**JOHN JAY CHEERLEADING**

**TEAM HANDBOOK**

**(**Revised June 2013, 2015, 2016, 2017,2018)

**Contact information:**

**Varsity Coach and JJ Cheer program director**

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John Jay cheerleading web site**: www.johnjaycheerleading.com**

Schedules and full calendars as well as other team information can be found on our web site.

**COACHING PHILOSOPHY**

John Jay Cheerleading is a very unique sport. The cheerleading team is given the opportunity to support their school in 2 very different ways. The Cheerleading team will support football and basketball on the sidelines of that sport’s games. The cheerleaders will encourage crowd support, school spirit and pride while executing cheers using their skills and training (i.e. cheers, stunts, tumbling)

The cheerleaders are also given the opportunity to participate in competitions that represent their sport. The competitions exhibit the athleticism involved in the sport of cheerleading. They will represent John Jay HS at local, Sectional, Regional and State competitions. There may also be opportunities to attend National competitions.

The coaches believe that the primary purpose of John Jay Cheerleading is to promote school spirit and pride using athletic talents in the sport of Cheerleading. However, we also believe that these athletes will learn the many lessons of “sport” through the opportunities open to them with competitive cheerleading. Cheerleading is a team sport that requires every athlete to have a strong commitment to the team. We do not look for individual glory but for individual improvement that strengthens the team as a whole.

The coaching staff firmly believes that through the sport of cheerleading each individual athlete will learn life lessons such as team work, commitment, accountability, friendship, community, goal setting, and many more that will stay with the athlete long after the game, competition or season is over! At the same time, each individual cheerleader will be encouraged to refine and increase their individual skills to their highest levels.

In addition to the athletic skills our program emphasizes the importance of academics. It will teach the athlete how to have a balance between academics and athletics. Our goal is to encourage the participants to be scholar athletes!

The John Jay coaching staff agrees with the philosophy of the John Jay administration; being a member of an athletic team is a privilege, not a right. Our athletes are held to a higher standard and expected to be leaders in their school environment.

John Jay Cheerleading will always strive to be number 1, but more than the win; we will learn from and cherish all the experiences that get us to that competitive level.

**TRYOUT POLICY**

John Jay cheerleading follows the rules for tryouts and eligibility that are in place for all Wappingers Central School district interscholastic sports. Please see the WCSD booklet for interscholastic sports rules and guidelines.

Tryouts will take place starting on the specified dates given by Section 1 athletics. (fall season – approx. the 3rd Monday in August. Winter season – approx. the 2nd week of November.)

***Sports physical***

***· Physical must be up to date and Athlete must be registered via the Family ID online registration tool***

***“Open” Summer Conditioning/ Strength training and practices (held at JJ track):***

***· 2 to 3 days a week 8:30-10:30 usually starting the week after July 4th holiday***

***· Optional but highly recommended getting to as many of these practices as possible. Tryouts will include a test of conditioning and strength, such as running, push-ups, abs etc.***

***· Must bring hand held weights, exercise ball and towel. Also suggest a weighted medicine ball***

***· Always bring water and a healthy snack***

***“Open” summer stunting clinics and flexibility training***

* ***1 evening a week from 5:30--8 pm***

***Tryouts:***

***· Tryouts will take place over 2-3 days at John Jay HS. Time TBA***

***· Must attend all days of tryouts***

***· All veteran and new cheerleaders must tryout. \*\* Being a member of a team in the previous season does not guarantee a position on a team in the current season. Teams are picked based on the skill level of all the athletes trying out.***

* ***If skills are lost or not being executed following tryouts, the coaches do have the discretion of either cutting the cheerleader the following season or dropping the cheerleader from varsity to JV if it applies. Example; Fall season a cheerleader is selected due to her tumbling skills shown at tryouts but the cheerleader stops throwing her tumbling skills in routine. Winter season that cheerleader may be removed from the team or dropped down to the JV team if applicable. This is also true for any skill set that helps determine a cheerleader’s placement on a team.***

***· Dark shorts and white t-shirt must be worn with hair up in pony tail.***

***· Number of members on each team will be determined by skill level***

***· There may be alternates or just game cheerleaders picked for each team. If a cheerleader is an alternate or game cheerleader he/she is a full member of the team but will not participate in the Competitive contests***

* ***Starting in fall 2018 there is a Game Day division for competitions vs the regular competitions. It is possible for an athlete to be on the Game Day competition team but not be on the Full competition team. Winter season MAY not have a Game Day division.***

***Varsity skills we will be looking for:***

***· A conditioned athlete: able to run 1 mile nonstop under 10 minutes, perform sets of sit ups, push-ups and strength skills and demonstrate core strength***

***· Standing tumbling – back handspring, standing tuck***

***· Running tumbling- round off/back handspring, r/o tuck, r/o bhs tuck, r/o bhs layout and fulls***

***· Jumps: triple jumps at the intermediate and advanced levels***

***· Stunting: able to perform at 2 different positions in a stunt (front spotting is not a position) Flyers and bases must show ability of 2 legged and single leg stunts. Must also show skill levels of load in skills, transitional stunts and dismounts***

***· Knowledge of tryout routine***

***· Strong motions***

***· Strong Floor presence/attitude***

***· Good leadership skills***

***A cheerleader may be placed on varsity if he/she meets the majority of these skills. Participants not meeting this skill level may be placed on Jr Varsity***

***Coaches will give tryout results to each individual athlete face to face following the last day of tryouts.***

**TEAM RULES**

1. Every cheerleader is a vital and important part of their team. She/he must attend **ALL** practices and games!!
2. ***John Jay Cheerleading must be your priority SPORT, club or activity. No other activity can take precedence over cheerleading or be a reason to miss practices and games. This includes Employment.***
3. ***Athletics stress a healthy life style and body image. John Jay cheerleading promotes a healthy lifetstyle which includes good nutrition, appropriate hydration, muscle recovery, good body image and avoiding substances that are a detriment to over all good health. Any cheerleader exhibiting unhealthy lifestyles that may be dangerous to her physical or emotional health will be asked to speak with a coach in order to help them.***
4. ***John Jay cheerleading will not tolerate the use of any illegal substance at any JJ cheer event. Any cheerleader found with an illegal substance or being underage using alcohol, tobacco or vaping any substance will be suspended from the team for a time period of at least 1 week or dismissed from the team. (guidelines are also listed in the WCSD interscholastic athletic policies)***
5. We do not look for individual glory; we look for individual improvement which strengthens the team!
6. Commitment to the team means commitment to your academics. It is necessary and important to keep up with all school work and strive for excellence in school. A cheerleader with failing grades can only hurt the team. If a cheerleader is struggling with school it is her/his responsibility to let the coaches know so they can assist in finding help or tutoring.
7. It is every cheerleader’s responsibility to manage schoolwork and cheerleading. School work should not be a reason to miss a practice or game if your time is managed well.
8. Sportsmanship is vital to cheerleading. All John Jay cheerleaders will always display good sportsmanship. This means being positive and respectful to your teammates as well as to any visiting school’s athletes or fans. This applies to all John Jay cheerleaders even when they are not with their team, but are wearing any apparel that shows they are a member of John Jay Cheerleading.
9. Community service is a mandatory part of John Jay cheerleading. Every cheerleader is required to attend the community service projects.
10. Every Cheerleader must respect herself, her teammates and the coaches. Disrespect will **never** be tolerated!! Repeated disrespect to coaches, teammates or team rules will result in removal from the team.
11. It is each individual cheerleader’s responsibility to be aware of the team’s schedule. Work is never an excuse to miss a practice or game. Schedules are usually posted at least a month in advance
12. If a cheerleader is going to miss a practice or game, a coach must be **called** at least 2 hours before that practice or game. An unexcused absence from a game or practices will sideline the cheerleader from the next game or portion of that game. Texting a coach is not an acceptable form of communication
13. Parents should not “punish” a cheerleader by not allowing them to attend a game or practice.
14. Every cheerleader must be on time for all practices and games. Cheerleaders should be at the gym 15 minutes prior to the start time for practices and 45 minutes prior to the start of a game
15. Every cheerleader is required to practice in specific and assigned shorts, t-shirt and cheerleading sneakers. Hair must be up in ponytail
16. Cell phones may not be used at any times during practices, games, competitions and on buses to/from events. It is the policy of JJ cheerleading that no phones be carried by our athletes to competitions and during the competition. Cell phones must be either left home or will be collected by the coach until the end of the game/competition
17. Full Game uniform is required at all games.
18. **JEWELRY IS PROHIBITED AT ALL PRACTICES AND GAMES. This means ALL body piercings must be removed prior to the start of a practice or game.**
19. If any cheerleader has a tattoo it must be covered for all practices and games
20. Never should any John Jay Cheerleader post any John Jay cheer routine, team picture, individual pictures on any social media site without a coach’s permission. Posting of any John Jay routine or team members without permission could result in suspension or removal from the team.
21. Once a team is picked for a season, a competitive team MAY be picked from that team. There will be a chosen number of competitive cheerleaders and there COULD be alternates to that team. Alternates are required to attend all practices, and competitions. They will learn the competition routine and in the case of an illness or injury to a competitive cheerleader, the alternate will be placed onto the competition squad. In addition, a competitive team cheerleader that does not follow team rules or misses team practices may be moved to alternate status and an alternate will replace her/him on the competitive team.
22. A cheerleader may tryout and cheer at just games and not be competitive, however all competitive cheerleaders must cheer at games
23. Selection of team captains is at the discretion of the coaches.

**In addition to these rules every cheerleader will receive the Wappingers School district guidelines for interscholastic sports.**

**CONSEQUENCES FOR BREAKING TEAM RULES:**

For most of the rules, the first infraction will result in the coach speaking with the cheerleader. Severity of the infraction will dictate the punishment.

* Cheerleaders repeatedly late to practice may lose their role in the competition routine.
* Cheerleaders that miss practices will sit for one game, if the behavior persists, the cheerleader may be removed from the team.
* Poor Sportsmanship, inappropriate postings on the internet, or disrespect shown to team members or coaches could result in immediate removal of the team.
* Any cheerleader suspended from school is also suspended from cheerleading and risks being removed from the competitive squad.
* Any cheerleader that misses a Competition contest without the approval of the coaches is immediately removed from the team.

**COMMUNICATION POLICY**

We maintain an open communication policy between coaches, cheerleaders and parents. The coaches’ policy will always be to discuss small problems between the coach and cheerleader. If the results from that discussion are not satisfactory the coach will then speak with the parent of that cheerleader. For any problem that the coach feels the safety or health of a cheerleader is at risk, the coach will immediately consult with the parent.

If a parent wants to speak with a coach, the only appropriate times to do so is before the start of practice if there is sufficient time or at the end of practice. A parent should only contact a coach at home for extreme reasons unless the coach offers parents to reach her there. E-mail is also an appropriate form of communication.

A coach will not discuss cheerleaders other than the parents’ child with those parents. It is also not appropriate for a parent to contact a coach concerning his/her child’s “spot” in a routine or formation. Decisions about cheerleader placement in cheers and routines are at the discretion of the coach.

The coaches will often use their captains and/or veteran cheerleaders to distribute information to the team. This form of communication will usually consist of practices times, changes in times and game or practice attire.

The method of choice for the coaches to distribute team information is at end of practice/game meetings, texts and thru e-mail.

**Parent Participation:**

While it is important for the athletes at this age to become more responsible and self-reliant, parental participation is still vital for each athlete’s success and for our program’s success. John Jay Cheer Booster Club is for the parent participation and to help parents support their athletes through many activities.

The Booster club also is an important financial support for the program since there are very limited funds from the school and district.

It is mandatory for all John Jay cheer parents to participate in the John Jay Cheer Events.

As of fall 2018, it is mandated that each parent sign up for at least one JJ cheer fundraising event other than the JJHS Cheer Invitational which is mandatory for all of our parents. These events may consist of planning and carrying out an event or could be as simple as phone calls.

**Finances:**

Being a member of John Jay Cheerleading does come with some financial obligations. There are required sneakers, uniform pieces, practice gear etc that are essential for safety and team work.

John Jay Cheer provides many fundraising opportunities for our program. New for fall 2016, every cheerleader will be required to raise a minimum of $50 for the JJ Cheer booster club general fund.

No cheerleader will ever be turned away from a team due to financial hardship. The John Jay Cheerleading Booster Club does have a plan in place for financial hardships. The program offers many fund raising opportunities to the team members to help offset costs. While these are all optional, if a hardship exists, that cheerleader must participate in the program fund raisers. To request hardship status a written letter must be sent to the booster club treasurer. The treasurer will then contact the family to start the process. All information is kept confidential.

**I have read and understand all the information in the John Jay Cheerleading Handbook. I will follow all sport and team rules for John Jay Cheerleading as listed above.**

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**(Cheerleader’s signature) Date**

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**(Parent’s signature) Date**