

AHS Cheer Team

Team Rules & Expectations

Congratulations on being a part of the AHS Cheer Team! As a member of this team, you will be expected to fulfill certain obligations and uphold certain responsibilities. A cheerleader's job is to improve student and community morale and boost team spirit. You are expected to direct the fans in support of your team, regardless of the outcome of the game or season.

Team Structure:

Try-outs are held every Spring to determine placements for the team. We have two squads, Varsity and JV. Due to space constraints on the field and uniform availability, we do have limits for team capacity. Assignments to specific teams takes into consideration multiple factors: knowledge of cheers, ease of learning material, attitude, and effort to name a few. It is possible that some girls may be moved between Varsity and JV during the season. The coaching staff attempts to create the most cohesive team by monitoring each athlete's progress throughout the season. Determining the placement of athletes on each squad can be the most difficult process that the coaching staff goes through. Please understand that we will do our best to make the right choice each and every season.

Academic Responsibilities:

- Each cheerleader is required to maintain a positive academic standing. Grades will be monitored throughout the season. You are a student athlete which means you are a student *first* and an athlete second. Students will be asked to give regular updates to coaches. Should there be a failing overall grade in any subject, parents will be contacted by the coach and the cheerleader will be benched from practices and games until the grade is brought up.
- Attending ISS from any class will result in the student sitting out the following game.
- You must be in school the entire day of an event/game, as well as the day prior to be eligible to cheer. The only exceptions are medical appointments with a doctor's note and school related absences excused by the school. If the day following game day is a school day, the same expectations are in place.

Appearance:

- Uniform must be kept neat and clean. The cheerleader must replace any lost or damaged part of the uniform. Uniform includes: skirt, shell, body suit, briefs/spandex, socks, shoes, bow, poms and warm ups. Please label everything. Uniforms should be hand washed in cold water or on a delicate cycle in a machine and laid flat to dry or dry cleaned. **NEVER** place uniform piece into a dryer! When altering uniforms for size, care must be taken to prevent permanent stitching.
- Black sports bra (with NO TRIM) must be worn under the shell when uniforms are worn.
- Hair must be tied back so it is off the face. Coaches or captains will determine the hairstyle for each game.
- Fingernails should be clipped. Long, artificial nails will not be allowed, even for homecoming.
- NO CHEWING GUM! (Includes at practice or games.)
- NO JEWELRY! (Includes at practice or games.)
- Body suit/Spandex must be worn under uniform.
- Uniforms will be returned promptly, without damage, or the cheerleader will be billed for the amount to purchase a replacement.

Attendance:

- Attendance is very important, and athletes are expected to attend every practice possible, unless approved by a coach or physician. Absence for illness and death in family are the only excused absences. Cheerleading requires lots of conditioning and training. Inconsistent participation is the greatest hinderance to any athlete and team. Multiple unexcused absences may result in suspension from game performances.
- All cheerleading activities are mandatory. Cheerleaders are expected to arrive 5-10 minutes early for practice. Early is on time and on time is late. We want practice to start as scheduled. Timeliness to practice reflects an athlete's commitment to their workout, their goals, and their respect for their team and coaches. ****In case of illness or emergency, a parent must contact a coach by phone or email *prior to* practice or the event.****
- Injuries are part of sports in general, and unfortunately, they are a part of our sport as well. Cheerleading can be physically demanding which means extra attention should be placed on conditioning and warm-up. Athletes that do have an injury are absolutely encouraged to participate in as much of their regular workout as possible. An athlete with an injury can still train in areas that do not stress the injury and there are many things the athlete can do outside of full practice that can maintain an athlete's training level during recovery. With respects to the limits of the injury, athletes are expected to attend workouts to condition, stretch, and do whatever possible to make sure that they maintain their fitness.
- Work is NOT an excused absence. Please submit your cheer calendar to your place of work as soon as possible.
- Three unexcused absences may result in possible suspension from an upcoming performance or event or dismissal from the team. It will be up to coach discretion. Three unexcused tardies will result in one unexcused absence.
 - Unexcused absences include, but are not limited to: personal grooming appointments, optional outside events, and appointments that can be made for evenings and weekends.
- Coaches will be happy to work with special circumstances, so please contact a coach directly.
- In the event of suspension or injury, the cheerleader will still be required to attend practice and games in appropriate uniform and is expected to sit with the coach the entire time during games.

Additionally, fundraisers, locker signs and any other spirit event, especially the week of homecoming, are part of your responsibilities. Everyone will participate equally.

Conduct:

- Whether at home or away games, AHS cheerleaders must display proper conduct, respect for self, each other, the fans, opposing teams, etc. before, during and after the game. AHS cheerleaders are important representatives of the school and are visible to everyone!
- We expect top effort from every athlete at every practice and at every game. Our desire is to assist every athlete toward their personal and team goals every day. In that effort, and as a courtesy to the athletes that are training and performing at their best, we ask any athlete not feeling up to their potential to refrain from negatively influencing other athletes' workouts and performance. Outbursts such as crying, talking back to a coach, being rude to other athletes, or talking negatively to others is unacceptable and unnecessary. If a disruption occurs, we will ask the athlete to remove himself/herself from the practice/game area, collect himself/herself in the rest room or locker area, and then return with a renewed attitude. Even our greatest and most positive athletes have bad days, but they respect their coach and their teammates enough to "take it off the practice area/game field."
- Possessing/using alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs is strictly prohibited. DON'T DO IT! It will not be tolerated.

- Disrespect of any member of the coaching staff will not be tolerated and will result in possible dismissal from practice, game, or season at the discretion of the coaches and athletic director. Inappropriate behavior will not be tolerated!
- Please do not share your cheer gear with others outside of cheer. You represent the entire team when wearing cheer gear and we maintain high expectations of those wearing gear that represents our team.
- Cheerleaders should be leaders within the school and set a good example at all times. You are a role model to the younger students.
- Cheerleaders must abide by the standards set by Austin High School and the MN State High School League. Violations will have consequences.
- Remember that your own individual choices and words reflect how the community, parents, school administration, school faculty, and students view the team, not just the individual cheerleader. It is important that we all work towards a positive individual and team image!

Respect:

- **Respect Authority-** Challenging the authority of a coach or person in charge are grounds for dismissal from the team. The head coaches, along with the assistant coach(es) will make all team decisions.

Each team member must be aware that if a coach must speak with her or reprimand him/her for inappropriate behavior; including poor attitude, disrespect, non-compliance, etc.-he/she will receive a written strike.

After 3 written strikes, a cheerleader may be dismissed from the team.

Strikes will start over at the start of each season.

The coach will determine which action to take each time she determines that disciplinary action is necessary. We expect a highly disciplined team, and a lot is expected from each cheerleader.

All disciplinary action is at the coach's discretion.

- **Respect Teammates-**Any abusive or negative behavior (by a cheerleader or parent) toward a team member or coach, whether through social media or at an in-person event will be grounds for dismissal.
- **Respect Self-**Maintain a balanced diet to maintain physical ability. Get enough sleep! Develop time management skills to balance and prioritize your obligations with cheer, family, school and friends.

Social Media:

- While we don't require cheerleaders to have social media in any form, we do use a private Facebook page to communicate between Captains, Coaches, Cheerleaders and Parents. Please, no negative comments or posts on our Facebook page or you will be removed from the page for this!
- Be responsible! Remember that what you post is not only representing yourself but the team as a whole- including team member and their families. Absolutely no disrespecting your teammates, your coaches, or any member of other teams. This could result in discipline and possible removal from the team. Before you speak, "THINK."

THINK

T=Is it true?

H=Is it helpful?

I=Is it inspiring?

N=Is it necessary?

K=Is it kind?

Lettering:

Awards are earned by the cheerleader, not given by the coaches. You must be on the Varsity team, participating in practice daily, in order to earn a Varsity letter. You may have NO MSHSL violations! You must be on the Junior Varsity team, participating in practice daily, in order to earn numerals. You may have NO MSHSL violations!

Games:

- You are expected to attend all scheduled games. Home and away for Varsity; home only for JV and C squad. You must maintain a professional attitude at any event. Keep your place in formation, no talking during the game, listen/pay attention to the game, listen to captains and know your cheers.
- Game Nights are an opportunity for our athlete to showcase their skills in front of a crowd. Under no circumstances will an athlete that is unprepared to perform participate in a game night event. If their skills are not solid and the coaches do not believe it is in the athlete's or team's best interest to participate, your athlete will not complete. This is not a warning or punishment, rather a means to have our best and highest skill level ready for performance.
- Bleachers are for the audience and the field is for the athletes. We ask athletes, parents, friends and family to respect these boundaries before, during and after a game. At the conclusion of the game, at the discretion of the field officials and school officials, others may approach the field. Please save photo opportunities with athletes on the field until after the conclusion of the game. Athletes will remain with their team until the conclusion of the tunnel at the end of the game.
- The cheer team must be at the field **one hour before** the game to warm up any stunts, cheers and dances.
- You must be in full uniform with makeup and hair done.
- Visiting with friends, boyfriends, family, etc. is not allowed during games. PDA is not acceptable when in uniform or while representing Cheer.
- Use of cell phone is prohibited and use may result in loss of phone to coach.
- Captains are responsible for calling cheers and stunts. Please respect them and their decisions. If you have questions or concerns, please address them with a coach.
- Complete locker signs will be hung the night before a game or before school starts the morning of the game.

Away Games:

- Be at the meeting place at least 10 minutes before departure to load.
- You may dress in warm ups on the bus/van.
- Bringing healthy snacks is encouraged.
- A cheerleader is not allowed to drive him/herself to any away game. If special transportation arrangements are needed, they must be discussed and approved with the athletic director and coach 24 hours in advance.

Practice:

- A practice calendar will be handed out for the season. It is subject to change and coaches reserve the right to add additional practices/events for the benefit of the team.
- Bring a water bottle.
- Dress appropriately.
- NO CHEWING GUM!

- NO JEWELRY!
- Spandex must be worn under shorts at practice.
- A sports bra must be worn under practice clothes.
- No texting or cell phone use during practice!
- Follow directions.
- Have FUN!
- Talking should be kept to a minimum. Talking during stunts is NOT permitted!
- Please respect everyone, regardless of skill level. Give constructive criticism and positive feedback.
- Don't be afraid to try something new. This is how we get better!
- Maintain a healthy lifestyle to promote fitness and prevent injury. Stretching and flexibility are very important. Time spent at practice during warm up and cool down is to properly stretch and warm up your body before jumping and stunting. Stretching outside of practice on your own is equally beneficial.
- **A coach MUST be present to supervise during any stunting and tumbling activities!**

Parent Suggestions:

Parents are encouraged to keep in good communication with their child's coach. We will do our best to meet regularly and informally with parents to provide an opportunity to discuss the questions or concerns that inevitably arise during a season. We accept our responsibility first to be as open with our team planning and decisions as possible, and in return if there are issues, we ask that they be brought to the attention of the coaching staff. Quality communication is a shared commitment. If you have a concern, or "heard something" and wonder if you should be concerned, please see your child's coach. Our desire is to keep the AHS Cheerleading program a 100% positive atmosphere for parents and athletes.

Try your best to be completely honest about your child's athletic abilities, competitive attitude, sportsmanship, and actual skill level. As difficult as it may be, don't compare him/her to other cheerleaders. Often times, coaches will see things in practice that you do not see at home. This is a part of determining placement.

Try not to relive your athletic life through your child. Let your child make her own voyage of discovery in the world of athletics. Help to calm the water when things get rough, but let him/her set his/her own course. Then he/she will have his/her own sense of accomplishment when cheerleading comes to an end.

Find out what your son/daughter thinks about the sport. Don't assume that he/she wants the same things that you do, or that he/she feels like you do about cheerleading. Don't try to push him/her in the direction that will give you the most satisfaction.

Always remember that children tend to exaggerate both when praised and when criticized. Temper your reactions to the tales of woe or heroics. Take a look at the situation and try to develop a calm outlook on the everyday ups and downs.

A major component of the athlete/coach relationship is the athlete's ability to discuss any relevant information about fears/frustrations/illnesses/injuries, etc. with their coach directly. Please encourage your child to bring that information forward and set the foundation for a successful working relationship between athlete and coach. Too many times a parent brings it to the coach because the athlete is uncomfortable. Our staff will work to make sure that the reaction is appropriate and comfortable for your child.

Risk statement & Safety Reminder:

Cheer does involve risk. We not only cheer but we stunt too. Stunting involves every cheerleader. As such, it is important to maintain yourself physically and mentally. We practice stunting every day, so come to practice prepared. Safety is our #1 priority and that takes concentration and dedication. Stunting will only be practiced when a certified stunting coach is present. We take stunting seriously!

Expectations Summary:

Presentation: We are judged by our presentation on game day! Each day there are simple things you can do to improve yourself and therefore, your team's presentation on game day.

Ask yourself each day, "What can I do to make this practice positive and time well spent?"

Attendance: Attendance counts! Your team relies on you to be at practice for formation and stunting work. Please make every effort to schedule appointments outside of practice time.

Attitude: Leave poor attitudes at the door. Your mood is contagious! This includes smiles, confidence, posture and knowledge of cheers.

Memory: Know every cheer and have tight, strong and exact movements.

These are the expectations of ALL AHS cheerleaders. We want you to have an awesome season and love the sport of cheer!

STRIKE POLICY:

If the coach must speak with a cheerleader or reprimand him/her for attendance, inappropriate behavior, or language, including but not limited to disrespect, defiance, insubordination, poor attitude, etc. three times, then that cheerleader may be removed from the team.

The coach will provide the cheerleader with a written account of the strike, which must be signed and dated by the coach, the cheerleader, and a parent/guardian of the cheerleader.

Due to the severity of the infraction, immediate dismissal from the team may occur.

Questions regarding strikes should be taken immediately to the head coach.

Fundraising:

Fundraisers are important for our group and we need everyone's participation to make these successful! We appreciate your participation and support of our TEAM. Uniforms are a costly item to replace and having the funds available when replacement is needed is made possible by our yearly fundraising activities.

Banquet:

A banquet will be held at the end of the season to celebrate our success and hand out awards.

Coaches Statement:

Our commitment to you is to foster a safe, positive, and encouraging environment where everyone feels welcome. Our goal is to develop athletes into trustworthy individuals with respect towards others while training with perseverance and determination to improve their skills.

*While we welcome the opportunity to answer your questions, please speak with your child first, before contacting a Coach. Please note that Coaches will return calls, emails and messages as soon as they are able however due to other employment obligations a response may not be immediate. Thank you in advance for your understanding. If your

question is more generic and can be answered by the AHS Athletic Office, you may contact them directly at 507-460-1825. Cheer Team specific questions should be directed to an AHS Cheer Team Coach.

NOTE:

You must have your current physical on file and have registered and paid fees prior to the season start date. If any part is missing, you will **not** be allowed to practice.

Please read the Cheer Team Rules and Expectations, sign and return the acknowledgement page. Post the Expectations near a mirror, on your fridge, or somewhere visible so you will be reminded of how to conduct yourself.

Cheers to a GREAT season!

Coach Contact Information:

Jamie, Varsity Head Coach	jamie.norton@austin.k12.mn.us
Melissa, JV Head Coach	melissa.nangle@austin.k12.mn.us
Alayna, Varsity & JV Assistant Coach	alayna.moser@austin.k12.mn.us

-2021-

I have read the AHS Cheer Team Rules & Expectations. By signing this, I am committed to abiding by the rules and expectations as set forth and positively representing the AHS Cheer Team in the community. I understand the consequences of not abiding by the rules and expectations can include loss of cheering privileges including sitting out at practice, sitting out at a game, loss of bus privileges and up to, and including removal from the team.

Athlete Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Phone: _____

Parent Name: _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Contact Phone: _____

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