CPLS Cheerleading Handbook 2026-2027

Cheerleading Program Mission:
The CPLS Cheerleaders foster positive school spirit and good sportsmanship at athletic events, provide channels for students to express school spirit, encourage attendance at school events, and perform at a level of excellence that serves as a source of pride for the school, the squad, and themselves.

CPLS Cheer Verse:
"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up" (I Thessalonians 5:11a).

MEMBERSHIP

CPLS Cheer Squads:
The junior high squad typically consists of 6th-8th grade girls. While 6th graders are not allowed to stunt at KSHSAA sanctioned events, they are allowed to cheer, perform, and stunt at non-KSHSAA sanctioned events. The varsity squad will consist of 9th-12th grade girls. The maximum number of participants will vary from year to year.

Varsity State Squad:
Out of the varsity squad, up to 12 may compete at the KSHSAA State Cheer Competition.

Tryouts:
All members must demonstrate designated skills in front of the coaches and panel of judges. Each hopeful member must also have four teacher recommendation forms submitted. Their responses heavily factor into who makes the squad.

Attire for the day of tryouts:

- Hair must be completely pulled back
- Absolutely no jewelry (including watches)
- Wear a plain, light colored t-shirt
- Dark-colored shorts or leggings
- Athletic shoes
- Must be modest
- Should look "put together," and that effort went into their appearance for that day

Eligibility:
As per the CPLS policy, cheerleaders must maintain passing grades. If a cheerleader is failing at least one class or has two or more D's, they will be ineligible to participate in cheerleading. This includes both practices and games.

Quitting/Removal Policy:
If a cheerleader willfully quits the squad in the middle of the season, that cheerleader forfeits their right to tryout for the squad the following school year. After one full school year has passed, that student will be allowed to try out again. The same applies if a student is asked to be removed from the squad by the coaches or school administration.

COMMITMENTS

1. Both varsity and jr. high cheerleaders are required to cheer for both football and basketball.

2. Cheerleaders will cheer at ALL HOME football and basketball games and some away games.

3. Varsity will cheer for all of the post-season tournament games. Please block your calendars for these potential dates, even though details are unknown until later in the season. The football championship game is typically the Saturday after Thanksgiving, and the basketball championship game is typically the second weekend of March.

4. Cheerleaders are permitted to play volleyball, basketball, be in the dramas, partake in scholar's bowl, etc., but they must work out a schedule with the coach to still participate in cheer. Cheerleaders will forgo practices/rehearsals on Wednesdays to attend cheer practice.

5. Cheerleaders must have all cheers, chants, and dance routines memorized before the first football game.

6. **Community Service**. Both squads are expected to participate in various community service projects throughout the summer/school year.

SUMMER EXPECTATIONS

1. **REQUIRED**: Summer Day Camps
    a. 8:00-3:30 on Tuesday, June 2nd (Both squads)
    b. 8:00-3:30 on Wednesday, June 3rd (Varsity only)
    c. 8:00-3:30 on Thursday, June 4th (Both squads)

2. SUMMER PRACTICES:
    a. Varsity will practice from 6:30AM - 8:30AM every Tuesday and Thursday (June 9th - July 30th)
    b. JH cheerleaders will practice from 6:30-8:30AM every Tuesday (June 9th - July 28th) and every Wednesday from 7:00-8:15 AM (June 10th - July 29th)
        i. *Both squads will take off the week of June 29th-July 3rd*
    c. Cheerleaders must attend at least 75% of these practices.
        i. If a cheerleader oversleeps or arrives more than 10 minutes late to a summer practice without a parent's confirmation, it will count as ½ absence.

3. If the attendance requirements are not met during the summer, that cheerleader will be required to make up practices at the beginning of August, otherwise they will be benched from the first football game.

RULES FOR PRACTICE

1. Cheerleaders are to support one another by attending **all** practices.

2. Cheerleaders are to be ON TIME.

3. Practice (during the school year) – Every Wednesday from 4:00-5:30 PM for junior high and 4:00-6:00 PM for Varsity at the Topeka Bible Church gym during the school year.

4. Missing a Wednesday practice may result in that cheerleader not being allowed to stunt or be featured in cheers at the following game. Other consequences for absences will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

5. If an unforeseen conflict (such as illness) arises, the parent (not the cheerleader) must inform the coach prior to the scheduled practice.

6. The cheer coach may schedule additional practices as needed.

7. Since we only get to practice once a week during the school year, please do not schedule appointments, vacations, work, or other commitments on Wednesdays.

8. Chewing gum is not permitted during practice.

9. **ATTIRE**: Cheerleaders should wear the designated practice attire. If personal clothes are allowed for special occasions, cheerleaders should dress modestly for practices. Shirts that cover their entire midriff and chest are expected and no extremely short shorts. Failure to comply will result in consequences.

10. Cheerleaders may not be on their cell phones at any time during practice.

RULES FOR GAMES

1. Cheerleaders are expected to cheer for ALL home football/basketball games and selected away games. **Please do not schedule appointments, vacations, work, or other commitments on game days**.

2. Cheerleaders are to start warming up with the squad 45-60 minutes prior to game time–sometimes earlier if the need is determined in advance. Being on time is expected.

3. A cheerleader is not allowed to be on their phone at any time during a game.

4. If an unforeseen conflict arises, a parent must inform the coach prior to the scheduled games.

5. Chewing gum is not permitted during games.

INJURIES

Cheerleaders are required to attend all scheduled practices, games, and team events, even if they are injured, unless excused by a coach or medical professional. Injured cheerleaders are expected to participate in a modified capacity, such as observing routines, supporting teammates, or fulfilling other squad responsibilities as assigned by the coach.

SHOWCASE + STATE EXPECTATIONS

1. Both the junior high and varsity squads are expected to perform at the Rural Spirit Showcase (usually the first Saturday in November).

2. If we have more than 12 members on the varsity squad, all will have the opportunity to perform on the mat for the Rural Spirit Showcase.

3. We compete in the KSHSAA State Cheer Competition each year (the Saturday before Thanksgiving). KSHSAA only allows up to 12 cheerleaders on the mat for State. We will choose between 8-12 cheerleaders from the varsity squad to compete on the mat. If we have cheerleaders on the squad who were not selected to compete, they are expected to attend State in uniform and cheer on their squad.

4. Junior high cheerleaders are expected to attend the State competition as spectators and cheer on the varsity. This will also give them the opportunity to know what to expect when they're in high school.

GENERAL RULES + EXPECTATIONS

1. Jewelry is not permitted during practices or games. KSHSAA prohibits the wearing of any jewelry. Piercings should never occur between June-March. The cheerleader will either have to take out the piercing or not stunt.

2. For safety, KSHSAA requires manicured fingernails to fingertip length.

3. Cheer shoes should only be worn at practice and games–never outside or in public. Cheerleaders should have an alternate pair of shoes to wear to practice/games and will change into the cheer shoes.

4. If a cheerleader leaves a cheer item (poms, bows, bag, etc.) at a practice or a game, that cheerleader will have a consequence in order to get it back.

5. If a cheerleader does not remove all jewelry before a practice starts, the entire squad will have a consequence (running, pushups, etc.).

6. If a cheerleader has social media (mainly Instagram), she must allow the CPLS Cheer page to follow her.

7. All cheerleaders are required to fully participate in any necessary fundraising activities. If they fail to do so, they will be asked to make this up in an alternative way for the squad.

8. Cheerleaders are never to stunt without a coach present.

9. All cheer attire is reserved for cheerleaders only. No part of our uniform, warm-up gear, practice clothes, etc. should be lent to anyone who is not a CPLS cheerleader.

10. Disciplinary issues at school (such as a detention or suspension) may also result in consequences for the squad.

UNIFORMS + GEAR

1. The coach will make the final decision regarding uniforms and all cheer gear.

2. Each cheerleader assumes responsibility for her uniforms and cheer gear (poms, bags, etc.). As property of CPLS, if any of these items are lost, stolen, or damaged beyond normal wear and tear, the cheerleader is financially responsible for replacing the item(s).

3. Uniforms must be cleaned and returned at the end of the basketball season.

4. Certain items will be purchased by the cheerleader that she will keep.

5. Cheer shoes should ONLY be worn at practice and games--they should NEVER be worn outside. Please bring a change of shoes for before and after practice/games.

6. All cheer attire is reserved only for cheerleaders. No part of our uniform, warm-up gear, practice clothes, etc. should be lent to anyone who is not a CPLS cheerleader.

PARENT VOLUNTEERING

We rely on parent volunteers throughout the season for a variety of needs. We ask that each family volunteer for multiple voluntary needs throughout the school year.