

Carmel Middle School Cheerleading Handbook

Welcome to CMS Cheerleading

Welcome to the Carmel Middle School Cheerleading program. Being a cheerleader is about much more than performance—it is about leadership, discipline, resilience, teamwork, and representing our school with pride.

As members of this program, athletes are expected to uphold high standards both on and off campus, in and out of uniform, and across all forms of communication, including social media. Participation on the squad is a privilege, and all athletes are expected to contribute positively to the culture, safety, and success of the team.

This handbook outlines the expectations, responsibilities, and policies that guide our program. Its purpose is to ensure clarity, fairness, safety, and accountability for all athletes and families.

Program Commitment

Cheerleading requires dedication and consistency. By accepting a position on the squad, athletes and families agree that school cheerleading commitments take priority over other extracurricular activities, appointments, and outside programs when conflicts arise.

A tentative season calendar will be shared prior to the start of the season. Athletes are responsible for knowing and attending all scheduled practices, games, and events.

Attendance Policy

Attendance is essential for team safety, preparation, and performance.

Expectations

- All practices, games, and team events are mandatory unless approved in advance.
- Athletes must arrive on time and remain for the full duration of the event.
- Tardiness or absences for any reason may result in reduced participation.
- Any absences should be communicated as soon as possible.

Excused Absences

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An absence may be considered excused when:

- Communication is provided before the event begins.
- Appropriate documentation is submitted when required.
- The reason falls under illness, family emergency, school-related obligation, or other approved circumstance.

Unexcused Absences

Absences without prior approval or valid documentation are considered unexcused.

Consequences may include:

1. Warning or athlete conference
2. Reduced participation in games or performances
3. Removal from specific routines or stunts
4. Parent meeting and probation
5. Suspension or dismissal from the squad

Repeated or severe violations may result in immediate escalation.

Athletes with two or more unexcused absences may be dismissed from the program.

Safety Standards

Athlete safety is the top priority of this program.

All stunts, tumbling, pyramids, tosses, and partner skills must comply with current NFHS and USA Cheer school cheerleading safety rules.

- Skills may only be performed under coach supervision.
- Athletes may not attempt skills outside approved progressions.
- Required spotters must be present at all times.
- Coaches have final authority to stop any unsafe activity.

Failure to follow safety rules may result in immediate removal from participation.

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Injury Protocol and Athletic Trainer

- All injuries must be reported to a coach immediately.
- Any athlete suspected of a concussion will be removed from participation immediately.
- The athletic trainer is available for evaluation and medical support as needed.
- Medical clearance is required before returning to activity when necessary.
- As athletes build strength and learn new skills, some soreness, fatigue, and minor bumps are expected and are not always considered injuries requiring athletic trainer evaluation.
- Athletes may not conceal injuries or symptoms.

Coaches reserve the right to limit participation if athlete safety is in question.

Practice Expectations

Athletes must arrive prepared and dressed appropriately.

Required practice items include:

- Practice uniform
- Cheer shoes
- White crew socks
- Hair secured back
- Poms
- Water bottle

If an athlete arrives without required items, participation may be limited.

Phones must remain stored away during practice.

Game Day Expectations

Athletes must arrive prepared, focused, and ready to represent CMS with pride and professionalism.

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Required game day items include:

- All required uniforms
- Body liners
- Briefs
- Cheer shoes
- Bows
- Poms
- White crew socks
- Hair secured back
- Water bottle

When not actively performing, athletes should remain attentive and engaged.

Phones must remain stored away during games.

Uniform and Appearance Standards

- Uniforms must be kept clean and in good condition.
- Uniforms may not be loaned, altered, or used for non-school purposes.
- Hair must be secured away from the face.
- Nails must be short and natural.
- No jewelry may be worn during practice, games, or performances.
- Permanent and newly pierced jewelry that cannot be removed may make an athlete ineligible to participate.

Cheer shoes should only be worn for cheer-related activities.

Academic and School Eligibility

Student comes before athlete.

- Athletes must maintain a minimum 2.0 GPA.
- Students must meet school attendance requirements for extracurricular participation.

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- Athletes must comply with all rules in the school student and athletic handbook.

Failure to meet academic or school expectations may affect eligibility.

Conduct Expectations

Athletes are expected to demonstrate:

- Respect
- Positive attitude
- Leadership
- Coachability
- Sportsmanship
- Teamwork
- Accountability
- Effective communication

Prohibited behaviors include:

- Bullying or harassment
- Foul language or inappropriate gestures
- Unsafe conduct
- Public displays of inappropriate behavior in uniform
- Alcohol or drug use
- Social media content that damages the reputation of the athlete, team, or school

Publicly available online behavior may be reviewed and may result in disciplinary action.

Parent Expectations

Parents and guardians are essential partners in program success.

Families are expected to:

- Support attendance and punctuality
- Communicate concerns respectfully and privately

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- Encourage athlete accountability
- Respect coaching decisions
- Avoid discussing team discipline or placements with other families

Transportation

Families are responsible for timely drop-off and pick-up.

For school-sponsored travel, all team members must follow school transportation procedures unless prior written approval is provided.

Weather and Schedule Changes

Schedule changes due to weather, facility needs, or emergencies will be communicated through official team communication channels as soon as possible.

Grievance Process

Questions or concerns should be addressed directly with coaching staff at an appropriate time outside of practice or games.

Open and respectful communication is encouraged to support a positive team environment.

Final Statement

Participation on the CMS Cheerleading Squad is a privilege, not a right. Failure to uphold these expectations may result in reduced participation, suspension, or dismissal from the program.

By signing below, athletes and families acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to follow the policies outlined in this handbook.

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Student Signature: _____ **Date:** _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ **Date:** _____