



2018
Sykesville Raiders Cheerleading
Parent & Cheerleader
Handbook

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Introduction

Welcome to the Sykesville Raiders Football and Cheerleading program. We have been providing youth sports in the Sykesville area for over 50 years. Our Organization is committed to maintaining a safe, competitive environment for our young athletes. We are dedicated to promote and inspire teamwork, camaraderie, sportsmanship, fitness, discipline and self-pride. Another main goal is to have fun and create friendships that often last years to follow. Information included in this packet is to familiarize parents and cheerleaders about the programs expectations for the upcoming season. The Raiders are a traveling team that competes in the CCFL Youth Football and Cheerleading league. Our Cheerleading program is made up of girls in grades K-8th who will cheer for both football teams in their appropriate age group.

Cheerleader Expectations & Practices

Cheerleading is a team sport, it takes a lot of hard work and dedication from each and every participant to make the cheers and routines work. It is expected that cheerleaders attend all practices and games.

Evaluations will take place on Wednesday 25 July and Thursday 26 July. Evaluations are held at Freedom Park, and generally run from 6-8pm. Please note that evaluations aren't meant to "test" or stress out your child. We divide them into groups (generally by age) and send them through multiple stations throughout the night. This allows the girls to learn some new things, get back into the "swing of things" and primarily lets the coaches see what their squad is already able to do. This allows us to focus on our strengths from the start as well as develop and build the areas that are needed.

Practices begin the week of July 30th at Freedom Park Field. Practices could be held three days a week until school starts, depending on what squad you are on. Once school starts, all squads will practice twice a week. We practice outside at Freedom Park and Obrecht field until the start of fall, where we will then move indoors. Practice days and times could change due to the availability of indoor space. Prior to the CCFL Cheer Competition coaches may add additional practice days and times; each cheerleader is expected to attend all of these scheduled practices. Individual teams and coaches will give out their practice schedule.

The Raiders have an open practice policy during outdoor practice times only. This policy encourages parents to attend our outdoor practices, but at a distance. This allows parents the opportunity to see what their cheerleaders are learning at practice and how the coaches interact with them. We want to remind you that once the girls hit the practice field they are on their Coach's time. Please refrain from interrupting practices. For our Young Cheerleaders we ask that there is an adult responsible for your child, especially if they have to use the bathrooms. Coaches and Trainers cannot leave the practice area to run children to the bathroom.

When we move practices indoors they will be closed to the parents. Parents will not be able to attend these practices due to the lack of space. Coaches will have special times where parents can come in the last few minutes of practice and showcase what the girls have been working on. Please make sure you have proper communications with your Coach if your child has to miss a practice or game (our expectations for attendance can be found in our absent policy).

Discipline and Positive Reinforcement

Please be aware that Coaches are there to teach the athletes' proper techniques and safety, as well as the actual skills, cheers, etc. required for the sport. If a coach is having an issue with a particular cheerleader, that coach is allowed to discipline that cheerleader. The Raiders encourage the use of a positive reinforcement programs, but realize that such programs sometimes are not effective in some situations. Coaches are allowed to sit cheerleaders out of practices, half time routines, and games if the issue persists. If a coach deems that the issue is so extreme that it's causing problems for the entire team, we will ask to meet with the coach/parent/Cheer AD to try and resolve the issue. In some cases (missing

games and practices) cheerleaders will NOT be allowed to compete in any competitions. In extreme cases girls will be removed from the squad.

If there is something you would like to talk about/address, please do so with your team parent first, and in private. The team parent plays the role of liaison between the coaches and the athletes' families. If you find that the issue has not been resolved, please then contact your assistant coach. If the issue still persists, or hasn't been addressed/resolved to your satisfaction, then contact your coach, then your Cheer AD, and if all else fails, the Raiders President and VP.

Practice Requirements:

- Cheerleaders must be on time
- Bring a Bottle of Water
- NO JEWELRY (includes studded earrings)
- Cheer Shoes – no slip ons, sandals, flip-flops etc.
- Form fitting, comfortable clothing (cotton shorts & t-shirts are great)
- Hair must be pulled up and out of the face
- NO Dresses, Jeans or Baggy Clothing
- Cheerleaders should not be chewing gum or eating during practice
- Appropriate undergarments must be worn
- Electronic devices are NOT allowed to be used at practice. Cheerleaders may bring them to the field and set them off to the side until practice is over.

Please Note: if your child comes to practice unprepared or not in appropriate attire, she may have to sit on the sides for safety reasons.

No talking in between cheers and training will be accepted and goofing off is only encouraged at break times. We need to reinforce the fact that we have a lot of cheers, stunts, formations etc. to teach, so everyone must be focused on learning quickly and as efficiently as possible.

If it is raining, please check the Raiders website to verify that we are having practice. If the fields are closed, and we are still outside, practice will be cancelled!!

Absent Policy:

Practice and game attendance is mandatory. Practices are designed to teach participants all aspects of the sport cheerleading. Practices include but are not limited to, cheers/chants, running, stretching, stunting, tumbling, jump conditioning, half time routines and competition routines. Cheerleading relies heavily on every participant. We all recognize and certainly understand that unexpected situations arise, such as illness and family obligations that may require a cheerleader to miss an occasional practice or game. Excessive absences may place your child at a disadvantage in learning her routines and/or stunts. We ask that you stay in communication with your coach if you need to miss any practices or games. Unexcused absences from practices prior to a game could result in the cheerleader not participating in that weeks game. Missing more than three unexcused games, or an excessive amount of practices, could result in not being able to participate at competition. All practices two weeks prior to the CCFL competition are mandatory. We ask that this is not looked at as a punishment but as encouragement for each cheerleader to take pride in their position on the squad. Safety is our number one priority. If a cheerleader is not learning their routines and formation it could lead to a safety issue.

Fundraising/Volunteers:

Sykesville Raiders Football and Cheer Program is solely run by volunteers. There are plenty of opportunities for parents to volunteer. We expect each family to donate their time to help with functions such as snack shack, homecoming, Raider family picnic, and other Raider hosted events. Fundraising is vital to keep the program running successfully and we hope that everyone can participate in the many options we may have for this 2018 season.

Summer Camp:

We ask that all cheerleaders attend our mandatory summer camp. While dates are not firm, we are planning on the first 2 weeks of August. Each squad will receive 3 days at camp at MDE in Eldersburg. Cost is \$65 per cheerleader, and its held in the evenings and during the days on the weekends. Each day generally ranges from 2-3 hours. This is an essential start to our cheerleading season and competition. It is important that parents have their children to camp on time every day. The girls will be taught proper stunting, tumbling and cheer techniques along with getting the basics of their choreography. These skills and routines learned at camp will be perfected and progress throughout the season at practices. Camp dates and times are given out by the Head Coach of each team. If there are any conflicts, coaches must be notified ASAP.

MVA Cards:

Each Cheerleader is required to have a Maryland Identification Card, obtained at the MVA, or a current military ID. ID cards must be turned in PRIOR to the start of the season (24 August) and will be returned at the end of the season after the uniform is inspected and turned in. Your child will not receive a uniform without her MVA card (and they may not cheer without a uniform). The CCFL requires these to participate in competition.

Uniforms:

All girls will be provided with a shell (top) and skirt by the Sykesville Raiders. Uniforms will be given out to the participants upon receiving their MVA card. Each girl is responsible for the care, maintenance and the safe return of these items at the end of the season. We ask that uniforms are cared for and cleaned properly in a cold gentle wash. Uniforms should also be hung dry and should not be placed in the dryer or sent to a dry cleaners. **We also require a \$100 uniform deposit from all 8th grade participants.** This deposit will be returned at the end of the season when uniforms are inspected and turned in. Parents assume responsibility for the replacement cost of the uniforms that are either damaged beyond normal wear and tear or not returned. All uniforms are to be washed prior to returning them to the program. Uniforms are not to be worn outside of game day or a Sykesville Raiders event. Please wear your uniform with pride, do not show up to games in uniforms that are not clean. We ask that all cheerleaders remember that they are easily recognizable while in uniform, and that their actions reflect not only on them personally, but also on the Raiders organization as a whole.

Other Required Uniform Items:

Parents are required to purchase additional mandatory cheer items. All girls must have a Crop Top, Silver Boy Cut Briefs, bow chosen by her coach, and their cheer shoes.

<u>Uniform to be worn on Game Days:</u>	<u>Other Items:</u>
Top (provided) Skirt (provided) Cheer Shoes (average \$40)	Black leggings Black Jacket/Sweat Shirt Black gloves

Crop Top (average \$30) Silver Boy Cut Briefs (average \$15) No Show White Socks Season Bow (average \$10)	Head Band to Cover Ears **Raider Warm Ups and Cheer Bags are completely optional and available for purchase** <i>(above are weather related items)</i>
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Note on Weather Related Items: We require these to coincide with our teams colors. Cheerleaders will not be allowed to cheer on the sidelines in different color jackets, gloves etc. We cheer as a team and we need to present ourselves as a team.

** During our warm months, when we do not wear the crop tops; your child must have a black sports bra, camisole or tank top on under the uniform, regardless of age.

If your child comes to game days without the required uniform items, she may have to sit and watch the game from the sidelines until she is in the appropriate uniform. This also includes hair neatly pulled up away from the face with the appropriate hair piece. **There is also NO Jewelry or colored hair** (exceptions made for Homecoming with temporary sprayed in silver/black colors) allowed.

Games:

Games will typically fall on Friday evenings or Saturdays. Each Cheerleading squad is required to cheer a minimum of 8 games during the season. However, most squads will schedule a game every weekend. Our regular season begins the weekend of August 25th and ends on 27 October. **WE MAY PLAY LABOR DAY WEEKEND, INCLUDING CHEER.** All cheerleaders are required to participate on the sidelines to attend the CCFL Cheer Competition. Most games will be located at our home field; however this is a traveling league and depending on the schedule your squad may have away games to attend. Coaches will provide specific details each week in regards to the game location and arrival time.

Game schedules are usually finalized by mid-August. We will get this to you as soon as they are available. It is important to remember that game schedule (dates and times) are subject to change at any time during the season. Please understand that game changes occur during the season to accommodate postponements due to inclement weather and field availability. Parents will be notified by their coaches when this takes place.

While in the cheer box, the athletes are expected to give their undivided attention to the game in play, their coaches, and their teammates. If for some reason during the game you need to speak with your child, or remove your child from the cheer box, please find your team parent before doing so. Your team parent (or coach in their absence) will pull your child for you. Coaches are responsible for their team members at all times on the field. Please be sure to help reinforce that policy.

Playoffs/Super Bowl:

Our Season does not end at the league's in house competition, each cheerleader is expected to participate at scheduled play off and super bowl games, until every Sykesville Raiders football team has finished their season. Play offs will begin Nov 3rd and continue through Nov 9th. Superbowl will be held on Saturday, 17 November 2018.

Sideline Etiquette:

All cheerleaders must exhibit proper behavior while on the field when cheering at any Sykesville Raiders Football Games. In an effort to maintain a safe environment while not cheering, girls must stand in their assigned positions. Girls may not run around, cartwheel, etc. while in line. Excessive reprimanding may result in your child being asked to sit out the quarter/half/game. Parents please re-enforce this rule with your daughters, especially the younger girls to help us keep and look organized during the games.

Tumbling/Stunting:

For the safety of all cheerleaders, there will be NO tumbling or Stunting without the supervision of an Adult Coach. We ask that parents remind their children when the appropriate time and place for tumbling and stunting is.

Competition:

Sykesville Raiders Cheerleaders will participate at the Annual CCFL Cheerleading Championships held on Sunday November 18th at the Carroll County Ag Center in Westminster. We ask that all cheerleaders participate in the end of the year competition. Intent to compete forms must be signed at evals. Competition information and schedules will be given out a couple weeks prior to the event.

Field Policy:

NO Pets are Allowed at the Field. We also ask that you do not pass the parking lot opening on the left hand side in your cars. This is Fogles driveway and they have asked us not to drive up that way. The league has strict field regulations regarding sideline and field access, we ask that parents do not cross into the roped off areas of the field during games.

Sportsmanship/Code of Conduct:

Good sportsmanship should always be present at all Sykesville Raider events, competition and on the field. No parent or cheerleader should ever react negatively towards anyone, including the opposing teams. Diversity makes the world go round!! We must learn to put any and all differences aside as soon as we step onto the field, please remember we are a TEAM! We ask any conflicts you may have towards anyone on the team (and with their parents) be kept at home and away from practices and games. Parents, Cheerleaders & Coaches are expected to follow all codes of conduct put forth by the CCFL and the County. We expect Cheerleaders to uphold and follow all rules by our program and their coaches.

Winter Cheer:

The Raiders currently run a Winter Cheer program. That season runs from late November until approximately the beginning of May. There are additional costs for this season, including but not limited to, new uniforms, bows, bloomers, etc. These squads are filled on a try out basis and their sole purpose is competition. Each squad competes in the REC divisions, Under USASF All Star rules, and must meet those requirements. At least 50% of the squad must have been a Raider cheerleader on this season's sidelines, fit age requirements, etc. If you are interested in this season in addition to fall, please feel free to contact Shelly George, Cheer AD, or Trystin Obrien, Asst Cheer AD.

PARENT/GUARDIAN and CHEERLEADER ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF HANDBOOK

Print Name _____ Sign _____ Date _____

Cheerleader Signature

Print Name _____ Sign _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Signature

ADA STATEMENT: Accessibility Notice: The Americans with Disabilities Act applies to the Carroll County Government and its programs, services, activities and facilities. If you have questions, suggestions, or complaints, please contact Jolene Sullivan, the Carroll County Government Americans with Disabilities Act Coordinator, at 410-386-3600, and MD Relay 7-1-1/800-735-2258. The mailing address is 10 Distillery Drive, 1st Floor, Suite 101, Westminster, Maryland, 21157.

