

Bethel Park High School

Cheerleading Handbook

2018-2019



Middle School Team

JV Team

Varsity Game Team

Varsity Competitive Spirit Team

Bethel Park Cheerleaders

Squad Responsibilities

Middle School Team

Responsibilities:

- Summer Camp with UCA
- Mandatory Two Week Camp (August)
- Cheering at Middle School and Jr. High Events (Football, Soccer, and Basketball)
- Scheduled Practices
- Community Day and Homecoming Parades
- Selling Programs at Varsity Football Games
- Cheerleading Banquet
- Wearing Game Day Attire to School
- Attending Team Activities
- Participating in the Special Olympics Bowling and Basketball Tournaments

JV Team

Responsibilities:

- Summer Camp with UCA
- Mandatory Two Week Camp (August)
- Cheering at JV Events (Football, Soccer, and Basketball)
- Scheduled Practices
- Community Day and Homecoming Parades
- Selling Programs at Varsity Football Games
- Cheerleading Banquet
- Wearing Game Day Attire to School
- Attending Team Activities
- Participating in the Special Olympics Bowling and Basketball Tournaments

Varsity Game Team

Responsibilities:

- Summer Camp with UCA
- Mandatory Two Week Camp (August)
- Cheering at High School Events (Football, Soccer, Boys Basketball, Girls Basketball, and Playoffs)
- Mentoring a BP Rec. Cheerleading Squad
- Scheduled Practices
- Community Day and Homecoming Parades
- Cheerleading Banquet
- Wearing Game Day Attire to School
- Attending Team Activities
- Participating in the Special Olympics Bowling and Basketball Tournaments

Varsity Competitive Spirit Team

Responsibilities:

- Summer Camp with UCA
- Mandatory Two Week Camp (August)
- Cheering at High School Events (Football and Boys Basketball)
- Mentoring a BP Rec. Cheerleading Squad
- Mandatory Tumbling/Conditioning Class
- Scheduled Practices
- Community Day and Homecoming Parades
- Cheerleading Banquet
- Wearing Game Day Attire to School
- Attending Team Activities
- Participating in the Special Olympics Bowling and Basketball Tournaments

Bethel Park Cheerleaders

Rules and Regulations

Cheerleaders are considered role models. I hope that you will embrace this role. People are watching everything you say and do. You must remember this and conduct yourself appropriately. Bethel Park cheerleaders are expected to set high standards for their school. To accomplish this, you must abide by the following expectations.

Game Team Tryouts

- The number of girls on each Game Team will be determined by a break in the scores at tryouts.
- There is no set number of spots on any of the teams.
- We are looking for girls that are motivated, driven and dedicated. Girls must be able to work together as a team and to accept constructive criticism.
- Tryouts will consist of two days of learning and practicing material and one day of actual tryouts.
- Tryouts will be judged by an unbiased panel of judges. The judges will be present to score and aid the coaching staff in the selection of the squads.
- More information on tryouts including sample score sheets, paperwork, and dates/times/locations of tryouts will be distributed in the Tryout Packet.

Varsity Competitive Spirit Tryouts

- All girls must decide at the time of tryouts whether they would like to be considered for a spot on the Varsity Spirit Team.
- All girls must re-tryout each year. No one is guaranteed a spot on the team regardless of grade or seniority.
- There is no set number of girls that will be taken. The number of girls selected for the team will be determined by the number of girls at the appropriate skill level.
- We are looking for girls that are motivated, driven and dedicated. Girls must be able to work together as a team and to accept constructive criticism.
- Tryouts will consist of open gyms, two days of learning and practicing material, and one day of actual tryouts.
- The judges will be present to score and aid the coaching staff in the selection of the Varsity Competitive Spirit Team.
- More information on tryouts including sample score sheets, paperwork, and dates/times/locations of tryouts will be distributed in the Tryout Packet.

Scheduling

- Other activities, appointments, and work must be scheduled around cheerleading. Parents are responsible for making arrangements for their daughter to be driven to and picked up from the scheduled events.
- The coaches will provide a calendar of scheduled practices, games, and events as soon as possible. The girls will receive a separate schedule for the Spring/Summer, Fall, and Winter Seasons.
- The schedules will also be posted on the website. You should check the website at least once a week for any schedule changes and updates.
- If a cheerleader wishes to participate in other activities, they will need to speak to the coach on an individual basis to make them aware of these situations. Bethel Park Cheerleading must remain the **first priority** to the cheerleader.

Attendance

- **ALL PRACTICES, GAMES, AND TEAM ACTIVITIES ARE MANDATORY!!** You need to arrive **ON TIME!!**
- If a cheerleader misses 1-3 days of the mandatory August camp, they will sit out one game. If they miss an entire week, they will sit out 2 games. If they miss more than a week, they may be removed from the squad. **NO EXCEPTIONS!!**
- All practices are called by the coach. A practice schedule will be set and distributed for each season; however, extra practices may be needed. If this occurs, the squad members will be notified by the coach in advance.
- **Continuous “I have to leave early” or “I will be a little late” will not be tolerated. Once you reach 2 hours of accumulated early dismissal/late arrival time, you will need to turn in 1 personal day excuse or you will be given 5 demerits.**
- If a cheerleader is found to have been untrue about an absence, then she is subject to disciplinary action and possible suspension and/or dismissal from the squad.
- If you are suspended from school or you have to sit out due to grades or demerits, you are NOT eligible to participate in anything throughout the duration of the suspension. You must still attend the event and be dressed appropriately. You will sit with the coach during the event. This is not a time to socialize.
- Each cheerleader will be required to submit their vacation schedule for the summer. In order for this to be excused, the cheerleader must submit their vacation to their coach ahead of time.
- The following are **absences** that are considered **excused**, as long as the coach is contacted by the **parent prior** to the event.
 - Sick from school, sent home by the nurse, family funerals, summer vacations before mandatory camp (not including the mandatory camps), school events required for a grade

Academic Expectations

Your first responsibility at school is your EDUCATION; therefore, academics are our main priority. Cheerleaders follow the same guidelines as other sports with respect to grades. Students must meet academic eligibility requirements as outlined in the Bethel Park Student Handbook.

- If a cheerleader is ineligible, she will still be required to attend ALL practices and games. Although she cannot participate, it is important for her to be there. At games, the cheerleader must wear her uniform and sit with the coach throughout the game.
- The coaches will also help the cheerleaders arrange tutoring sessions with their fellow teammates, if they are not able to find help themselves. This means that you may be asked to tutor another cheerleader in a subject area you are excelling at.

Safety and Injuries

Safety is extremely important. Guidelines should be followed at ALL TIMES.

- Warm-up and stretching must precede all practice sessions, pep-rallies, games, competitions, and other physical activities.
- We will follow the recommended safety guidelines published by AACCA.
- **No stunting, tumbling, jumping, and practicing without a coach present.**
- If a cheerleader is injured, she must submit a note from a doctor. It must be specific and detailed as to what the cheerleader can and cannot do. The note should also have the dates of restrictions. The cheerleader must also submit a doctor's note that specifies that the cheerleader is allowed to return before she can begin participating again.
- If the cheerleader is injured, she is still required to attend all events. She should be dressed appropriately and she will sit with the coach during the duration of the event. **The only exception is if the cheerleader has service agreement with the school to attend half days.** At that point, she will not be permitted to come to any event. Once the cheerleader returns to full days, a meeting will occur between the coach, athletic trainer, and cheerleader to determine whether she can return.

General Conduct and Attitude

You are a representative of your school and community. You are expected to be a good example for others to follow. Inappropriate conduct is a reflection on everyone who wears a uniform. Inappropriate conduct of any kind will NOT BE TOLERATED.

- All school and academic policies will be enforced.
- Any cheerleader who abuses the Bethel Park School District substance abuse policy or bullying policy will be subject to the appropriate school consequences, in addition to the guidelines addressed in the Student Handbook.
- When representing the school officially, cheerleaders are to be in full uniform, including all cold-weather gear.
- All school rules outlined in the Student Handbook apply at ALL cheerleading and school activities.

- Every cheerleader will treat coaches, captains, game officials, and other athletics staff with respect at all times. This attitude should also extend to members of this and other cheerleading squads.
- Members of the squad are expected to behave appropriately during games and appearances, refraining from booing, heckling, or other negative behavior toward officials or other teams.

Game Conduct

- Attendance at games is REQUIRED.
- You should arrive on time. If the cheerleader is more than 15 minutes late for an away game, the bus will leave without them and they will receive 5 demerits for an unexcused absence.
- Cheerleaders should be dressed in complete uniform, including appropriate ribbons and socks (white, low-cut socks).
- No boots are to be worn with their uniform.
- At away games while the girls are not cheering, they are only permitted to wear black leggings or black yoga pants, a BP Cheer jacket or sweatshirt, in addition to their uniform.
- Their hair should be in a high ponytail with their ribbon.
- No jewelry is to be worn.
- The girls may only wear clear nail polish and their nails should be the appropriate length.
- Cheerleaders may be asked to wear a particular outfit to school prior to a game.
- All cheerleaders will stand in their designated places at all sporting events.
- DO NOT socialize with players or crowd members during the game. This can be difficult during basketball season, but do your best. Remember you are there to cheer. You may take care of your personal business during halftime.
- Cheerleaders must be back at their designated places 2 minutes before the end of halftime.
- There will be no gum chewing, eating, or using your cell phone while cheering.
- No excessive talking or playing will be permitted while cheering at any game.
- Cheerleaders must be attentive to the game.
- Follow the captains and do not tell them what cheers you do or do not want to do.
- Perform only the stunts that have been perfected.
- During game suspensions, the squad member will sit in uniform with the coach for the entire game.
- If a cheerleader is not properly dressed, then she will not be eligible to cheer until she makes those corrections.

Uniforms

- All uniform pieces are property of the Bethel Park School District. At no time should any piece of your uniform be lent to anyone or worn at a non-cheerleading event.
- Leggings must be worn with the uniform when they are worn during school.
- At the end of the year, all uniform pieces must be returned. If a cheerleader fails to return her uniform on the scheduled date, then she will be turned in to the school for an obligation.

Cell Phones

- Cell phones must be **turned off** once you arrive to all practices, games, fundraisers, and events and remain off throughout the event.
- If you are caught using your cell phone, the coach has the right to confiscate your phone until the end of the event.
- If you need to use your phone for any reason, you **MUST** ask your coach first!
- Parents, if you need to reach your daughter in case of emergency during a practice or a game, please call the respective coach on her cell phone.

Transportation

- The cheerleader will ride with the squad to and from all events and activities.
- Rare exceptions will be made only if the proper procedures are followed.
 - The cheerleader and parent(s) must complete and hand in the BP Athletic Travel and Release Form prior to the girls leaving for the game. The form can be found on the Athletic Page on the High School's Website.
 - No forms will be accepted once we leave.

Bullying Policy

- During the season, a student shall not violate the Bethel Park School District Student Bullying/Harassment Policy. Upon confirmed violation of the Bullying/Harassment Policy, the student will be subject to disciplinary action and possible removal from the squad.

Substance Use Policy

- During the season, a student shall not, regardless of the quantity, use or consume, possess, buy/ sell or give away any beverage containing alcohol; and tobacco product; marijuana; steroids; or any controlled substance. Upon confirmed violation of the Bethel Park School District Substance Use Policy, the student will face disciplinary action from the school and cheerleading program.

Chain of Command

- If a problem arises, the coach of the cheerleader's specific team should be contacted first. If the problem is not resolved, the coach will contact the head coach to set up a meeting.
- If the situation involves school intervention, the head coach will contact all parties involved including the Athletic Director and/or the Principal if required.
- We ask that school officials should not be contacted regarding cheerleading matters without first discussing these issues with the coaches. This will ensure that the chain of command works properly.
- Due to our privacy policy, coaches will only discuss situations with the parent(s) and/or cheerleader(s) involved in the situation under question.

- **Knowledge of Material and Maintenance of Skill Level**

- All cheerleaders are expected to maintain a minimum of the skill level that they were capable of at tryouts. This means if you tried out with a back handspring, you must perform your back handspring when asked.
- All cheerleaders are expected to know all necessary material by the beginning of each season. The coach reserves the right to sit the cheerleader out of games and performances if she is not consistently meeting the minimum skill requirements or if she does not consistently know all necessary material.
- If you are absent from a practice for any reason, you are responsible for learning the material missed before the next practice.

Website

- Cheerleaders and parents are expected to check the website at least once a week for updates and information.
- Cheerleaders and parents are expected to keep the website log-in information confidential.

Coach's Discretion

- All BP Cheerleading rules will be interpreted and carried out by BP cheerleading coaches, under the guidance of the BP Athletic Director and High School Principal. Interpretation of these rules is at the strict discretion of the BP coaching staff.

Bethel Park Cheerleaders Varsity Competitive Team

Additional Rules and Regulations

The following information pertains to the Varsity Competitive Spirit members only. These rules and regulations are in addition to the rules and regulations of the program given above. The competition squad members are expected to abide by both sets.

Purpose and Goals of the Squad

- The purpose of the competition team is to provide the girls with the opportunity to expand upon their experience as a cheerleader. Since this squad is focused on competing, stunting, tumbling, and jumps will be a main priority.
- We will compete in one of the following divisions: Small Varsity (12 members), Medium Varsity (16 members) or Large Varsity (20 members). If circumstances throughout the season (injuries, girls quitting the competition squad or falling below the required skill level) we will consider changing which division we will be competing according to what we feel will best benefit the team.
- We will compete at 4-5 local competitions with the possibility of going to Nationals. We will also compete at the WPIAL Championships and the PIAA Championships (if we qualify).
- The coaches will determine which competitions we will compete at pending approval from the proper school officials.
- All competition practices will be closed practices unless specified otherwise. If you need to discuss something with the coach, please do it before or after practice.
- As stated above, the coaches reserve the right to decide what division the team will compete in, and this is subject to change throughout the season based on what is best for the team.
- If a member of the Varsity Competitive Spirit Team is injured, ill, etc. an alternate will fill in for that person. The coaches will determine if and when the original competing member will return to the routine and who will be removed from the routine at that time.
- The coach(es) reserve the right to choose the initial Varsity Competitive Spirit Team and make changes as they see fit. This includes holding tryouts or inviting additional girls to join the team at any point throughout the season if the need arises (injuries, girls quitting, girls falling below the required skill level, girls not reaching or maintain a certain skill level). This also includes removing girls from the squad if their skills are not consistently meeting the required level (stunting and/or tumbling).

Fundraising

- Parent/guardian participation in fundraisers is also needed. The competition squad will only be successful with the help of parents/guardians. Each squad member must have one

parent/guardian participate on one fundraising committee and one South Hills Showdown Competition committee.

- If our fundraising efforts throughout the season come up short of the amount that we need, each girl will be expected to pay the remaining balance out-of-pocket.
- If the cheerleader is removed from the Varsity Competitive Spirit Team due to rule violations, falling below the required skill level, or if she removes herself for personal reasons (including injury), the fundraising money that she has helped to raise to that point is the property of Bethel Park Varsity Competitive Spirit Team. Any money that the cheerleader owes for outstanding expenses must still be paid. The Bethel Park Varsity Competitive Spirit Team will not be responsible for reimbursing any money that may have been lost due to disciplinary action and/ or a family's decision (for any reason) to not continue with the squad.

Transportation

- For all local competitions, the cheerleader may be responsible for arranging her own transportation. Cheerleaders are not permitted to drive themselves to any competitions (unless their parent is in the car with them.)
- For each local competition, we will select a local meeting place to meet before we depart for the competition. All cheerleaders must meet at this location.
- The Bethel Park High School Cheerleaders, Coaches and the Bethel Park School District are not responsible for the cheerleaders while they are in transit to and from the competitions. Supervision will begin by the coaches once the cheerleaders arrive at the event, and will end at the conclusion of the event.

Bethel Park Cheerleaders

Demerit System

The following scale of demerits will apply to ALL cheerleaders.

A. PRACTICE CONSEQUENCE

Cheerleader must wear appropriate workout clothing when practice begins.	1 Demerit
No using your cell phone.	1 Demerit
No jewelry may be worn. This includes body piercing of any kind.	1 Demerit
No chewing gum.	1 Demerit
No cursing/arguing with anyone.	2 Demerits
Must have required items (forms, pom poms, etc.) at the beginning of practice.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader must be on time to all in/out of school practice.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will attend all in/out of school practices. The coach must clear any absence. The coach must also be contacted by the cheerleader's parent prior to the absence. <i>See the Attendance Section for more specific details.</i> Note: For safety reasons, missing practice may result in exclusion from certain aspects of a performance.	Excused: No penalty Unexcused: 5 Demerits

B. GAME CONSEQUENCE

Cheerleader must be in correct/complete uniform at school on game/pep-rally days. Only letter jackets/designated sweats/sweater may be worn with uniform or spirit attire.	3 Demerits
Cheerleader will be in correct/complete uniform at designated meeting time.	3 Demerits
Hair will be up and secure as per coach.	1 Demerit
No jewelry may be worn. This includes body piercing of any kind.	1 Demerit
No chewing gum.	1 Demerit
No cursing/arguing with anyone.	2 Demerit

No using cell phones.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will have required items upon arrival.	2 Demerits
Cheerleader will maintain proper sideline behavior at all times. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No excessive talking among cheerleaders or mascots. • No talking to people in the crowd. • No going up into the stands. • Pay attention to the game/pep-rally. • Stand in correct formation/stance. • Cheer/spirit, jump and tumble the entire game or pep-rally. • Only one person out of formation at a time for drinks. • No taunting the other team. 	2 Demerits
All cheerleaders will stay to clean up after each game/pep-rally and will be dismissed by the coach.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will arrive on time and at the designated meeting area and will remain for the duration of the game/pep-rally.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will be back on the field/court ready to cheer 2 minute before half-time ends.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will attend all in/out of school games, pep rallies, meetings, functions and activities. <u>The coach must clear any absence prior to the event.</u> The coach must be contacted by the cheerleader's parent prior to the absence. <i>See the Attendance Section for more specific details.</i>	5 Demerits
Cheerleader acting in an unsafe manner as determined by the coach.	First offense: principal/coach review with possible dismissal from the squad. Second offense: Automatic dismissal from the squad.

C. UNIFORM GUIDELINES CONSEQUENCE

Cheerleader will not wear uniform to a non-BP function. (The coach as an exception to this guideline may approve eating after a game.)	3 Demerits
Cheerleader will not lend out their uniform to someone who is not a cheerleader.	3 Demerits

D. GENERAL CONSEQUENCE

No visible tattoos or body piercing. Ears may be pierced, but earrings cannot be worn while in uniform or at practice.	Benched until no longer visible.
Cheerleader will not leave food, trash, or mess in the dressing room, practice area, halls, or any performance area.	1 Demerit
Cheerleader will follow (not necessarily agree with) the captain's instructions at all times during activities.	2 Demerits
Cheerleader will respect/respond to all coaches at all times. Rudeness/insubordination will not be tolerated.	5 Demerits and Benched
Cheerleader will respect all teacher/staff members at all times.	5 Demerits

- For every 5 demerits a cheerleader earns, she will have to participate in a conditioning day. This day will take place once a month. Failure to participate will result in 5 more demerits.

- If a cheerleader earns 15 demerits, she will be dismissed from the squad. Dismissal will occur when the coach notifies the parent/cheerleader in writing.

- Any coach and principal review of student's actions may result in dismissal from the squad.

- Failure to comply with these guidelines may at times require judgment calls to be made. These decisions will be left up to the individual coaches for each squad. Coaches reserve the right to upgrade any penalty (immediate benching, office referral) depending on the severity of the situation.

Bethel Park Cheerleaders
Community Service Program

The coaches are asking each cheerleader to participate in various community service activities throughout the year. We are not going to penalize the girls if they do not participate in this program, with the exception of any mandatory event. We want them to want to do good things for others. We are sure with the caliber of girls we have, they will all participate as much as possible. Any activities they do participate in will be recorded, so we can give them hours if they need it for NHS or another activity. We also may need parent volunteers for each activity, so we would appreciate parent support as well.

The girls are required to attend two Special Olympics Events. One will be a bowling tournament and the other will be a basketball tournament. Your FULL PARTICIPATION (no leaving early or coming late) in these events is required as a member of the Bethel Park Cheerleading Program.

Signature Form

I HAVE READ AND UNDERSTAND THE EXPECTATIONS FOR MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY FOR THE CHEERLEADING SQUAD AT BETHEL PARK HIGH SCHOOL. I AGREE TO FOLLOW AND SUPPORT THESE GUIDELINES. I UNDERSTAND THAT IF I CHOOSE NOT TO FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES I MAY BE REMOVED FROM MY POSITION AS A CONSEQUENCE OF MY ACTIONS. I ALSO UNDERSTAND THE DEMERIT SYSTEM SET IN PLACE. I AGREE TO ABIDE BY THE REGULATIONS SET FORTH BY THE COACHING STAFF.

CHEERLEADER SIGNATURE

DATE

PARENT/GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE