the online registration form.

- ☐ I acknowledge that I have read and understood the "Standards of Participation" and it is my responsibility to abide by the standards set forth.
- ☐ The SFTYCA will charge a \$25.00 fee on all returned checks.
- ☐ It is the coach's discretion to determine a cheerleader's preparedness to participate in ANY routine or activity.

ATTENDANCE

Cheerleading is a unique TEAM sport. Each position is dependent upon one another. Every cheerleader has a role and if someone is missing, it places a hardship on the whole squad, can become a safety issue, and can take away other cheerleaders' ability to fully participate that day. Thus, attendance is essential to the squad.

Missing practices and games has a negative impact on both individual skill and squad development. For safety reasons, all squads are required to warm-up & practice as a team, as well as practice their half-time routines, prior to each game.

Cheer Camp is MANDATORY. Each cheerleader is an important and integral part of the squad. The objectives of camp are to teach and set half-time routines and to ensure that all safety issues are understood and executed properly. This cannot be done unless ALL cheerleaders are present. Therefore, all girls **MUST** attend.

- ☐ Cheer Camp is **MANDATORY**. Missing any part of Cheer Camp may result in the cheerleader being terminated from the program.
- ☐ MORE THAN TWO absences from practice sessions will be brought to the board for review (this includes the 45-minute practices before each game). More than 60 MINUTES of late or early exits from regular practice sessions will result in loss of paid banquet meal and end of year gift.
- ☐ A cheerleader may permanently lose her position(s) in ANY routine or activity due to absences/late arrivals.
- ☐ A cheerleader may leave TWO football games AFTER half-time is over and it WILL NOT count as an absence from a game, but will disqualify the cheerleader from perfect attendance. You must communicate this with your coaches ahead of time and sign out for that game with the Coach Manager. If a cheerleader leaves a game early again OR is not signed out, it will count as an absence.
- ☐ THREE absences from league football games will result in the loss of the paid meal and the end-of-year gift for the cheerleader at the banquet.
- ☐ FOUR absences from league football games will result in the cheerleader being terminated from the program.

REQUIRED MERCHANDISE

- ☐ All required/mandatory merchandise (vest, skirt, half-shirt, briefs, warm-up jacket and leggings, headwarmer, shoes, green hair bow, pink hair bow, & rain poncho) must be purchased through the SFTYCA at Uniform Fittings or Facebook Uniform Presale.



Commonly Asked Questions



Q: Why is there an Attendance Policy?

A: Cheer is a very unique team sport. If a squad member is missing, one (or more) stunt groups cannot practice and/or perform; thus a squad member's absence impacts her teammates' ability to participate for that day. Unlike football, basketball, baseball, soccer, etc., cheer squads do not have "extras" sitting on the bench to share a position and rotate playing time during the course of a game. Every cheerleader is an integral part of the squad and has an important role to fulfill.

Q: My daughter has a doctor's excuse. Does this still count as an absence?

A: Yes, an absence with a doctor's excuse does still count as an absence. An absence is an absence - there are not excused and unexcused absences. However, if you do have a doctor's excuse, please give it to your business manager at the time of return. If a cheerleader has a medical issue that will cause her to miss more practices and/or games than allowed for in our Attendance Policy, please bring this situation to the attention of BOTH the head coach and the SFTYCA President for review.

Q: Why can't my child be a cheerleader if she does not attend Cheer Camp?

A: All members of the squad have to be present to have their individual skills assessed, be placed, and learn the routine together at the same time - it's similar to putting all of the pieces of a jigsaw puzzle together. The camp instructors are stunt-certified. They safely teach the cheerleaders and coaches how to properly perform the stunts in a controlled environment. All girls must be present to form the best combination of stunt groups for each squad. Stunt group placement then in turn affects formation placement, which also then changes according to tumbling skills, and so forth and so on. Cheerleaders cannot learn their half-time routine (stunts, various formations, tumbling pass placements, spacing, etc.) without all the other members of the squad present. If someone is absent, she also takes away other girls' abilities to participate and learn at camp.

At the practices that follow Cheer Camp, the majority of the time is spent on the half-time routine. Thus, a cheerleader that is not in the half-time routine is then unable to participate in the majority of practice time and has to sit out. This creates a stressful situation for not only the cheerleader that has to sit out for the majority of all practices, but also for her fellow squad members and coaches. Thus, all cheerleaders must be able to attend Cheer Camp and fully participate in the program.

Advance notice was given, as the dates of the 2024 Mandatory Cheer Camp were made public via email, as well as posted on the SFTYCA website.



Q: Why do the squads have a pre-game practice session 45 minutes before kickoff?

A: As with any sport or physical activity, the cheerleaders need to warm up and receive instruction from their coaches. Also, since there are not weekday practices once games begin*, the squads have not practiced their routine(s) since the game the week prior. The girls need to practice the routines prior to game time for safety purposes as well as to account for/make any adjustments for any absences. Additionally, the cheerleaders and football players are normally called out onto the field approximately ten to fifteen minutes prior to the scheduled kickoff time to start the pre-game activities; thus pre-game practices are less than forty-five minutes.

*Please note that the SFTYCA does not have weekday practices that count towards the attendance policy past the month of August. This is done so that cheer practice does not conflict with year-round weekday activities that normally start after Labor Day (such as religious education, etc.).