

# Flagstaff High School Spiritline

## 2020-2021 Parent – Athlete Handbook

**\*\*Please note, for the 2020-2021 cheer season, we will have multiple rounds of tryouts, the first of which being virtual. In order to make the team, you must pass each round of tryouts. Athletes that make it through the final round of the tryout selection process will be extended an invitation to accept a placement on the team. Placement on the team is decided by the coaches. \*\***

We are very excited to provide you with an introduction to the **Flagstaff High School Cheer Program!** We welcome each of you and look forward to developing a partnership between you, your parents, and our coaches. We believe that all athletes should have a safe environment (mentally, physically, and emotionally) in which they have fun, build character, learn to practice sportsmanship, and develop skills and traits that help them become responsible citizens and live happy, healthy lives. We are dedicated to providing our athletes with the safest and most up-to date cheer technique available to increase their skills, build self-confidence, and become a team player!

### OUR PHILOSOPHY

Cheer is one of the most exciting and challenging sports available to kids today. We are dedicated to creating a dynamic environment of sportsmanship and school pride throughout the season. Our role in Flagstaff High School includes acting as:

- **Crowd Leaders** - Motivating the crowd to rally around their team and get on their feet and yell!
- **Spirit Raisers** - Taking the pride we feel in our school and spreading that to our classmates and the community. Whether it is making signs and encouraging peers to attend the games, dressing up for all spirit days, or keeping the energy up during the games, cheerleading is where the spirit begins!
- **Entertainers** - Cheerleaders use their crowd leading skills, spirit and athleticism to entertain the crowd on game day, especially during timeouts and halftime. When the crowd is engaged, entertained, and enjoying the game they are more likely to stand up and yell when our team needs it the most!
- **Ambassadors & Role Models** - As one of the most visible student athletes, cheerleaders should be friendly, set a good example for other students, and spread school spirit.
- **ATHLETES** - Cheerleading requires strength, endurance, and technique to execute the skills used in crowd leading. This unique team sport combines tumbling, dance and jumps, pyramids and stunting in fast paced routines. Cheerleaders are athletes in every sense of the word. They are dedicated teammates who work very hard to achieve their goals. In the end they are rewarded by a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment that makes all of the work worthwhile. Character, Commitment and Attitude are all values that we hope our athletes will strongly develop and carry into all areas of their lives. It is our goal to see each and every one of our athletes develop lasting relationships, a strong sense of self-worth, pride in being a part of something bigger than themselves and life skills that will assist them in becoming positive and productive adults.

**ATTITUDE DETERMINES YOUR ALTITUDE IS THE #1 RULE on our team: ALL ATHLETES MUST DISPLAY A POSITIVE ATTITUDE.** Everyone has a bad day at times,

but we want our team to be the place athletes come to *get away* from negativity. Work ethic is crucial for our teams, and it is expected that athletes will come to practice ready to cheer and willing to give whatever their team needs them to give. Sometimes practice will be physically and mentally exhausting-It is during these times that our athlete's character shows, and we hope that they will take this opportunity to shine. Leaving our problems off the mat helps to bring the team together in a positive way and focus on the task at hand.

**BEING ON THE CHEER TEAM IS A PRIVILEGE, NOT A REQUIREMENT.** As such, every athlete must comply with the guidelines and rules set forth by Flagstaff High School as well as the cheer coaches. Please thoroughly read the following handbook, sign and date, and submit before your athlete begins practice. Both PARENTS and CHEERLEADERS must sign this packet before starting – you will not be allowed to start practicing or tryout for the team without the signed forms on file. If it is determined the athlete is not following the expectations they signed, a meeting will be held to discuss the future of their participation.

## **GENERAL RULES:**

**BE HEALTHY**---Absolutely no use of tobacco products, alcohol, performance enhancing substances or illegal drugs. Over-the-counter medications that could hinder the ability to execute a routine safely are not allowed. Cheerleaders are athletes and need to maintain outstanding physical ability as well as being role models. This includes eating balanced meals and getting enough sleep. Your body doesn't work at an optimum level without taking care of it.

**RESPECT FOR TEAM MEMBERS & THE COMMUNITY**---Any abusive or negative behavior towards a team member, administration, coaches or other teams in person or through gossip, during practice, at games etc. and any SOCIAL MEDIA will be grounds for dismissal. **Poor representation of Flagstaff High School or our team is not allowed in any way.** Having the skills alone does not mean you have a guaranteed spot if your words and actions do not reflect those of the program.

**TREAT INJURIES APPROPRIATELY**---**Inform the coach immediately of injuries.** Athletes will be advised by the school trainer as to what action to take immediately (ice, ibuprofen, etc). They may require clearance from the athlete's primary physician (a medical release) if it is determined that your injury is serious. Injured athletes will continue to be trained in accordance with their physician's guidelines and/or their physical therapist's guidelines. If you are missing practice due to injury, you **MUST** have a doctor's note or a note from the FHS Sports Medicine Office with your injury and any rehab you need to be doing. Injuries and rehab should be taken care of before practice and not interfere with practice time. The best way to avoid injuries is taking care of your body and listening to your coaches for proper technique.

## **TEAM PLACEMENTS:**

Athletes will be placed on a team based upon skill level, attitude, work ethic, enthusiasm, and their tryout scores. We believe an individual will excel and be most happy when placed on a team that compliments this criteria. Our ultimate goal is to create teams that are balanced in all technical areas of cheerleading. **Athletes try out to be a member of the team, not for any particular position and must be willing to be placed where it benefits the entire team.** We reserve the right to place anyone on the team we see fit. We also reserve the right to move individuals to another team that might be a better fit for them after the season goes on and we have assessed that they would work out better somewhere else. *All decisions are made based on what's best for the team, as well as the individual.* As with any sport, athletes must start at the level most appropriate for their skill level. We

expect cheerleaders and their parents to respect our decisions on team placements. **As such, coaches' decisions are final and are not up for discussion.** Tryouts are usually a 3-5 day commitment. Athletes will be judged by guest judges and the coaches. They will be judged on their ATTITUDE, cheer, fight song, dance, jumps, kicks, splits, and an interview. We will be looking for sharpness, voice, overall impression (which includes energy and enthusiasm), and technical skill. New teams will be posted on the evening of tryouts around 7:30 pm. Athletes will be listed by an assigned number and not by name to ensure anonymity.

**RESPECT THE COACHES' DECISIONS:** The coaches will place athletes based on performance in practice, attitude, work ethic, attendance and grades. When choosing stunt groups the coaches will create the groups they believe will perform at the highest levels together. **This is the coaches' decision and not the athlete or parent's decision.**

## **COMMUNICATION:**

High school athletes are learning the responsibilities of being on a team and time management skills. To encourage this growth, a majority of our communication will be with the athletes themselves. Our primary mode of communication will be updates at practice, the team GroupMe app, and the Facebook Cheer Parents page. All families are asked to provide an email address, which should be checked regularly. We email updates and information that you will need to know to ensure that your athlete is meeting the team requirements. If the information is very detailed, athletes will often receive a hard copy (during Homecoming and other crazy weeks). We also use Facebook as a tool of communication and ask that you join the Flagstaff High School Cheer Booster Club Facebook page.

**STAY INFORMED---Athletes are responsible for finding out any missed information.** Pay attention during practice for announcements. Check texts and emails regularly. If an athlete is unable to use the preferred communication, it is up to them to get the information from teammates. Ignorance is not a substitute for proper communication.

**Athlete and Parents will commit to the following protocol for communications:**

**Athletes must address any issue with the coaches prior to parent involvement.** If the issue is not resolved, the coaches will meet with the parent and athlete. After all steps have been followed the coaches, parents, athlete, and administration can meet. Problem solving will not take place via text.

Please limit communication between 7 AM and 8 PM. If there is an emergency, you may call one of the coaches, but avoid sending messages and communication "after hours."

## **PRACTICES/GAMES:**

All members are to attend all team and tumbling/conditioning practices. Please arrive at practice ready to work. This includes having your practice uniform on (including shoes), your hair up in a pony tail and all jewelry removed by the beginning of practice. Athletes must wear appropriate attire for practice. (Jewelry of any kind including ear, nose, tongue, belly button and facial rings are not allowed.) Jewelry must be removed and may not be taped over. No lotion allowed at practice or games.

- **FOOD AND DRINKS** – Please fuel your body for practice and games! Complex carbohydrates and lean protein are encouraged. Water bottles are required and should be

labeled with your name. Water bottles should be placed around the blue mat during practice to ensure proper hydration. Chewing gum is not allowed at any time.

- **PERSONAL BELONGINGS** – Personal belongings are the responsibility of the athletes. Please do not leave expensive cell phones, computers, Hydro Flasks, or clothing unattended at any time. Phones should be in backpacks during practice and games.
- **PARENTS AT PRACTICE/GAMES-** Coaches will not be available during practice but will be more than willing to schedule an appointment or to address any concerns. Parents should avoid coaching athletes from the sidelines or interrupt the coaching staff during games. Maintaining a safe and respectful environment is very important.
- **SUMMER PRACTICE SCHEDULE** - The summer practice schedule will be based on the week that the team attends UCA cheer camp. We practice the week prior to camp. **Camp will be July 8th-11th this year, and practices will be June 22nd - July 1st & July 7th** (COVID-permitting). Summer practices and camp are very important and absence during this time may affect the athlete's placement in routines and stunt groups. Please plan summer vacations accordingly.
- **SCHOOL PRACTICE SCHEDULE** - Practice will be daily from 3:30-6:00 with the exception of game days. All athletes and parents have access to game schedules through AZ Preps 365. Please check the site for games (football, volleyball, and basketball). Please recognize that the calendar will be subject to change and should be viewed as flexible. We do try to adhere to the schedule as much as possible but there are always things that come up that are out of our control. Practices may on occasion be longer (Homecoming, Coconino Games, Competition) which will be determined at practices as we see how prepared our athletes are for the upcoming performance or game.
- **CELL PHONES** - Cell phones may be brought to practice for communication before and after practice but must be put away during practice. There are ABSOLUTELY no cell phones allowed at practice/games (including texting). If athletes need to contact a parent, we ask that they let the coach know.
- **TARDIES** - Being tardy to practice or leaving practice early is not acceptable. Cheer is a team sport and needs all athletes in practice to achieve team goals. Athletes are allowed to take care of their academics after school but **must let us know ahead of time** and bring a note from their teacher to practice stating where they were. Should an athlete be tardy, they will be asked to sit out of the next game the number of minutes they were late. When athletes are late, the entire team is left waiting. We know that life happens, and sometimes you just can't help it (coaches are late sometimes, too!), but if you are on time the majority of the time, we will be more understanding when you are not. 3 tardies equal 1 absence. **If a team member is more than 15 minutes late it will be counted as an absence.**
- **ATTENDANCE** - **Athletes will miss no more than 5 practice per semester. After 3 absences, a meeting with parents and the student will be set up to determine if the athlete will continue with the team or forfeit their spot.** If an athlete should miss a practice the week of the game they will sit out the first quarter of the game. Two missed practices =two quarters and so on. The athlete is still required to attend the game in uniform but unfortunately has lost the privilege of cheering. This policy is necessary because of the reliance of every team member on one another. We want to keep the sport safe and that means only stunting with those that have practiced during that week. Athletes may be excused from an absence under special circumstance if the athlete has spoken to the coaches prior to the practice/game.

Athletes are expected to follow the team dress code at practices and games. If athletes are not in proper attire they will not be able to cheer and/or practice for that day.

- EXCUSED Absence: Includes but is not limited to; academics, illness, and family emergencies.
- UNEXCUSED Absence: Is not informing the coach of missing practice, OR missing practice for social events.
- **Full team attendance is key to the success of a program! School dances, athletic games, and other social events are not an excuse for missing practice. These types of absences will not be excused.**
- **IF ATTENDANCE BECOMES AN ISSUE WE WILL ASK THAT THE ATHLETE AND THEIR PARENTS MEET WITH THE COACHES TO DETERMINE THE BEST COURSE OF ACTION.**

**Athletes who would like to participate on the cheer team must be fully committed to the cheer team.** For example, any member who chooses to be part of the FHS Competition Cheer Team, will not be able to participate in a spring sport in addition to being on the competition team.

## **GRADE CHECKS**

Athletes are required to maintain a 2.0 GPA to participate as determined by AIA and our school expectations. If an athlete's grade point average drops below a 2.0 they will be placed on probation. Receiving an F on a grade check automatically means that the athlete cannot participate until the next grade check. The first time this happens the athlete is allowed to immediately remediate the grade-meaning they can raise the grade, and with the signature from the teacher, participate as soon as this is done. The 2<sup>nd</sup> time the athlete receives an F there will be an automatic 3 week suspension. The 3<sup>rd</sup> time the athlete receives an F the athlete receives the 3 week suspension and may be up for dismissal from the team.

## **CAPTAINS**

Captains will be chosen based on an application, an interview with the coaches, and by potential captains demonstrating their ability to teach a cheer and a stunt. The team will vote and be considered 1/3 of the vote, and each coach will vote individually and be considered 1/3 of the vote. The coaches will have final say and it is not up for discussion.

## **PARENT BOOSTER CLUB**

The purpose of a Booster Club is to act as a support group for our athletes and coaches, both financially and emotionally, to ensure that our FHS athletes have a great experience as cheerleaders! We are the cheerleaders for our kids!

### **The Booster Club will consist of:**

Presidents – organize monthly meetings, keep club on track, meet with coaches to keep informed

Vice President – manage booster membership, keep contact logs

Secretary – keep records of meetings and emails updates to the families

Treasurer – keep financial records for booster club and athlete fundraisers

Social Chair-Coordinates with all members of booster club to provide fun activities and maintain traditions

Fundraising Coordinator – plans fundraisers and reports all funds to the Treasurer

## **ATHLETE RESPONSIBILITIES**

I, the athlete, understand the expectations of my coaches and Flagstaff High School. I have read the parent-athlete handbook and understand the rules governing this program and agree to abide by them. I realize there are consequences for not adhering to the policies, including dismissal from the team. This dismissal will be at the discretion of the coaches and administration. I will respect my coaches, teammates and other team's members at all times. I will refrain from using inappropriate language at practice or any other team event. I agree to represent Flagstaff High School in a positive light at all times. I will be a positive role model at all times for my teammates, and will adhere to the uniform policies for game days, performances and practices as set forth by my coaches. I will not post inappropriate content or photos on Facebook, TikTok, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram or any other social network.

In addition, I agree to follow the below rules:

- Abide by the safety guidelines set forth by the coaches.
- Be supportive of all athletes and display courtesy, maturity, respect, and a sportsmanlike and positive attitude toward teammates, coaches, and all other athletes.
- Be respectful of Flagstaff High School personnel, administration, coaches and athletes and present a constructive and supportive outlook.
- Refrain from participating in any illegal activity (i.e. use of drugs or alcohol). Participating in any illegal activity will result in automatic removal from the program.
- Strive to attain and maintain healthy habits.
- Help the team roll out mats and anything else that pertains to a successful practice.
- Be prepared to participate by being properly attired before practice starts.
- Be prepared to practice, work on school work in the hour allotted before practice begins and after practice ends.
- Be on time for practice, ready to go.
- Keep open lines of communication with cheer coaches by discussing questions in person, by telephone, e-mail, text or by appointment and not have my parents communicate for me..
- Athletes will not use profanity while participating in any cheer/school related events or while wearing any FHS cheer attire.
- Athletes will take care of their injuries. If they are not excused by a doctor or FHS Sports Medicine, they are expected to perform all skills.
- Athletes will not tumble, stunt or do any activity without a qualified coach in attendance.
- Be willing to try new things.
- Most importantly, you are a student first and your priority should be attaining the best education possible! You must maintain your grades.

**CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE →**

## PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

I, the parent, will support my athlete, their teammates, and the coaches. I agree to abide by the following terms of participation Flagstaff High School Spirit Line

- I will encourage my athlete to adhere to the rules set forth by Flagstaff High School and the team coaches.
- The Cheerleader agrees to be fully dressed and ready for practice and games at the times specified by the coaches during the season. If my athlete is not yet driving I will provide rides or set up carpooling to allow my athlete to fulfill their responsibility as a cheerleader;
- **Decisions relating to the squad, individual performance, and placement of any of the team members/talent as they relate to cheerleading and the team are strictly those of the FHS coaches.**
- I will avoid calling my athlete or coaches during practice times or games except in the case of emergency.
- I will be involved in the Booster club to the best of my ability and attend meetings and contribute to the team through fundraisers or helping with all of our fun activities.
- Be respectful of Flagstaff High School personnel, administration, coaches and other athletes and present a constructive and supportive outlook.
- Keep open lines of communication with Cheer coaches by discussing questions in person, by telephone, e-mail, or by appointment.

I also understand the fees associated with the team, and agree to pay them as indicated on the budget form, plus any other fees that may be announced throughout the course of the season. I have been made aware that should I lapse in payment of my child's account fees, my child will not be allowed to participate until accounts are current. I have also been made aware that my child may be removed from the team for lack of payment and not allowed to try-out again until all accounts are current.

- Payments are due to the FHS Bookstore on the dates indicated on the budget form.
- Any member with a balance more than 30 days late may be benched until the account is current. If this occurs please set a meeting with our bookkeeper, Roxanne Teller, to develop a payment plan. Payment plans are up to the discretion of Roxanne Teller and our Athletic Director, Jeannine Brandel.
- No athlete will be allowed to start a new season with a negative balance.
- Accounts must be current in order to receive uniforms, team clothing or apparel. Accounts must be current to participate in team competitions. Payments are applied to the oldest outstanding debt on your account. **Athletes will not receive their gear or uniform until their balance has been paid.**
- FHS Cheer has a NO REFUND policy for items purchased or travel expenses paid. Should an athlete leave the team prior to the end of the season there are no refunds of any monies paid or expectation of receiving any additional cheer gear.

**Make sure you register under cheer in Family ID and get your physical done prior to tryouts to ensure you have athletic clearance!**

**Sign and return the following page.**

**Sign and return the following page.**

-----TEAR OFF AND RETURN THIS PAGE ONLY -----

**Please fill out the following page and return to the coaches prior to tryouts.  
Athletes cannot be placed without a signed contract.**

By signing these agreements, the athlete and their parents agree to follow these guidelines, policies, and rules as set forth by the FHS cheer coaches and the administration and are giving your full commitment to the cheer program. As well as your commitment to make all payments in full in a timely manner.

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ATHLETE SIGNATURE

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DATE

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ATHLETE PHONE NUMBER

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ATHLETE EMAIL

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PARENT SIGNATURE

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