



Ware Shoals High School

# Cheerleader Handbook

Kendall Davis  
Varsity Coach  
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## Purpose

The purpose of the cheerleaders is to support the curricular and extracurricular activities of Ware Shoals High School by promoting school spirit. Being a cheerleader is an honor and special privilege. Cheerleaders exist to promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, and wholesome and enthusiastic school spirit. Cheerleaders are first and foremost ambassadors of their school. Cheerleaders should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position in accordance with the Ware Shoals High School rules. Cheerleaders have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus and academic achievement better than that of their peers.

## Role

Athletes selected for the cheerleading squad are expected to make a **TOTAL COMMITMENT** to the team and to the sport. This involves two key areas: Character and Commitment.

### Character

As a cheerleader you represent not only yourself and your family, but also your team, your coach, your school, and your community. As a cheerleader, you are the most visible of all Ware Shoals students and athletes. We require that you represent your school well by demonstrating your respect for yourself and others at all times. In other words: do not be rude, discourteous and/or obnoxious, sit respectful in your uniform, bend over respectful in your uniform, wear a bra at all times. Be proud and confident, but not cocky and loud. Cheerleaders are expected to abide by rules of public displays of affection and to dress according to the dress code of Ware Shoals High School, setting an example for other students. They are expected to be courteous and respectful when speaking with fellow students, teachers, administrators, and coaches. Back-talking and disrespectful language is not permitted.

Cheerleaders demonstrate school and team spirit when their team wins and loses. It is a cheerleader's job to focus on the positive and lead fans in positive cheers for their team. Cheerleaders never participate or encourage cheering against referees. Cheerleaders speak positively about WSHS and **NEVER** complain about "having to go to a game." Cheerleaders do not hope for a loss in play-off games in order to shorten their season. Cheerleaders work to encourage other students to come out and support their teams. Cheerleaders are honored to be asked to participate in extra events by the teams they support, not inconvenienced because of a lack of their own personal recognition.

## Commitment

Being a cheerleader is not all privilege; it involves sacrifice. Commitment is demonstrated by an athlete's unselfishness and loyalty to her team and school. Throughout the seasons, there will be trying times as well as rewarding times; it is essential that cheerleaders maintain their loyalty to their team, coaches and school. An organization is only as strong as its weakest member and cannot grow and survive without the loyalty and commitment of all members. Each cheerleader MUST remember that no individual is more important than the team. Cheerleaders may find that they disagree with coaching decisions and policies, but they MUST support and respect the decisions made. Cheerleading is a selfless endeavor. Cheerleaders are expected to maintain a positive attitude and build school spirit on and off the field and court without anything in return other than the satisfaction of a job well done. Cheerleaders are expected to put it all out there for their team and school.

It is for this reason, that if a cheerleader quits throughout the year, she will not make the team the following year. It is not enough for a cheerleader to "show up." She must be prepared and appropriately engaged at all times. A cheerleader's responsibility includes being physically and mentally prepared. Cheerleaders must arrive on time, with the needed gear, dressed appropriately, with the right attitude, and prepared to be accountable. Cheerleaders are required to participate in numerous activities throughout the year. It is the cheerleader's responsibility to keep up with provided schedules; there will not be constant reminders. Cheerleaders are expected to be responsible for themselves and their behavior at all times.

## Academics

Ware Shoals High is a school with high expectations of its students. The cheerleading program at WSH will work to promote each cheerleader's success in the classroom as well as on the sidelines. Athletics is NOT an excuse for failing grades. A true athlete is well disciplined and realizes that the sacrifices required to become a member of team does NOT include academics. Cheerleaders will not be discipline problems in or out of season; they will be focused and on-task in class. The following guidelines for class should apply to all members of the cheerleading team:

- Sit toward the front row.
- Bring all materials to class daily.
- Be respectful.
- Make each teacher feel his/her class is your most important.
- Set a positive example for other students by your words and actions.

## Cheerleading Expectations

- Arrive on time to all cheerleading events (practices, games, fundraisers) “on time” meaning 10 minutes early.
- Have mats rolled out and begin stretching at the designated start time.
- Be fully dressed out and on the mats by the time practice starts.
- Show up in the right attire.
- Participate fully every day.
- Maintain positive, respectful attitudes towards all individuals present at practice.
- Exemplify good sportsmanship and encouragement towards coaches and teammates.
- Set high standards and expectations for yourself and your teammates.
- Represent the program positively on and off campus, in and out of uniform.
- Abide by the rules set forth by the contract that was signed before tryouts.

## Dress Expectations

(Practices, games, assemblies, events)

- Outfit set by head coach and posted on GroupMe.
- Head-to-toe outfit (includes shoes, socks, shorts, shirt, and hair).
- Practice attire will consist of a shirt, sports bra, shorts, ankle socks, cheer shoes.
- Cheer shoes should be worn at EVERY practice.
- Hair pulled up and out of your face is mandatory at EVERY practice.
- Body free of jewelry- earrings, necklaces, bracelets, belly rings, anklets, etc. are all unacceptable for EVERY practice.
- No fake (or long) nails will be allowed while cheering or at practices.
- No gum should be chewed at any practice, assembly, or game.
- Cheerleaders will wear appropriate spirit wear to school on game days.

## Attendance Policy

The quality of the squad’s appearance and success depends upon **unified practices, commitment, and dedication**. Cheerleaders are allowed a total of **4 absences**, beginning in August. This includes “excused” and “unexcused” absences. An excused absence is a sudden illness, family emergency, or a doctor’s appointment. Cheerleaders are expected to be present at practices, games, and other cheerleading events. Cheerleaders are expected to notify the coach prior to an absence. After 4 absences, you will forfeit the privilege of being on our team and no refunds will be given. If it becomes necessary to suspend or remove a cheerleader, the parent or guardian will be notified. The coaches reserve the right to determine each case on an individual basis.

## **Injuries**

Cheerleading requires strenuous physical activity on the part of each cheerleader. It is the cheerleader's responsibility to immediately notify the coach in the case of an injury. If an injury occurs that keeps the cheerleader out of two or more practices, a note from the cheerleader's parent or doctor stating the reason will be required. If the injury restricts the cheerleader from three or more practices, a doctor's note will be required. This note should state the nature of the injury, the length of time of the restriction, the specific task the cheerleader cannot perform, and any special instructions.

## **Uniforms/Equipment**

The cheerleader is required to purchase her own uniform and other attire as required. The purchase must be paid in full by the due date, no exceptions. If a cheerleader loses her uniform or other attire, she will be required to pay for a replacement.

Some items and equipment are purchased by the cheerleading account. These include but not limited to poms, signs, and paint. Cheerleaders are responsible for returning these items in their original condition. Cheerleaders are expected to pay for replacement costs for any damaged item.

## **Behavior**

If there is a problem which affects the squad, the coach, the individual, or the school, it (depending on the incident) will first be handled as a "reprimand" from the coach, giving the cheerleader the chance to correct the action. If the does not bring an improvement or clear up the problem, the cheerleader will then be referred to Administration. If an unfavorable conduct becomes serious enough for the possible dismissal from the squad, the cheerleader and the parents/guardians will have full prior knowledge and an opportunity to discuss the matter with the coach.

Any athlete placed in ISS or OSS will face the following consequences:

First Offense: ISS – coach's discretion; OSS - suspension 1st contest after date served.

Second Offense: ISS - coach's and/or athletic director's discretion. OSS - suspension for the next two contests following the dates served. Third Offense: ISS – one game suspension after date served; OSS – the athlete will not be allowed to participate on any team the remainder of the school year.

## **GAMES**

All members should be dressed out and ready to go 45 minutes prior to the game, unless told otherwise. The team will meet for stretch-outs and review of the game plan. Cheerleaders need to be ready to cheer at the proper time- be on the sideline 2 minutes before the game begins. If

a cheerleader is late to the sideline, he/she may be benched for the first quarter of the game. This policy applies to the 2nd half of the game as well. Cheerleaders should not leave until the game is over. Parents, please contact a coach in case of an emergency.

The cheerleaders are expected to attend all away games that have been approved by the school. Cheerleaders will attend away games by a bus provided by the school. For all away games/events, all cheerleaders are to return home with the squad. If a parent needs to take his/her child home, the parent must have permission from the principal and coach 2 days in advance and the parent must sign his/her child out at the end of the game or event. The coach will have a sign out sheet if necessary.

**Game expectations:** No excessive talking or playing will be permitted while cheering at any game. Cheerleaders must be attentive to the game and leading the crowd in cheering on our team.

### **Miscellaneous Rules**

- Cheerleaders need to be ready to practice by the time practice starts.
- No excessive talking or playing will be permitted while cheering at any game.
- Cheerleaders will ride to and from away games in school-provided transportation.
- Cheerleaders will wear appropriate spirit wear to school on game days.
- All practices are considered closed practices unless otherwise stated by the coach.
- No jewelry of any kind will be allowed while cheering or at practice.
- Hair must be tied back the entire practice time as well as for games.
- Respect towards coaches/captains will be expected.
- No cellphones may be out at practice, games, or events.
- Cheerleaders must have all required documentation (physical, forms, etc.) on file and current.
- Cheerleaders will abide by the cheerleading handbook, squad rules, and coaching decisions.
- Cheerleaders must be present for at least one-half day to be eligible to practice or participate in a game. The cheerleader must have attended at least one-half of her scheduled classes. Exceptions can be made for medical reasons, school business, and death in the immediate family or as otherwise approved by the principal.

**Handbook Contract and Acknowledgement**

Cheerleader's Name: \_\_\_\_\_

I, \_\_\_\_\_ agree to all of the policies outlined in the Cheerleading Handbook. I understand that my violation of any policy contained within the handbook can result in my immediate dismissal from the squad or other penalties as deemed necessary by the coach or administration. If I am dismissed, I must return all of the items provided by Ware Shoals High School and I forgo the right to participate in any cheerleading activities. Furthermore, I understand that there will be no refunds for monies paid to Ware Shoals High School. I understand the commitment I am making. My parents support this handbook and its policies. Failure to pay cheerleading-related financial obligations to Ware Shoals High School in a timely manner will result in my dismissal from the squad.

Signatures:

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheerleader Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Date