

WELCOME FUTURE WARRIOR CHEERLEADERS

Dear Cheerleader Candidates and Parents,

Welcome! Thank you for taking an interest in the AJFL 7th-8th Grade *Travel* Cheerleading Program. I am so excited for the opportunity to coach this group of athletes and bring a little of my Southern “flare” to the AJFL community. We are all looking forward to a wonderful and exciting year for everyone involved.

The purpose of the AJFL 7-8th Grade *Travel* Cheerleading Program is to create and promote spirit, awareness and a sense of pride within the Andover Community. We do this through football games, competitions, cheerleading showcases, fundraisers, and volunteer work throughout the season. I hope this handbook will help you understand my expectations for the upcoming season. Cheerleaders will be expected to behave in a manner which is considered respectful and mature. You will be an ambassador of AJFL and the Andover Community and must always represent it honorably. A good cheerleader maintains a healthy balance in life, combining schoolwork, activities, and a competitive spirit. I am here to help you find that balance and have fun doing it. Make no mistake, it is hard work and a big commitment.

Please read this handbook carefully and keep it for your reference. It is also important that your parents review this handbook and understand the guidelines for becoming an AJFL *Travel* Team Cheerleader. Both the cheerleader candidate and a parent must sign the agreement before the candidate will be allowed to attend practice or tryouts.

I can't wait for a fantastic season!

Coach Christine Zombik

2017 AJFL 7th – 8th Grade *Travel* Cheerleading Team

Important Dates

Registration Closes

Friday, August 11th

Uniform Distribution / Warm-Up Sizing – Doherty Middle School Cafeteria

Monday, August 21st @ 6:00-7:00pm

(please wear sports bra and Nike Pros or other tight-fitting undergarments to try on under uniform)

Practice – AHS Field House

Wednesday, August 23rd @ 4:30-6:30pm

Practice – AHS Field House

Thursday, August 24th @ 5:00-6:30pm

Practice – AHS Field House

Monday, August 28th @ 4:30-6:30pm

Practice / Learn Material for Competition Team Try-Outs – AHS Field House

Wednesday, August 30th @ 4:30-6:30pm

Practice / Learn Material for Competition Team Try-Outs – AHS Field House

Thursday, August 31st @ 5:00-6:30pm

Practice / Learn Material for Competition Team Try-Outs – AHS Field House

Wednesday, September 6th @ 4:30-6:30pm

Competition Team Try-Outs - AHS Field House

Thursday, September 7th @ 5:00-6:30pm

**those who do not wish to be on Competition Team do not need to come to try-outs*

AJFL Opening Day - AHS Football Field

EITHER Saturday, September 9th OR Sunday, September 10th, Time is TBD

Normal Practice Schedule Begins - AHS Field House

Monday, September 11th @ 4:30-6:30pm

Checklist for First Practice

Cheerleaders for AJFL *Travel* Team must have:

1. Emergency Contact Information Form
2. Contract Agreement Form
3. Check cheer calendar on website for important dates – www.ajfl.com → cheerleading → Middle School Cheerleading. Discuss conflicts with coach.

Time Commitment

AJFL 7th – 8th Grade Football is comprised of an A-Team and a B-Team. ALL cheerleaders will be required to cheer for both games, every game day. Home games can run between 3-4 hours, and away games with travel can run as long as 5-7 hours. I encourage you to consider this time commitment before signing up for the team. Cheerleaders are not permitted to leave after the first game unless previously approved by the coach.

The Competition Team may be required to attend additional weekend practices, camps and clinics throughout the season. A tentative schedule will be provided the first day of Competition Try-Outs.

General Information

There will be two ways to be a part of the AJFL 7th-8th *Travel* Cheer Program – a Game Team and a Competition Team.

Game Team

- Up to 30 cheerleaders
- Try-outs will NOT be held for the Game Team
- Basic cheer / dance technique
- Ability and willingness to learn
- A great attitude
- Commitment to improving cheers / jumps / flexibility / tumbling while not at practice

Competition Team

- Try-outs WILL be held for the Competition Team and will be comprised of a select group of girls from the Game Team
- Will be made up of 12-20 Cheerleaders, based on Coach's discretion
- A positive attitude and strong work ethic
- Exceptional skill level including jumps, strong motion technique, excellent dancing ability
- Basic to advanced tumbling skills – must have body awareness and control
- Strong stunting ability
- Someone willing to commit the time and energy competing takes

Safety

Cheerleading has changed to be a highly competitive sport with a risk of injury. AJFL does it's best to provide a safe environment for our cheerleaders. We always practice on a full sized competition/practice mat. As your coach I am NFHS Certified, CPR and First aid Certified and Concussion in sports certified. Even with these safeguards in place, there's still a risk of injury, as there is in all sports. This is why attendance and paying attention at all times is VERY important!

Practices

Practices will be held in the Andover High School Field House. A coach and/or authorized adult will be present at all times. We will not leave practices, games, or competitions until all cheerleaders are picked up, so we ask parent(s) to kindly pick up your child on time. Cheerleaders will have access to cell phones to inform parent(s) of pick-up times if not known in advance.

The Game Team will practice twice per week and the Competition Team will practice three times per week. Practice days and times are as follows:

Monday – 4:30 - 6:30PM (Game Team)
 Wednesday – 4:30 - 6:30PM (Game Team)
 Thursday – 5:00 - 6:30PM (Competition Team)
 Thursday – **Time TBD** - Optional Tumbling for both Squads @ Wilkey's Gym

*** All practice dates and times are subject to change pending team needs and Field House availability **

Tumbling

Those cheerleaders interested in the Competition Team are strongly encouraged to participate in a tumbling class / private lesson at least once per week. The Competition Team will showcase advanced skills and will help prepare the cheerleaders for the High School level, which requires a standing back-handspring for Varsity and JV try-outs. **An optional tumbling class is scheduled for any cheerleader who is interested on Thursdays for an extra fee.**

Tumbling Gym: Wilkey's Gymnastics
120 Lumber Lane, Tewksbury, MA 01876

Mandatory Attendance

All athletes must attend the uniform fitting. Competition team candidates must attend every day of tryouts to be eligible (exceptions may be made for those with extenuating circumstances). If you sign-up for the team, games, events and all practices (including extra practices for Competition Team) are 100% mandatory.

Work/vacations/Birthdays etc. are NOT acceptable excuses. Do not sign up if you can't be present (no exceptions). As an AJFL Cheerleader, you are making a commitment to not only yourself, but to a team and that will require 100% dedication. If you feel that you cannot make the commitment, or are unsure for any reason then you should not sign-up.

Team Mom/Parent

I encourage any parent interested in helping with the team to sign up for our Team Mom/Parent position. This person will help at various practices/games and competitions as needed. If there are several parents interested, we will have a rotating schedule.

If you are interested, please contact Kim Sousa : kimsousa120@gmail.com, (617) 413- 1643

Important Mandatory Events

- Fundraiser/Community Service - Dates and Times TBD
- Opening Day – Sunday, September 10th
- Team Pictures - Dates and Times TBD
- Sports Banquet - Dates and Times TBD
- Competition Schedule - Dates and Times TBD

Estimated Expenses

Item	Cost
Warmups	\$130.00
Shoes	\$80.00
Shorts	\$30.00
Game Bow	\$10.00
Competition Bow	\$10.00
Team Shirt	\$10.00
Sweatshirt	\$30.00
Approx Total	\$300.00

Personnel Information**Head Coach**

Christine Zombik
(843) 540-7195 zombik1682@gmail.com

Assistant Coach

Beth Glennon
(603) 714-8049 bethann.glennon@gmail.com

AJFL Board Contact

Kim Sousa
(617) 413-1643 kimsousa120@gmail.com

AJFL 7th-8th Grade Travel Cheerleading Team Handbook 2017

All athletes in the cheerleading program are expected to adhere to the following code of conduct. Athletes and parents must be familiar with and agree to these expectations. These guidelines serve as the foundation for maintaining a successful program.

AJFL Cheerleading is a sport. You will be treated as an athlete. You are expected to understand the physical requirements, time commitments, safety risks and social responsibilities that come along with the privilege of being an AJFL Athlete. You are a representative of Andover Cheerleading and must conduct yourself in an appropriate manner IN and OUT of uniform at all times. **Information posted on websites, Instagram, Face book, Snapchat, twitter etc. is public- you will be dismissed immediately for inappropriate actions. All information, words, pictures should be school appropriate.**

Purpose

Cheerleaders will: 1) promote and uphold Andover spirit, loyalty, and pride; 2) develop and encourage a sense of good sportsmanship among athletes and adults; 3) encourage spectators to become involved in the support of the team; 4) build better relationships between teams; 5) compete, at the coaches' discretion, on the local and state level.

Teams

There will be one (1) Game Team and one (1) Competition Team

Game Team will cheer at A & B Team football games in the fall. The team will have up to thirty (30) members. While this is a no-cut team for games, those interested should register as soon as possible as we cap the team at 30 cheerleaders.

Competition Team will also cheer at A & B Team football games in the fall. The competition team will be selected from a group of girls from the Game Team. The team will have twelve (12) to twenty (20) members. They will be selected on the basis of results of judging in a variety of areas. Final decision will be up the coaches.

Requirements

1. All members must read and sign the AJFL Cheerleader/Parent Agreement.
2. All members should be aware that cheer duties (practice, games, etc.) must be first in importance of their extracurricular activities.
3. All members must participate in all practices and all assigned games, events, and competitions.
4. Members will act as hosts to visiting squads and teams.
5. Members are responsible to help control the attitude of the crowd, as much as possible. They should help keep the fans from acting in an unsportsmanlike manner.
6. All squad decisions will be governed by the majority vote and/or coaches' approval.

Practices, Games, and Events

1. All members are required to attend all scheduled practices, games, and other events as deemed required by the coach. Illness and family emergency are the only excuses for absences.
2. Missing practices, games, and events for doctor appointments, vacations, tutors, other team practices (All-Star Cheer, etc.), and work are NOT EXCUSED. Please plan accordingly. Three unexcused absences will lead to suspension from the team, at the coaches' discretion.
3. The frequency and time of additional practices will be at the discretion of the coach, but will be communicated with parents in advance.
4. See specific team calendars for exact dates and times.

5. Missing the practice prior to a competition will result in the athlete NOT performing with the team that weekend

Conduct

1. All members should abide by the rules set forth in this handbook.
2. Members should be able to accept responsibility and show that they are capable of being leaders by setting positive examples.
3. Members should promote good sportsmanlike conduct and community spirit.
4. Jewelry (such as necklaces, earrings, bracelets, rings, watches, and ANY PEIRCINGS) will not be worn while practicing or performing per National Federation rules.
5. Cell phones will not be allowed at practice. Turn ringers off!!!
6. Do not chew gum, eat, drink, or visit with friends while at games or practices, as well as other inappropriate times. There will be designated water and snack breaks.
7. There will be no smoking, drinking, or drug use tolerated.
8. BE ON TIME FOR GAMES, PRACTICES, AND COMPETITIONS!!
 - a. Every late arrival, one minute to 15 minutes, will be recorded by the coach. Three late arrivals result in one unexcused absence.
 - b. If a Cheerleader is more than 15 minutes late without prior arrangement with the coach, it will be considered an unexcused absence.
9. Members will stay together as a squad throughout the assigned event. They should not be with boyfriends and/or girlfriends during the games or practices. When a cheerleader needs a break (drink or use the restroom) they may not all go at the same time. EVERYONE MUST BE BACK AT TWO MINUTES BEFORE THE GAME RESUMES!!
10. During the playing of the National Anthem, all squad members will be in formation determined by the coaches, at attention, with NO TALKING!
11. Personal grooming is important; however, it should be dealt with in private.
12. Above all, be familiar with all cheers, chants, dances, and routines, as well as, with game rules. Be ready to cheer at appropriate times.
13. There will be no unsportsmanlike behavior, taunting, teasing, hazing, etc. towards teammates OR towards other teams.
14. Excessive talking, goofing off and moving out of cheer lines during games will not be tolerated.
15. Quitting the team prior to the end of season is strong discouraged.

Discipline (Suspension, Dismissal)

1. If a member misses a practice or game (unexcused), a written or oral excuse must be submitted BEFORE the member performs again.
2. Members may be suspended from the teams for one or more of the following reasons:
 - a. Unexcused absence from a practice, game, or other event.
 - b. Lack of participation in team activities, as determined by the coach.
 - c. Uncooperative attitude with fellow squad member or coach, such as being disrespectful or disagreeable and not willing to work as a group.
3. Members may be dismissed from the squad for one or more of the following:
 - a. Continued violation of any of the above, stated in suspension.

Transportation

1. All members are responsible for their own transportation to and from practice, home games, events, and competitions.
2. Lack of transportation will NOT be considered an excused absence.
3. Members may carpool with parents and other members to games and competitions. Members MUST stay in cars that their parents allow them to ride in.
4. A bus will be provided for away games, but transportation to and from the bus is required.

Fundraising Events

1. All fundraising events must have the approval of the coach. Any fundraising activities will be communicated with the team and parents well in advance
2. All members must attend and participate in all fundraisers.
3. Any profit raised on behalf of AJFL Cheer will be deposited in the team's account for necessary expenses throughout the season. This may include camps, clinics, choreography, competition music, pizza parties, etc.

Uniforms / Appearance

1. Each member will be responsible for their uniform as well as extra items, which will remain in her possession. This will include shoes, socks, briefs, sweatshirt, warm-up jackets and pants, bows, and other accessories.
2. All uniforms must be clean when worn.
3. Uniforms or selected alternate outfits will be worn to all games and designated events.
4. Uniforms are property of AJFL and you are only "borrowing" them for the season. You are NOT to alter your uniform in any way. When uniforms are returned at the end of the season they're expected to be in good condition. If a uniform is returned with stains, rips, tears, alterations done or is lost, you will have to pay the cost of a replacement uniform and any additional charges that may apply.
5. Shoes must be kept clean and bright white for all game days and Competitions.
6. Socks must be pure white ankle socks.
7. Nails must be kept short, no acrylics. No bright nail polish.
8. Absolutely NO JEWELRY of any kind.
9. Hair is to be up in a high pony tail completed out of face.

Physical Condition

1. Any member needing a doctor's care for injury or illness may not participate in practices/performances until the coach has received a release from the doctor or clearance from the member's parent.

Quitting/Suspended from the Team

1. Quitting or being suspended from the team prior to the end of the season will NOT result in repayment for any items that have been purchased specifically for the participant. This includes, but is not limited to, warm-ups, sneakers, bows, etc.
2. Quitting or being suspended from the team prior to the end of season may result in student not being allowed to return to the program the following year. If you have quit the program in the past, you are required to meet with the coaches prior to tryouts/sign-ups to discuss eligibility.

Social Media Policy

1. AJFL Cheerleading does not tolerate any sort of bullying, hazing, foul language, or improper conduct on social media. This includes, but is not limited to, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Respect for our program, community, and sport is of utmost importance.

RULES AND EXPECTATIONS OVERVIEW

PRACTICES

- MANDATORY - only illness or family emergency will be excused.
- DO NOT BE LATE!!!
- All members MUST be in MATCHING practice gear, as determined by coaches.
- No gum chewing, **ABSOLUTELY no jewelry**, hair secured back tightly, & no long nails.
- Cell phones MUST be turned OFF.

GAMES

- See rules regarding practices.
- Arrive for game at assigned time.
- Arrive in designated attire for game.
- No eating or drinking during game time, and no socializing with friends or family during game time.
- Stay in assigned formation at all times.
- Know ALL material and do ONLY stunts approved by coaches.

UNIFORMS

- Upkeep and care are cheerleader's responsibility
- Uniform is to be worn in its entirety or not at all (this includes proper undergarments, hair accessories, socks, shoes, briefs, etc.)
- Do not lend out ANY part of your uniform (it is NOT a Halloween costume!)
- When in uniform do not conduct yourself in a manner embarrassing to yourself or the team.
- REMEMBER: When you are in uniform, you are representing the Andover community.

CONDUCT

- No smoking, drinking, or drug use allowed
- No foul language
- Regular school attendance required – NO SKIPPING!!!
- Treat coaches, teammates, parents, and others with respect at all times

CONSEQUENCES (at discretion of the coach)

- Missing pieces to uniform or arriving unprepared: Sit out performance or first qt. of game
 - Late to practice/game: Will run extra laps
 - Consistent tardiness: Considered unexcused absence, will sit out 1 game
 - Missed practice prior to a competition: Will not compete with the team that following weekend
 - Unexcused missed practice: Will sit out 1 game
 - Unexcused missed game: Will sit out at following week's game
 - **Three unexcused practices, games or events: Dismissal from the team**
 - Disruptive behavior/attitude:
 - i. First: Warning*
 - ii. Second: Meeting with parents*
 - iii. Third: Dismissal from team
- *other consequences may be assigned at the discretion of the coach
- Misuse of uniform: Forfeit to coaches

CHEERLEADER / PARENT AGREEMENT



I have read the AJFL handbook carefully and thoroughly. I agree to abide by the rules stated in the handbook at all times. I understand the responsibilities of being an AJFL Cheerleader and will do my best to uphold the high standards of the squad and my coach. I will accept the decisions of the coach and the organization.

Student Name _____

Student Signature _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____

I have read the AJFL Cheerleader Handbook carefully and thoroughly. I agree to help my child comply with all policies, rules and regulations set forth in the handbook. I understand the responsibilities of being an AJFL Cheerleader and will abide by the decisions of the coach and the organization.

Parent/Guardian Name _____

Parent/Guardian Signature _____

Date _____

Email _____

Phone _____