

# **Arbutus Athletic Association**



## **2023 Competitive Cheerleading Policies & Procedures Handbook**

## Practice Locations

The Arbutus Golden Eagles cheerleading program practices in varying locations. For the 2023 season cheerleading will start its practices on Monday July 24th and will continue until further notice at Arbutus Middle School (5525 Shelbourne Road, Baltimore, MD 21227) **OUTSIDE**. Practices are then moved inside—locations will be determined based on available spaces. Once the county notifies us where we can practice parents will be made aware of all changes.

## Attendance

- Attendance for all practices, games, and competitions for the 2023 season is MANDATORY and will be tracked for competitive cheerleaders. To provide our cheerleaders with a successful season we need everyone at all practices and games. Missing time not only inhibits the cheerleader's ability to succeed in the sport, but also inhibits the team's overall success.
- Please refrain from bringing your child to practice if they have a fever or are contagious or have been advised to quarantine. Injuries that require time off should be discussed on a case-by-case basis with the coach.
- **Competition Teams: will have a strict attendance policy, these cheerleaders may miss no more than (3) unexcused practices from 8/27/23 thru 12/10/23. Cheerleaders who miss more than (3) unexcused practices or give no notice to coaches maybe removed from the team or moved to a performance only team. This decision will be at the discretion of the coaching staff and cheer director. \*\*Excused: illness and or school related function\*\***

### Practices:

- Summer attendance is extremely important! We do understand that cheerleaders may take vacations during this time, but we do encourage everyone to be at all practices.
- Please advise coaches immediately upon making a competitive team of any planned vacations.
- Attendance will be taken beginning the first practice after school starts.
- The week prior to each competition, all practices are mandatory. Any cheerleader missing any practice during this week may be cut from that competition.

### Games:

- Participation in games is mandatory for all cheerleaders regardless of their competitive status.
- A "game" is defined as 4 quarters of a football game. \* **Exception TEAM FUTURES, who will cheer through halftime \***
- Cheerleaders must report at least 30 minutes prior to game time, unless otherwise stated by the coach. If a cheerleader arrives more than 15 minutes past arrival time, they will not be permitted to participate in half time but will still be expected to participate in sideline cheers.

### Competitions:

- Cheerleaders are expected to report to the designated location and time as determined by the coach.
- If a cheerleader will be late, the parent must notify the coach immediately. It is the parents understanding that a cheerleader may be taken out of the competition depending on the time of arrival.
- Cheerleaders who are a "no show" to the competition without notification will be dismissed from all further competitions and will not be eligible to participate in competitive cheer the following season.

## Attire

- It is expected that a cheerleader always has all required pieces of their uniform clean and ready throughout the season
- Cheerleaders not prepared for a practice, game, or competition will not be permitted to participate that day. No exceptions!
- It is the understanding of the parent that parts of the uniform are not supplied by the cheer program and must be purchased before the first game.

All Practice and Game clothing must be APPROPRIATE. Shorts must be of at least mid-thigh in length or must have bloomers/spanx under their shorts. Cheerleaders are not permitted to wear sports bras as tops. Cheerleaders not adhering to these rules will be asked to change their clothing or will be dismissed from their game or practice.

- Practice Attire REQUIRED for purchase by PARENT: BLACK tank tops/t-shirts, shorts or leggings and lace up tennis shoes. \*\*Flyers are required to wear cheer shoes to practice\*\*
- Uniform Attire REQUIRED for purchase by the PARENT: red bloomers (game day only), any white cheer shoe (practice/games), red warmups
- Provided by the program: game day uniform, competition uniform & shoes, bows

### Practice:

- Mandatory OUTDOOR Practice attire: BLACK tank tops/t-shirts, shorts or leggings and lace up tennis shoes.
- Hair should be pulled back away from the face.
- Hair beads, hair ties with hard balls, metal hair gems/clips
- No jewelry may be worn.
- Tennis shoes with laces must be worn to all practices, flyers should wear cheer shoes.
- Nails may not be longer than fingertip length per NFHS (National Federation High School)
- Cheerleaders must provide their own water.
- When weather becomes cooler, pants or other tight-fitting sweatshirts/jackets (no hoods) are permitted so long as it is safe to stunt/tumble in.

### Games

- Cheerleaders will begin the season wearing the sideline uniform (provided by Arbutus), cheer bow and white cheer shoes.

- Cheerleaders are permitted to wear warm-ups during cooler games. Cheerleaders can purchase the official “bling” warm-ups or red sweat suit; parents can also provide an all-red jacket/pants.
- Clear rain jackets are permitted and are available for purchase through the program.

## **Expectations**

### **Practice:**

- Practice schedules, including days of the week, times, and locations are established by the coach with the approval from the Cheer AD and will be provided to all parents prior to the start of the season.
- Cheerleaders are expected to be at practice on time.
- Parents are permitted to watch the outdoor practices only but are required to refrain from interrupting practice. Parents are not permitted to watch indoor practices per Rec and Park Council regulations.
- Parents understand that they should not interrupt the coach or cheerleader during practice time for any reason. Personal matters should be addressed before or after practice.
- Cheerleaders must use the restroom prior to practice. Bathroom breaks will be allowed during practice at the discretion of the coach.
- Cell phones should be always kept away during practice. If a parent needs to reach a cheerleader or vis versa the coach should be contacted.

### **Game Day:**

- Game schedules are determined by the CCYFCL, the Arbutus Athletic Association, and the Cheer AD. Schedules will be distributed as soon as it is available. The schedule may be subject to change. Schedules will be provided to parents in writing by email.
- Cheerleaders are required to travel to away games. Driving times can vary and may be greater than an hour away. Please plan your travel time accordingly.
- Cheerleaders are expected to be on time at the designated location as determined by the coach. Typically, report times will be thirty (30) mins prior to game time to allow for sufficient warm up time, half time preparation, bathroom breaks, etc.
- Cheerleaders who report 15 minutes or more past the report time will not be permitted to participate in halftime but will still be expected to sideline cheer.
- Cheerleaders must use the restroom prior to the game. Bathroom breaks will be allowed during the game at the discretion of the coach.

### **Coaches**

- First and foremost, the AGE Coaches shall be aware that they have tremendous influence on the development of the participant. As such, a coach should never place the value of winning above that of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- The coach shall treat each member of the team equally regardless of age, race, sex, or athletic ability.
- All coaches must go through an application and interview process before being selected by the Arbutus Athletic Association Board of Directors for a coaching staff position.
- It is the responsibility of the coach to be knowledgeable of all rules, guidelines, and safety regulations established by the Carroll County Youth Football and Cheer League (CCYFCL), the Arbutus Athletic Association, the National High School Cheerleading Federation (NFHS) and the US Finals rules.
- Coaches are required to sign the CCYFCL Coaches Code of Conduct, Baltimore County Coaches Code of Conduct, complete the Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Background Check and complete the Concussion Training Certification through the NFHS.
- Coaches are not permitted to cancel practice or games unless specific permission is given by the Cheer Athletic Director (AD). If practices or games are cancelled, it is the coaches' responsibility to notify all parents at least one (1) hour prior to report time by email, text, or phone call. It is also the coaches' responsibility to ensure acknowledgement from each parent has been received of said cancellation.
- Decisions on content of routine, placement of cheerleaders in the routine, etc. are at the sole discretion of the coach and will be based on the athlete's ability to safely execute the skill(s) needed. Concerns may be addressed to the coach.

### **Cheerleader**

- It is fully expected that each cheerleader read and understand the Cheerleader Code of Conduct and uphold those standards.
- The Cheerleader Code of Conduct can be found at the end of this handbook. Parents can request a duplicate copy at any time. This document is also available on the Arbutus Golden Eagles Website. ([www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com](http://www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com))

### **Parent**

- It is expected that each parent always upholds the values outlined in the Parent Code of Conduct, this includes the Arbutus Athletic Association Code of Conduct and the Parent Code of Conduct.
- Parents acknowledge that they accept full responsibility for their guests on the field, at practice, or at competitions, and understand that they are responsible for the conduct of guests.
- The Cheerleading Parent Code of Conduct is included in this overall Cheerleading Program Policies and Procedures Handbook. Parents can request a duplicate copy at any time. This document is also available on the Arbutus Golden Eagles Website ([www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com](http://www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com))

## **Volunteering**

- The Arbutus Football and Cheer Program is run solely by volunteers. This includes, but is not limited to coaching staff, concessions staff, judges, officials, etc.
- It is expected that all parents volunteer in some capacity during the season. Without parent volunteers, the responsibility falls on coaches, which in turn, takes time away from your kids.
- All volunteers must complete a Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Background Check. This can be found at ([www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com](http://www.arbutusgoldeneagles.com))

- We will be hosting a Volunteer Information Session for those parents interested in learning more about how you can help! More information will be provided later.
- Nails may not be longer than fingertip length per NFHS (National Federation High School)

## **Sportsmanship**

- Cheerleaders and parents are expected to represent the Arbutus Athletic Association to the highest extent as determined in the Arbutus Athletic Association and Baltimore County Recreation and Parks Parent Code of Conduct.
- All interactions with members of the Arbutus Golden Eagles and/or opposing team are to remain positive and will embody the highest level of sportsmanship.
- Regardless of the outcome of a game or competition, it is expected that all coaches, cheerleaders, and parents always maintain a positive composure. Concerns regarding the outcome of an event are to be addressed in private to the coach or to the Cheer AD or the Assistant Cheer AD, as appropriate.

## **Team Placement:**

New for the 2023 season, cheerleaders have 3 different cheerleading options: Futures Performance Cheer (ages 3/4/5), Performance Cheer (6-14) or Competitive Cheer (6-14)

### **FUTURES – Performance Cheer:**

- Any cheerleader ages 3-4-5 years old
- Practices will be: (2) 1.5hr practices a week with 1 game time on Saturday
- Will participate in the AGE Showcase in October
- Will participate in the CCFL league competition in November

### **Performance Cheer:**

- Any cheerleader ages 6 thru 14 years old
- NOT interested in competitive cheer
- Performance Practices will be: (2) 2hr practices a week with 1 game time on Saturday
- Will participate in the AGE Showcase in October
- Will participate in the CCFL league competition in November

### **Competitive Cheer**

- Any cheerleader ages 6-14 years old
- Practices will be: (3) 2hr practices a week and 1 game time on Saturday
- Will participate in the AGE Showcase in October
- 4 competitions: CCFL (11/5) – CDE Spirit of Fall (TBD) – CDE Christmas Classic, OC (12/2) – Final Comp (TBD)

Cheerleaders who are registered for competition cheer teams will be partaking in a 3-day evaluation clinic where they will learn 3 different level-based routines. Once those 3 days are completed teams will be created based off the cheerleaders we have. The only set teams for the 2023 season are the futures and performance teams. Those coaches have been determined at this time. As for any other competitive teams which will be created after evaluations coaches HAVE NOT been assigned. \*\* Team breakdown is subject to change based on coaching staff availability and number of enrolled cheerleaders. Final determination of team placement will be made at the end of the 3-day evaluation and parents will be notified of teams by email.

### **Game Day Teams:**

- **CHANGE FOR 2023**
- Cheerleaders will **NOT** be broken down into separate game day teams. They will stay as their performance or competitive team

## **Communication:**

- **No communication before 9am during the week and Sundays**, we all work and spend the morning getting our children and selves ready.
- **No communication before 8:00am on Saturdays UNLESS** your game time is early. In this case use the appropriate crossbar team chat or coaches contact.
- **No communication after 9:30pm** on any day of the week. You may send an email, if necessary, but responses are not guaranteed prior to the approved communication windows.
- **Issues Communication:** Please follow the **24hr** rule before addressing a coach. If you have an issue or concern, please wait 24 hours before reaching out to the coach to discuss the situation. This gives all parties an appropriate amount of time to address the situation as necessary. If there is an emergency or safety concern, please contact Laura immediately. As our coaches are working to ensure the safety of all participants, it is imperative that parents do not approach any coach during a game or practice. Please feel free to reach out to the AD via email to schedule a time to meet with the coach and AD to address any concerns after waiting the 24-hour waiting period.
- **WEATHER:** Weather based cancelations will not be made prior to 5:45pm unless it is warranted. Practice is necessary and we want to wait until the last min possible. If you are coming from farther away, we understand just let someone know you will be delayed due to the announcement time, we understand. **WE WILL NO LONGER ACKNOWLEDGE WEATHER QUESTIONS prior to 5:30pm.**

## **Arbutus Golden Eagles Cheerleader Code of Conduct**

The Arbutus Golden Eagles Cheer program has established a Cheerleader Code of Conduct that is specific to the Cheer program. The purpose of the code of conduct is to establish the expectations of a cheerleader in order to run a successful program. It is the goal of the Arbutus Golden Eagles Cheer Program to run a fulfilling, fun and beneficial program to all involved including cheerleaders, coaches, parents, and spectators. In order to do so, it is critical that all participants be in full understanding of the expectations. At any time, a duplicate copy of these guidelines can be requested by the parent/cheerleader from the coach, Cheer AD or Assistant Cheer AD. As a participant of the cheer program, the cheerleader and parent understand and agrees to the following:

1. I will always encourage my teammates and will always follow good sportsmanship practices. I will always keep a good attitude, and will show respect to my fellow teammates, coaches, volunteers, judges, etc.
2. I will do my best to understand the rules of the program and will make my best effort to follow them and listen to my coach.
3. I understand that sometimes, a coach will make a decision for the benefit of the team. This could mean that I am not placed in the stunt group I prefer to be in, the spot in formation I wish to be in, etc.
4. I understand that I must keep my uniform clean and well maintained and must have all required clothing for games and competitions in order to participate.
5. I understand that I must be prepared for all practices with appropriate clothing and a water bottle.
6. I understand that cell phones and other electronic devices will not be permitted during practice for any reason unless permission is given from the coach.
7. I understand that breaks during practices and games are given at the discretion of the coach.
8. While cheering at an athletic event, the cheerleader will not participate in long conversations, on the sideline, use cell phones, or any other disruptive behavior. The purpose of games is to cheer for the team.
9. Attendance at all practices and games is mandatory. Missing more than 3 practices may result in removal from a competitive team. My team cannot better ourselves without the participation of every member.
10. If a disagreement occurs, or a decision is made that I do not like, I will address the concern with my coach in private before or after practice or games. Gossiping, bullying, or other negative behavior is not permitted under any circumstance. If I participate in such activities, I could potentially lose my spot on the team.
11. Any cheerleader and or parent in violation of the any part of the Cheerleader Code of Conduct, Parent Code of Conduct or the Arbutus Disciplinary Policy is subject to disciplinary action up to and including removal from the program.

### **Parent:**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the parent/guardian of \_\_\_\_\_ have received, reviewed, and fully understand the Arbutus Golden Eagles Cheerleading Standard Operating Procedures Handbook, and the Parent Code of Conduct. I acknowledge that I am in full support of the rules established by the cheer program and will do my best to uphold the standards set forth. I also acknowledge that I have read and fully explained the Cheerleaders Code of Conduct to my cheerleader and will do my best to enforce these rules with my cheerleader.

Parent Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

### **Cheerleader:**

I have been given a copy of the Cheerleader Code of Conduct. I understand what my coach and parent expect of me during the cheerleading season and will do my best to follow the rules. I will do my part to ensure that I am a good team member and will always try my best.

Cheerleader Name and Team:

\_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_