2026-2027



Parent/Athlete Handbook

Teamwork *Family* *Commitment* *Leadership* *Sportsmanship* *Fun*



Welcome to the Team!

Welcome to the Panthers All Star Cheerleading Program. All Star cheerleading is a very demanding, expensive, and time-consuming commitment. It can also be extremely rewarding. Team members learn athleticism, trust, dedication, the importance of teamwork, and often build lasting friendships. More and more colleges are offering scholarships for cheerleaders, and All-Star cheerleading can be a fantastic way to prepare for college cheerleading. We want each member of the team to get the most possible out of her experience as a Panther. For that to happen, some standards and guidelines must be followed. The following pages will describe what is expected of all team members and parents. Once you have read this entire document, please sign the acknowledgement form and return it to the coaching staff. You will also be asked to fill out an emergency contact form as well as a liability release form. No one may practice or compete as member of the Panthers All Star Cheer program until these forms have been turned in.

Team

As a member of this competitive program, all cheerleaders are required to attend and be actively involved in all cheerleading activities related to this facility.

The coach has the final word on any decision that the affects the cheerleading program. This will be most evident in determining practice structure and training styles, but also includes routine construction, choreography, choice of music, uniforms, choice of competitions, and practice times.

Please be aware, that as a member of the Panthers, you have agreed to be a TEAM member. Your team comes before the needs of the individual. You are not a “flyer” or a “tumbler”, but rather a Panther team member. As a team member, the priority is the team. We are looking for the well-rounded athlete. We want your child to be able to have knowledge of all areas of competitive cheerleading. This will only happen if athletes feel useful in many areas and do not think of one spot as more important than another. Remember there is no “I” in team, or in Panthers.

Practices

Teams will begin practice in June, and continue through the completion of the final received bid competition (mid-May). **THERE IS NO SPRING BREAK!** All practices are mandatory! You will get out of practice what you put into it. The harder you work at practice, the better you, and the team, will be. If one member of a stunt group is absent, the entire group is unable to practice that day, so your absence affects not only your own progress and success, but that of your teammates.

Athletes should arrive at the gym 5-10 minutes prior to their scheduled practice time so that practice can begin promptly. Athletes are required to follow all health and safety protocols as determined by the Ohio and/or Lake County Department of Health. If you need to be taped due to an injury, you are responsible for providing your own tape and pre-wrap, and must arrive early enough to be taped BEFORE practice begins.

If you are going to be late, or leave early, you must speak with the coach personally. If you are more than 15 minutes late, we may call home to see if you are ok. Warms ups and stretches are an integral part of practice, as it prevents injury, and the stretching we do also increases flexibility needed to be a competitive cheerleader. Being late and missing, this part of practice will inhibit your progress and put you at greater risk of injury.

We do not have a drinking fountain, so athletes are encouraged to bring their own water bottles. No food is permitted in the gym. We have 2 restrooms available. Feminine hygiene products are available upon request for athletes who may need them.

Personal items should be left in the front room. Cell phones may be collected at the beginning of each practice and returned at the end of practice. If there is an emergency, and parents need to reach a cheerleader, please call a coach. Take your belongings home after each practice the gym is not your bedroom or your closet. Items left behind will be temporarily placed in the Lost and Found, and then donated if not retrieved. Snacks may be eaten in the front room, but all spills must be cleaned up.

TARDINESS IS NOT ACCEPTABLE. ALL TARDINESS WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION AS DETERMINED BY THE COACHES. YOUR EXPECTATION IS TO BE READY TO PRACTICE AT THE STATED TIME. ANY DISCIPLINE RESULTING IN EXTRA CONDITIONING WILL BE COMPLETED AFTER PRACTICE.

If you are going to miss a practice, you need to turn in written notice at least one week prior to the absence. In case of illness or a last-minute emergency, you must speak to a coach, not another team member. **Written notice of all absences due to family vacations should be turned in as soon as possible, absolutely no later than July 1st.**

Our summer practices will focus largely on skills and conditioning so that our athletes will be prepared to perform the high-level stunts, tumbling, and jumps that are a part of competitive cheerleading, and to reduce the potential for injury. We understand that many athletes are in other sports that may occasionally have games or meets that conflict with our practices. While we encourage that cross training, it is imperative that our cheerleaders be at our team practices as well. Stunt groups are being formed, and many of the drills and practice sequences may become part of the actual team routines.

By mid-July, we will be working on more specific routine skills, and it will be important that all cheerleaders practice with their team. The better attendance we have at practice the more prepared we will be. Anyone who is not at practice may find themselves not in the position they hoped for.

Anyone who is flying, or would like to fly, must attend flyer class and/or complete conditioning/stretching assignments each week.

Additional practices will be assigned for learning choreography. All team members must be at these practices.

As of September 1st, our competition season begins and a stricter attendance policy will be in place. Athletes will be excused for illness, funerals, or school activities for a grade. All other absences will be considered unexcused. Excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) may result in the athlete being benched for a competition, or dismissal from the team. Special situations will be left to the coaches' discretion. Excessive absences, even excused may result in positions or teams being changed.

In addition to regular team practices, National team members are required to attend 2 additional tumbling practices each week. Regional team members have 1 extra tumbling practice per week. If you do not attend tumbling practices, tumbling skills may be removed from routines. A half-hour private lesson, with a coach will count as one of your additional tumbling practices. Private lessons taken outside of PAC must be approved by the coach.

The safety of all team members is always the priority. Rules set by the coaches for conduct during practices are absolute and not up for discussion. There will be absolutely no talking or fooling around while stunts are in the air. Disrespect or insubordination will not be tolerated from any athlete. First offense will receive a warning. The second time, the athlete may be asked to leave the practice, and parents will be notified. Any further incidents will result in dismissal from the team.

There is no viewing area in our gym. Parents are encouraged to drop athletes off at the front of the gym and return for pick up at the end of practice in the rear of the gym. The coaches are paid professionals with certifications and expertise in the safety and All-Star Cheerleading, parent coaching from the "sidelines" is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Practice wear will be provided and should be worn to all practices. Coaches determine what shirts are to be worn for all practices. Hair is to be worn up and completely out of the face. Failure to comply will result in disciplinary action.

All competitive cheerleaders must demonstrate proficiency in all skills appropriate to their competitive level to be allowed to enter and perform specific skills in any competition.

In addition, the cheerleader must be in good health and have attended EVERY practice during the week prior to any competition, or they may not be permitted to compete. Special situations should be discussed well in advance of the competition with the coach.

Coaching technique and discipline are not subject to compromise with parents or cheerleaders.

The coaching staff has the final say in all competitive program matters.

You may not always like or get along with every member of your team, but TEAMWORK IS ESSENTIAL! All personal issues and/or disagreements must be set aside for the safety and success of the team.

Conditioning will be an important part of practice. Strength and stamina enable our athletes to safely perform the skills that are required in our sport. We encourage general physical conditioning and exercise at home for all our athletes.

All injuries, no matter how small, must be promptly reported to the coach. If a cheerleader sustains an injury that requires her to be limited in her abilities at practices or sit out for more than one practice, a doctor's note must be provided. An additional doctor's note must also be provided once the cheerleader can return to full activity.

Injured cheerleaders are still expected to attend practices and continue to do conditioning exercises that do not affect the injured area. This will help prepare them to return to the team quicker and more successfully.

All questions regarding your child's progress, discipline, etc. may be discussed with the coaching staff before or after, but not during, practices. Please make the coaches aware of any concerns or special situations that you may have.

Most of, much of this section has focused on the gym and competition. However, the coaching staff believes that the order of importance always needs to be family, education, and then Cheerleading. If you choose to be a member of our program, we assume that you have allowed appropriate time for family functions and that your study habits and schoolwork are exemplary.

We do not advocate the use of this statement as an excuse for coming late or missing practices, etc. As with all things in life, it is your responsibility to fulfill your commitments. If you are unable to make the commitment this program requires, we can place you in another program that better fits your needs.

Athlete use of any and all recreational substances, including but not limited to, alcohol, marijuana, tobacco (in any form), vaping or smoking of any kind is strictly prohibited, and grounds for dismissal from the program.

Termination of Enrollment

Rumor, innuendo, and just plain backstabbing tend to occur when there is a vacuum created by a lack of information – this is detrimental to the success of any program. Any letters sent anonymously will be disregarded, without being read. Negativity and inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated from anyone - athletes, coaches, or parents. This includes, but is not limited to, verbal confrontations, texting, emails, and social media posts. Any of the above could be cause for dismissal from the program.

Social media can a great platform for sharing information and spreading the word about our amazing kids. It can also be dangerous and harmful, when posts are inappropriate, mean, and negative. Remember that our athletes and families represent our program, every

post, especially those in a Panther shirt or from a competition reflects on this program. We expect our Panther Family to set a high standard of positivity! Athletes posting inappropriate content will be asked to delete the posts. If inappropriate posting continues, a meeting with parents will be scheduled, and athletes may be dismissed from the program.

The coaches and Panthers have professional social media accounts that the athletes can, and should, follow. They will not be permitted to follow personal accounts of the staff. This is for the protection of both the athletes and the adults. Athletes with social media should make sure that they are set to "Private" and only allow those whom they actually know to follow them.

If you need or want to know any information about the cheer program, or have concerns that you feel needed to be addressed, please see Coach Lisa. Financial questions should be directed to Wally.

Athletes are expected to train following the protocols of our gym and our coaches. Attending Open Gyms or Tumbling lessons/classes at another gym, without permission from a coach, may result in dismissal from the program.

Insubordination, refusal to follow rules set forth by the coaches, or disrespect will not be tolerated from anyone, and could be cause for dismissal from the program.

The coaching staff has the right to suspend or ask a cheerleader and/or parent to terminate enrollment due to continuous problems or absences, which impair the safety and/or progress of the other program participants.

Athlete use of any and all recreational substances, including but not limited to, alcohol, marijuana, tobacco (in any form), vaping or smoking of any kind is strictly prohibited, and grounds for dismissal from the program. Parent use of these substances that results in poor behavior or risk to program is grounds for dismissal from the program.

Competition Etiquette for Cheerleaders

You will conduct yourselves as ladies/gentlemen and athletes, being friendly and using sportsmanlike conduct always. This includes off-site venues and hotels. You represent not only yourselves, but also your coaches, parents, the program, and the gym.

You are to be at the competition site at the time designated by the coach. Once you arrive at the competition site and report to the coach, you must be ready with hair and uniforms as designated by the coaches, and with the team at the designated times for each competition.

Hair will be worn completely up in a high ponytail, (no bangs, side swoops, or braids) with the bow/cuff designated by the coaches. Hair may be braided up the back to help hold the ponytail in place.

Make-up will be worn for all competitions. A grey or brown smoky eye for will be worn for older teams, and a grey/silver eye shadow for younger athletes, with a pink lip for all teams. Links will be sent for appropriate make-up kits.

Team members are expected to watch and cheer for the other competitors from our program. Failure to do so may result in disciplinary action.

No one is to leave the team and/or competition site without permission from the coach. If the coach gives you permission to leave the group, you must be with a parent or in groups of 4 or more cheerleaders from the team. Anyone leaving the team area without permission, or appropriate supervision will be subject to disciplinary measures.

In the event of a mass evacuation from a competition, a meet-up site will be established to reunite members of the program.

Uniforms must be worn when accepting awards. You should look "competition ready" when on the floor for awards. This includes any injured athletes wishing to take the floor with their team.

When moving about the competition venue, cheerleaders should be in full uniform or warm-ups, not dressed in half uniform/half street clothes. Uniform tops and leggings is not an appropriate outfit. Warm-up jackets, and sweatpants/joggers are available through the our spirit wear order.

All Cheerleaders are expected to stay until the end of the awards ceremony, whether they are receiving an award or not. You will show good sportsmanship by cheering for all award recipients – especially your teammates!

It is important to remember that a score and/or placing for any routine is an evaluation of one single performance, and not an overall judgment of you individually or as a team. Each competition teaches you more about your abilities as a competitor and person, and is a necessary ingredient for success at higher levels of competition.

Regardless of the outcome of a warm-up, routine or competition, you must learn that crying and feeling sorry for yourself is not an appropriate response. Crying on the competition floor for ANY reason other than injury is a poor reflection of the program and is inexcusable. Crying due to missed tumbling, or stunts, or mistakes in the routine, is poor sportsmanship, and will not be tolerated.

At out-of-town competitions, where a hotel stay is required, cheerleaders must be supervised in the hotel. Remember that these are competitions, not vacations, and the athletes should be preparing to be at their best on the competition floor. Cheerleaders must be in their rooms by the curfew time that may be set by the coaches. Anyone behaving inappropriately or found wondering the hotel without supervision, or after curfew, will be subject to disciplinary measures.

Cheerleaders are required to obtain team uniforms, warm-ups, shoes, etc., necessary to being a member of this program, and are responsible for that cost.

UNDER NO CIRCUMSTANCES WILL ANY CELL PHONES, CAMERAS, TOYS OR STUFFED ANIMALS BE PERMITTED ON THE AWARDS FLOOR!

Competition Etiquette for Parents

Team Spirit is a big help… Wear the team colors or a team T-shirt! Make signs, sit with the group and have fun cheering on our team!! The more excited we get, the more excited the girls will get, and hopefully the judges too! Homemade spirt wear may not include any of our logos, team names, program names, or initials.

It is important to show proper respect to all Officials and Coaches at every competition. They are all there for one reason or another to support your child's interest in competitive cheerleading.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to contact any competition official during or after a competition. Doing so could cause the team to be penalized or even disqualified. If you have any questions regarding the competition or your child's scores, you should contact the coach.

Under no circumstances should you attempt to enter the warm-up / practice area. Doing so could cause the team to be penalized or even disqualified.

Please show proper respect for all competitors. You never know who is sitting near you. Good sportsmanship is not only important for athletes but for spectators as well.

Once an athlete arrives at the competition, they are to report to the coach. Athletes must be ready and with their team at the designated times given for each competition.

Once the cheerleaders have entered the warm-up area, they are not allowed to talk or have contact with their parents or other spectators. The warm-up room is for athletes and coaches only. During this time, they need to focus on their routine and performance. Family and friends will not be allowed in the warm-up area or on the competition floor. This policy also includes joining the team during awards ceremonies. During awards, spectators are to stay in their areas. They are not to be with the coaches, or their children. Failure to follow these restrictions could result in the team being penalized.

In case of an injury during warm-up or a performance, you must stay in the spectator area until the coach signals otherwise.

Some out of town competitions may require a hotel stay. All team members are not required to stay together at a hotel designated by the team, however we may make room blocks available for some competitions.

At these competitions, parents are responsible for the supervision of their children in the hotel. Remember that these are competitions, not vacations, and the athletes should be preparing to be at their best on the competition floor. You are responsible for making sure that your cheerleader is in your room by the curfew that may be set by the coaches, and that they are exhibiting appropriate behavior. Disruptive or inappropriate behavior from parents or excessive, public abuse of alcohol or other substances will not be tolerated, and may result in dismissal from the program. Remember, as Panther Parents, you too represent our program, and should be setting a positive example for our athletes.

It is important that you respect the coaches and their decisions. They cannot effectively coach your child if you are questioning and second-guessing them. The cheerleaders need to know that when it comes to cheerleading, the coaches are in charge, and their rules and decisions are final. The coaching staff puts in a lot of time and effort both in and outside the gym to provide the athletes with a safe, competitive, and fun program.

In addition to years of experience in cheerleading, they also take the time for additional training in safety and first aid. They are here for your child, and deserve your respect and support. The kids will follow your lead.

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, be supportive of your child, no matter what. The athletes put in a lot of time and hard work, and need to be sure that you will be there for them. They put themselves out in front of people to be judged, and need to know that whether it is their best, or worst, performance, and whether they place first, or last, that you are proud of them.

There are no make-ups, discounts, refunds, or prorated accounts due to absence or cancellation of any nature. The competitive program is already greatly discounted in comparison to other programs and is subsidized by the instructional programs of the gym.

Financial Obligations

This is a Year-Round Commitment

Your choice to join Panthers All Star Cheer is major decision and reflects a significant commitment. Fees are calculated and then dived into equal payments to arrive at a monthly amount, which are due the 1st of each month, regardless of attendance.

Athletes will be a required to pay a monthly fee that includes gym practice time, Music, Choreography, competition fees, practice wear, and other team related expenses.

Injured Athletes are expected to train. This point must be made very clear: Fees will not be prorated due to injury, vacations, camps, conflicts etc.

Teams are 8-11 month commitments with fees due each month throughout the year. Details for Full and Half Year teams are stated in those teams' Financial Agreements. There are no refunds given if you choose to stop participating. Payment must be made at time of withdraw or you may be subjected to additional fees.

All Inclusive Monthly Fee will not be adjusted for any reason (example-missed or canceled competitions or practices, short-term injuries or illness.

When Are Payments Due

Your fees are payable to PAC. And are due the 1st of each month.

All fees must be Current to compete. We are not a booster club.

Gym Rules/Policies

General

PAC is not responsible for any lost or stolen property. Please leave valuables at home. Cell phones and other personal items should be left at home. No outdoor shoes may be worn inside the gym area. Please remove street shoes and keep them in the team room. Gym equipment is only to be used under the supervision of a coach. Be respectful of the property of the gym and others. If it is not yours, do not touch it! No food or drink is permitted in the gym, only water bottles. All other food/drink must stay in the team room, or outside.

Financial Policies

Fees are due the 1st of each month, beginning in June and continuing through the end of the season. Payments received after the 15th will be charged a late fee. All athletes must have a credit card on file with PAC LLC to begin practicing. Forms are available in the front desk. Payments will not be billed to this card unless you are delinquent or sign the authorization form. Competitive program accounts must be current and paid in full to enable you to participate in the competition season. **Anyone who has not paid the previous month's fees by the 15th of the month will not be allowed to practice or compete until your account is current and your credit card will be charged.**

Travel Expenses

Travel is not included! It is the responsibility of the Athletes/ Family to make and pay for all travel arrangements.

End of Season Qualifying Events for 2026-27: Destin, FL

End of Season Events are additional and NOT included in your regular season fees. They are not optional. If you cannot attend, you are still responsible for your part of the team's fee.

Any or all our teams that receive a Qualifying Bid to an End of Season Event WILL attend that event. Events will be chosen at the discretion of the coaches.

Parent/Cheerleader Acknowledgment

By attending practices, and paying my deposit, I acknowledge that I have read and understand the Parent/Athlete handbook and signed the financial agreement. I agree to abide by the guidelines set forth. I also understand that payments are to be kept current or I will not be allowed to practice or compete. I understand that as a Panther, I am part of an organization, and will put the needs of the Panthers first. I am a team player, and my job is to do my individual best at whatever my team and coaches need for our success.

I also understand that the policies and procedures may change throughout the year. Modifications to this document may be made via letters or communications from the Panther organization.

Should I have any questions regarding any policies or procedures, I understand that I should refer to the Parent/Athlete handbook for the appropriate contact person.