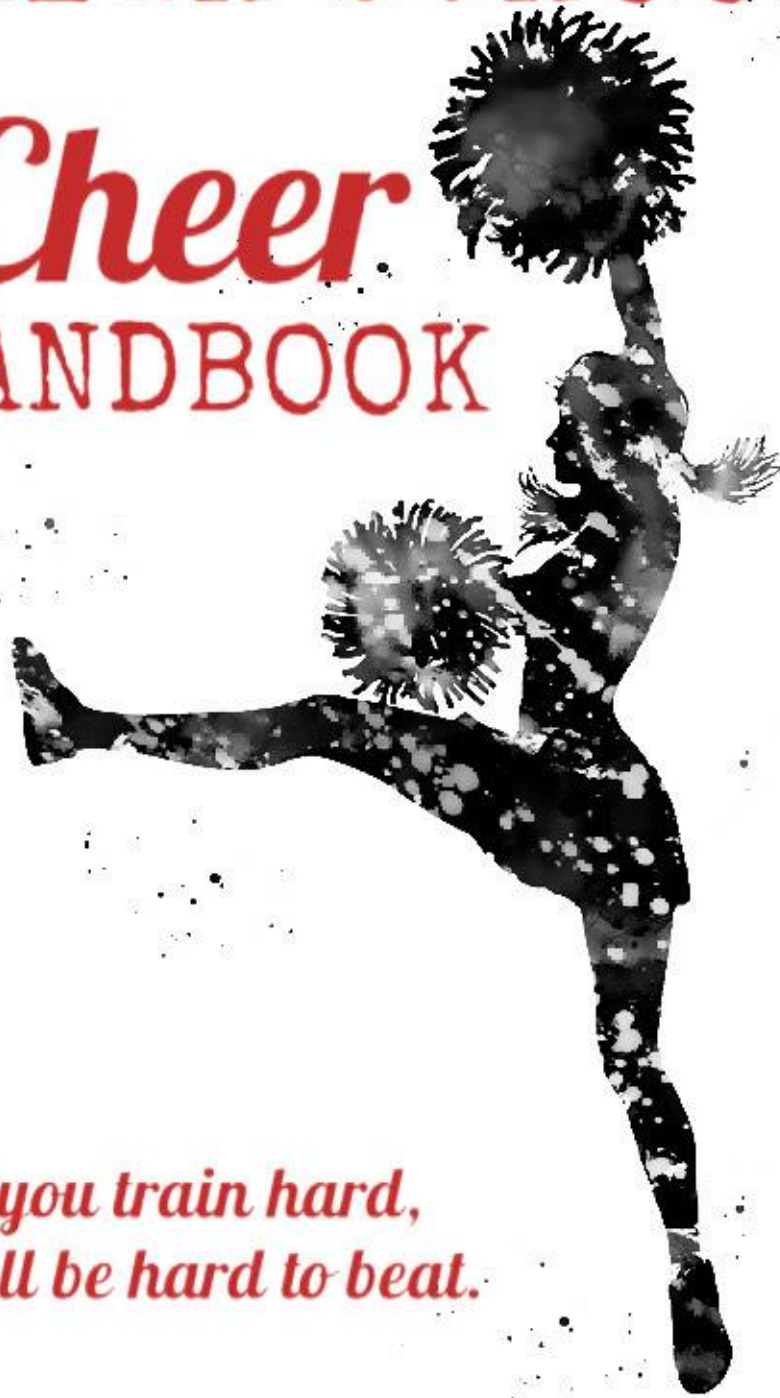


AMBRIDGE AREA HIGH SCHOOL

Cheer HANDBOOK



*If you train hard,
you'll be hard to beat.*

PURPOSE

Cheerleaders are student leaders who exemplify and promote school spirit, pride, and sportsmanship. Cheerleaders enhance a positive school climate by exhibiting leadership skills, such as respect for individual differences, building consensus, academic excellence, and modeling appropriate behaviors at all times, both in and away from school.

Cheerleaders are expected to be mentally and physically fit and athletically skilled in the field of cheerleading. They are first and foremost representatives of their school. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus than that of their peers. In or out of uniform, cheerleaders are representatives of the cheerleading squad and the school.

As leaders, cheerleaders are expected to set good examples and demonstrate high moral standards for other students. Respect for the school, other members of the squad, and the sponsor and her authority will be maintain at all times.

CHEERLEADING YEAR

The rules and procedures outlined in these guidelines are in effect from the date of the mandatory parent meeting preceding the tryouts until the next year tryout date. This does not include the academic guidelines.

TRYOUT – ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- A student must be enrolled in Ambridge Area School District. Principal has discretion to determine participation for students new to district who are not enrolled by tryouts. If student moves into the district after tryouts, the athlete can try out at the discretion of the coach.
- To be eligible for interscholastic athletic competition, a student must pursue a curriculum defined and approved by the Principal as a full-time curriculum. Where required, this curriculum or its equivalent must be approved by, and conform to, the regulations the PIAA, as well as any local policies established by the local School Board. The student must be passing at least **four full-credit subjects**. Eligibility is cumulative from the beginning of a grading period and must be reported on a weekly basis.
- Athlete must have good attendance.
- All tryout related activities are schedule to virtual for the 20-21 season.
- Students must be in proper attire for tryout day. Attire includes: athletic shoes, soffe shorts (maroon/red, black, or grey), white t-shirt (a small insignia is permitted ex. Nike swoosh. No other printing is permitted. T-shirts worn inside out will result in a deduction of points for appearance.)
- Tryout material will be released June 1st and videos will need to be submitted by June 8th at 10 PM.
- No jewelry or long acrylic nails are to be worn or deductions can occur for appearance.
- Athletes will submit their video and be assigned a number. Their video will then be sent to Elite cheer for judging.
- Cheerleaders being selected for the squad will be called after tryouts. Timeline will be determined closer to June 8th.

TRYOUT GUIDELINES

Procedures for cheerleader selection are based on the guidelines in this handbook. Parents will not be permitted in the try out area during any phase of the tryouts.

The following forms must be filled out and signed prior to participation at tryouts:

- Cheerleading Handbook Parent/Student Agreement Form pg. 10
- Cheerleader & Parent Contact Form pg. 10
- Medical Release Form pg. 11
- Inherent Risk Form pg. 12

COMMITMENT

Candidates selected to be a member of the cheerleading squad are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full cheerleading year. Any cheerleader who voluntarily quits the squad before the end of the cheerleading year or is dismissed by administration or coaching staff will not be allowed to try out for the next year.

SQUAD MAKEUP

The varsity squad (juniors and seniors) will be made up of 15-20 cheerleaders, as determined by a natural break in the scores. JV squad (freshman and sophomores) will be made up of 12-20 cheerleaders, as determined by a natural break in the scores. Cheerleaders selected for the JV squad can also be invited to participate in competition activities with the varsity squad. The middle school squad (seventh and eighth grade) will be made up of 12-15 members, as determined by a natural break in the scores.

JUDGING GUIDELINES

The following guidelines determine membership for the cheerleading squad: Performance & Citizenship

Performance Elements

- Entrance/Spirit
- Crowd Appeal/Smile
- Memory/Recall
- Voice Projection
- Dance/Stunting
- Motion/Technique
- Jumps
- Tumbling

Citizenship

- Teacher Recommendations (Past & Present)
- Grades
- Behavior
- Attendance

INJURY & USE OF VIDEO

A candidate for the cheerleading squad may show a video of his/her performance for the judges only if he/she is incapable of required physical activity. Coaches must receive a doctor's note the day after the injury. Other circumstances can be determined at the discretion of coaches.

FINAL DETERMINATION & NOTIFICATION

Candidates will receive notification of results on the day of tryouts. The notification calls will only identify the selected candidates based on assigned tryout numbers.

CHEERING ACTIVITIES

All cheerleaders will be expected to attend all practices. Practices will include exercise, tumbling, stunting, game day routine practice, and school spirit practices.

Varsity

- Football – All home and away games, including play-off games
- Basketball – All boy's home and away games, including play-off games.
- Camp/Clinics – Camp and clinics will be held in the summer and are mandatory. Varsity will host a cheer camp for younger athletes and is mandatory.
- Practices – 2 practices per week subject to increase during competition season

JV

- Football – All home Varsity and JV games
- Basketball – All boy's home games
- Camp/Clinics – Camp and clinics will be held in the summer and are mandatory. Varsity will host a cheer camp for younger athletes and is mandatory.
- Practices – 1-2 practices per week

Middle School

- Football – All home games
- Basketball – all boy's and girl's home basketball games
- Camp/Clinics – Camp and clinics will be held in the summer and are mandatory.
- Practices – 1-2 practices per week

Participation in other sports events, community activities, and social occasions will be at the discretion of the coach.

Students must be present at least one-half of the school day to participate in an activity.

Cheerleaders may not leave a practice, clinic, or other activity at any time unless approved by the coach.

- Any absence must have the prior approval of the coach.
- Prior notification of conflicts with school activities will be addressed with coach
- **Work is not considered an excuse for an absence**
- Medical and dentist appointments should be scheduled around practices

HEAD CHEERLEADERS (CAPTAIN)

Varsity Head Cheerleader

There may be two head cheerleaders chosen for the varsity squad and they will also serve as a leader for the JV squad.

Requirements of Varsity Captain:

- Must be a senior, at least one year experience as an AAHS cheerleader, and in good academic standing
- If grandfathered, cheerleader must still tryout
- Captain application completed and submitted

Determination of captain will be made based upon the following criteria: performance, citizenship, leadership, and squad vote.

The head cheerleader serves in a leadership role as a liaison between cheerleaders, students, and faculty. He/she also serves as a liaison between coaches and other cheerleaders and is the spokesperson for the program in public meetings and in front of the student body. The following is expected of this position:

- Communicates information to squad members regarding upcoming activities, such as uniform requirements and practice schedules
- Teaches and starts all cheers and routines for camp, games, and competitions
- Assists the sponsor in planning all pep rallies
- Organizes the creation, placement, and removal of all signs and items throughout the school and stadium
- Help facilitate and serve as leader for JV practices
- Update performance material on Facebook
- Carries out all other duties assigned by the coaches

JV Head Cheerleader

Head cheerleader can be selected at the discretion of the coach.

Middle School Head Cheerleader

Head cheerleaders are to be rotated at the middle school level.

Head cheerleaders may be removed from the position for conduct that occurs that is detrimental to the school or squad as determined by the coach.

UNIFORMS & APPEARANCE

All uniforms and practice attire should be clean and kept in good condition. Uniforms and practice attire include: warm ups, shell, skirt, turtle neck, briefs, warm ups, pom poms, rain gear, cheer bag, bow, headband, cheer shoes, and white low-cut socks.

While performing each member is expected to:

- Wear proper attire as directed. The uniform is worn to official functions only and a member may perform only if he/she is in the complete required uniform. All pieces of the uniform are to be brought to all games and events as well.
- All uniforms should be washed and hung dry after each use.
- Keep uniforms clean, pressed, and mended at all times. No cheerleaders are permitted to modify their own uniform.
- Reflect grooming standards as directed by the coach, including, by not limited to:
 - Makeup that is natural looking
 - Secured hairstyle with bow
 - Nails that are short and well-groomed and do not exceed the length of the finger; acrylic nails or tips are strongly discouraged for safety reasons; colored nail polish is not to be worn when competing.
 - No jewelry, including body piercings (unless matching all other cheerleaders and agreed upon with coaches)
 - No gum chewing or candy
 - Hair color must be natural
 - Required uniforms or cheer gear will be worn, as instructed, to school on game days.
- Parents are financially responsible for the replacement of school-issued uniforms and equipment; at the end of the school year, clean and return all school-issued uniforms. Uniform deposits may be initiated at the discretion of the coach.

COMPETITIONS

The varsity squad will participate in selected competitions. Coaches will select competitions to attend including WPIALS.

COMPETITION SQUAD

Whether to have a squad that enters competition is a decision to be made by the coaches. Competition squad will be the varsity squad and include any JV squad member invited to participate by the coaching staff.

REPLACEMENTS

If there is an opening on any squad, the opening may be fill by reviewing the ranked scores from tryouts. The same goes for any injuries that may occur throughout the season.

CONDUCT GUIDELINES

Upon the completion of tryouts, selected cheerleaders will be subject to all rules, expectations, and discipline consequences associated with the new squad. All discipline actions will affect the cheerleader's standing on his/her squad after tryouts and throughout the following academic year. Any member failing to abide by rules and regulations as set forth under the provisions may be subject to review by the coach. Dismissal from the squad may result from that review.

Since participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, AASD Cheer program has set higher standards for participants. Demerits will be appointed for violating any of rules listed throughout the handbook. After 3 demerits, a cheerleader will be suspended for 1 game or event. This then places the cheerleader on probation. If a cheerleader then acquires a 4th demerit he/she will be removed from the squad. Cheerleaders must conduct themselves with utmost integrity. The expectations are as followed:

- All cheerleaders are to willingly obey all rules at all times without a reminder.
- What a coach says is final. Back talking, profanity, or disrespect of any kind will result in a disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the squad. This also includes respect towards your captains and other team members.
- Be present at all practices, clinics, games, and events.
- Always exercise good sportsmanship.
- If not at practice, you do not participate! No excuses. If you cannot commit to the schedule you cannot participate in the program. Due to safety concerns, any cheerleader missing the practice before a game or event will sit that event. If doctor's excuse is provided, athlete will still until halftime.
- Arrive to practices at the appointed time, prepared, in proper attire, and ready to work hard. *Being on time, is being 15 minutes early.*
- Know all materials. If athletes do not know their material they can be pulled from events.
- Work is not a reason to miss an event. Cheerleaders are to plan their work schedule around games and practices.
- Cheerleaders are at the games to cheer. They are not to socialize with fans or each other.
- Decorating halls/lockers is mandatory (schedule will be decided upon by coach and captains.)
- If using cheer closet to create signs, it is your responsibility to clean any mess you make. Only cheerleaders are permitted in the cheer closet, you cannot bring in friends that are not cheerleaders.
- During stunting all girls should be standing and aware of what is going on. If a flyer hits the ground, the team will be disciplined.

GENERAL DEMERIT RULES

1st offense – Athlete and coach will have a face-to-face meeting.

2nd offense - Athlete and coach will have a face-to-face meeting, parents will be contacted, and cheerleader will be given a written warning.

3rd offense – Parent/athlete/coach conference to discuss the event, sanctions, and terms of cheerleader probation.

4th offense – Parent/athlete/coach meeting and possible removal from the squad.

PERMANENT DISMISSAL

Reasons for permanent dismissal from the cheerleading squad include but are not limited to:

- Academic Removal – If academically ineligible for three reporting periods, consecutive or nonconsecutive, removal for the remainder of the year.
- Unexpected absence from more than two games over the course of the fall/spring season.
- Failure to meet behavior expectations
- Expulsion

Prior to being dismissed, the student and parent will be notified of the reason for the action. Permanent dismissal can happen by skipping the four step process if deemed necessary.

TRANSPORTATION

Each cheerleader shall ride school-provided transportation to away games. A written request from the parent/guardian is required for the student to be released to the parent or to another adult designated by the parent if not using school-provided transportation on the way home. Cheerleaders are not allowed to leave away games with another student driver. Prior approval from the coach is required. The penalty for missing school-provided transportation is suspension from that night's game.

BOOSTER CLUB/PARENTAL SUPPORT

Parents are very important to the success of this program. It is important that the coaches and parents work together so that your child gains the full value of participation. Please keep the coaching staff informed about problems that your child is experiencing, such as medications, emotional distress, etc. The coaches care about each and every child in the program and can be great allies if they have the right information. Parents must be willing to accept and support the conditions and rules of participation as well as work in a cooperative and productive manner with the program. As most of the cheerleaders are not old enough to drive it may fall upon the parents to have arrangements for their cheerleader to make it to practices, games, and events. The Ambridge Area Cheerleading Program must raise the majority of operating funds itself. All parents must be willing to accept responsibilities by doing their fair share with fundraising activities (or donations), providing refreshments for games, helping with banquet tasks, and the many other tasks necessary to run and support the operation of our Ambridge Area Cheerleading Boosters Program.

The purpose of the cheerleading booster club is to support and promote the cheerleaders through fundraising, attendance at athletic performances, and special events.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraising will be required for each cheerleader and their parents to limit out of pocket expenses. Fundraisers can be mandatory when the proceeds go towards the general account. The cheerleaders will be aware of the mandatory fundraisers. Mandatory fundraisers include but are not limited to: tagging, hoagie sales, different types of bashes, working concession stands, etc.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITES

Uniforms: Shell and skirt will be provided by the district and are expected to be returned clean at the end of season. If uniforms are not returned, cheerleader/parents will be charged at cost of the uniform and placed on the school debt list until paid.

Parents will need to purchase the following: *Returning cheerleaders may not need to purchase some of these items. However, they need to be confirmed in good condition by coaches. Also, some of these items may be a new version and will have to be purchased again. JV cheerleaders invited to cheer for the varsity competition squad will have added varsity expenses. Expenses are subject to change.*

Varsity	JV	Middle School
<i>Package – 297.90</i>		
Polymicro Lined Warmup Jacket & Jogger	Polymicro Lined Warmup Jacket & Jogger - \$150	Warm Up - \$100.00
Bodyliner	Bodyliner - \$18.00	Bodyliner - \$18.00
Motionflex Briefs	Briefs - \$10.00	Briefs - \$10.00
Miza Cheer Shoes	Miza Cheer Shoes - \$79.99	Cheer Shoes -\$50.00
<i>Outside of Package</i>		Rain Coat - \$10.00
Practice Warm Up - \$50.00		
Cheer Bag - \$25.00	Cheer Bag - \$25.00	Cheer Bag - \$25.00

Items to be purchased by the Boosters: Rain Coat (\$10.00), Poms (\$20.00), Headband (\$12.00), Softe Shorts/T-shirt (\$12.00), Socks (\$10.00), Bows (\$20.00)

As a team, we will also be voting on camps, tumbling classes, and competitions. Those prices will be offset by the parents with possible financial help from the Boosters or individual fundraising.

Bridger Cheer Staff & Contact Information

Jennifer Phillips – Varsity Head Coach – jphillips@ambridge.k12.pa.us

Amanda Palshaw – Varsity Assistant Coach & JV Coach – mummabrin_00@yahoo.com

Middle School Coach – TBA

**AASD School District
Cheerleading Handbook Parent/Student Acknowledgement**

We have read and understand the policies, procedures, practices, financial requirements, and behavior expectations outline in the AASD Cheerleading Handbook and give consent for our son/daughter to try out for cheerleader. We agree to adhere to these guidelines as a condition for voluntary participating in the cheerleading program and understand that failure to do so may result in disciplinary measures and removal from the program.

Student Agreement

Student's Printed Name Student's Signature Date

Parental Agreement

Parent's Printed Name Parent's Signature Date

Contact Information

Student Name: _____ Grade (by tryouts) _____

Email Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Address:

Parent(s) Name: _____

Email Address: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Home Phone: _____

AASD Medical Release Form

Student's Name: _____ Grade: _____

School: _____

I certify that _____ is physically capable and able to fulfill requirements to be a cheerleader. I understand that this form legally releases all obligations and responsibilities for the medical treatment of my son/daughter in the event of illness or injury during any squad-related activity when either parent cannot be reached. If there is any physical or medical reason why he/she should not participate fully, the school requires a doctor's release. Furthermore, the school is not liable for any injury incurred during cheerleading.

Parent's signature: _____ Date: _____

Medical Treatment Permission

In the event of an emergency occurring while my son/daughter is on a school-sponsored practice, performance, or trip, I grant my permission to the school and its employees to take whatever action necessary. In the event that I cannot be reached, I hereby authorize the school and/or its employees to give consent for my son/daughter, _____ to receive medical treatment.

Person to be notified other than parent or guardian in an emergency:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Family Doctor: _____ Phone: _____

Medical Information	YES	NO
Heart condition/disease		
Diabetes		
Convulsions disorder		
Asthma		
Allergic to medication		
Allergic to insect bites		

State allergies: _____

Medications currently taking: _____

Additional pertinent medical information: _____

Inherent Risk Form

Cheerleading is reasonably safe as long as certain guidelines are followed, but there is the inherent risk of injury as in any athletic activity. Cheerleading is an anaerobic/aerobic activity that includes jumping, stunting, motions, and tumbling. All physicals must be on file in the school office before you may participate in practices and games. Keep your coach informed of all injuries and/or chronic conditions.

Although the probability of injury is minimized if you practice correctly, there is always the possibility of one occurring. Injuries that can occur in cheerleading include, but are not limited to, the following: blisters, muscle strains, joint and muscle soreness, abrasions, contusions, stress fractures, broken bones, spinal cord injuries, concussions, and even death. However, if you take certain precautions, the possibility of such injuries will be largely decreased.

Cheerleaders should consistently abide by the following guidelines:

1. Never stunt or tumble unless a coach is present.
2. Always practice in the presence of a qualified coach.
3. Always warm-up appropriately before cheering (practice and games) by jogging and stretching.
4. Do not attempt a stunt that you do not know how to perform safely and that has not been checked off by the coach.
5. Always use attentive spotters when stunting.
6. Always cheer in an area free from obstruction.
7. Always use mats or a grassy area when stunting during practice.
8. Do not stunt on uneven ground, wet surfaces, or concrete, and do not stunt in cold or rainy weather.
9. Never talk, laugh, or mess around when performing a stunt.
10. Report all injuries to the coach as soon as they occur.
11. Follow all trainer and doctor recommendations.
12. Lift weights to increase strength and guard against injuries.
13. Always wear shoes and clothing appropriate for cheerleading.
14. Never wear jewelry of any kind or chew gum when cheering (practice and games).
15. Always have your hair pulled back from your face and shoulders.
16. Eat nutritious meals and get plenty of rest.
17. Ask for assistance or advice at any time.

I have read the preceding warning and thoroughly appreciate and understand the assumption of risk inherent in cheerleading participation. I acknowledge that I am physically fit and that I am voluntarily participating in this activity.

Student name (print) _____

Student signature _____ Date _____

Parent signature _____ Date _____