

## 2011 Cheer Policies & Procedures

### Eligibility

1. Each participant must register with PYSA and must meet **one** of the following criteria:
  - a. Must be a resident of the town of Prosper
  - b. Must reside within the Prosper Independent School District
  - c. Must attend a Prosper ISD school
2. If none of the above criteria are met, a written request for an exception must be submitted to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner and will require PYSA Board approval. Exceptions will be considered on a first come, first serve basis.
3. A participant must be at least 5 years of age on or before September 1st of the registration year and no more than 13 years of age on that same date. Any age variances must have PYSA Cheer Commissioner approval.
4. Divisions are determined by grade. Cheerleaders will cheer in the division according to their grade level for the fall football season.
5. Eligibility variances to the standards listed in item 3 will be governed as follows:
  - a. A PYSA Eligibility Appeal – This request must be sent to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner no later than the last day of registration.
  - b. All PYSA cheer eligibility appeals require PYSA Commissioner and Cheer Coach approval.
  - c. Appeals are considered based on the specific individual's needs and the team's best interest.
  - d. Eligibility variations are subject to review and may change at any time.
  - e. Eligibility appeals only apply for one season.

### Cheer Board

The Cheer Board consists of the PYSA Cheer Commissioner and preferably one representative for each grade level K-6. If there are not enough volunteers at each grade level, more than one coach from a grade level can participate. A vote from the Cheer Board must consist of at least 5 votes to be approved.

### Scholarships

Scholarship requests must be made at the time of registration by sending the request directly to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner. The PYSA Cheer Commissioner will review the request(s) and the Parent/Guardian will be notified prior to the closing of registration.

### Teams

1. All participants will be assigned to teams according to their grade level.
2. All cheerleaders are divided equally among the teams in their own division. In the event that the League needs teams to cheer for another division due to numbers, the coaches will be advised. For example, the number of football teams in the 1st Grade division is more than the cheer registrants for the 1<sup>st</sup> Grade division. The league may have a Kindergarten team cheer in the 1st Grade division. Cheer squads will only cheer up or down a difference of one grade level.
3. Each squad shall consist of no less than 5 cheerleaders.

## **Team Coaches**

1. Each team shall have one Head Coach.
2. All coaches are responsible for assuring that their assistants and cheerleaders conduct themselves in a manner consistent with the mission of this organization..
3. All cheerleaders must be under direct supervision of the coaches or team parent at every practice and before, during, and after the games until released by the coach. Coaches will not leave cheerleaders alone on the game or practice field unless supervised by an assistant coach or a parent. Either must be at least 18 years of age.
4. Coaches will not allow any cheerleader to leave the field during the game without a team parent, assistant coach or said cheerleader's parent/guardian with them. Cheerleaders should only leave the field in case of an emergency or restroom break.
5. The PYSA Cheer Commissioner will recommend head coaches to the PYSA Board for final approval. The PYSA Board will award each head coaching position based on a background check and coaches application.
6. Head Coaches may select their assistants and have them complete a coach's application for approval. The assistant coach(s) may be in charge of practice in the absence of the Head Coach only if they have completed an application, are at least 18 years of age and have been approved by the PYSA Board.
7. Head Coaches must report all injuries to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner within 7 days of injury, or the next game day whichever comes first.
8. Coaches will be responsible for teaching cheerleaders the rules and fundamentals of cheerleading.
9. Coaches must keep an attendance record of all practice and games.
10. The Head Coach will appoint a Team Parent and supply a name, phone number, and email address to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner.
11. Coaches must report any cheerleader that drops out of the program immediately via email to cheer@prospertx-sports.org.
12. If any cheerleader will not be allowed to cheer in a game, the Head Coach must notify the parent/guardian, cheerleader, and PYSA Commissioner in writing with the reason clearly stated to justify actions. This notification must be given at least 24 hours prior to game time.
13. All Coaches will treat all cheerleaders equally and will stress the fact that cheerleading is a team sport. A Head Cheerleader/Captain may be selected for the entire season. In addition, an additional Head Cheerleader of the week should be assigned and each cheerleader, with the exception of the permanent Head Cheerleader/Captain, should hold the position at a minimum of one time during the season.
14. Coaches will not administer medication.
15. Coaches will ensure that squad members have water at all practices and games.
16. Any Coach with an unpaid balance due to PYSA for the Registration of their child or uniforms, unless waived by the board, shall not be eligible to coach.
17. Warm-up exercises and stretching should precede all practice sessions and games.
18. The cheering surface, location, lighting and weather conditions should be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity.

19. One coach from each squad must attend the league organized Stunting Clinic and/or Divisional Clinic to learn the proper techniques for stunting and obtain information about game day expectations. All coaches are encouraged to attend this clinic. If a representative coach is not present at the clinic, absolutely NO stunting will be allowed for their cheer squad for the entire season.
20. Cheer Coach's attire for games should be in good taste, represent your team colors and illustrate that you are serving as coach to said squad.

### **All Coaches Conduct**

1. PYSA regards bad sportsmanship as unnecessary and completely intolerable. Coaches are constantly being monitored and are considered role models, and will be held to an extremely high standard.
2. All Coaches are required to demonstrate positive sportsmanship and respect to their players, cheerleaders, team, parents, opposing team's players, cheerleaders, parents, coaches, and game officials. Coaches who are unable to demonstrate proper sportsmanship will be suspended from future coaching.
3. Any Coach that is ejected from a game for un-sportsmanlike conduct will be required to leave the field of play. Additionally, said coach will be unable to attend practice for the following week or coach the next scheduled game. The coach will be required to meet with the PYSA Cheer Commissioner in order to resume coaching. This includes post-season play. The continued demonstration of improper sportsmanship may constitute suspension from any number of practices and games, as the PYSA Cheer Commissioner deems necessary. No appeal is offered for a coach that has been ejected.
4. Coaches are responsible for assisting referees with the sportsmanship of all-playing and non-playing team members, as well as spectators and fellow coaches.

### **Allocation of Cheerleaders**

1. The number of squads and number of cheerleaders per squad, will be determined based on; the availability of cheer coaches, the number of registered cheerleaders, and the number of football teams., This allocation will also be dependent on the number of available squads within each division.
2. Squad size recommendations:
  - a. Kindergarten – 5 to 8 members (not to exceed 8)
  - b. 1st Grade – 8 to 10 members (not to exceed 10)
  - c. 2nd and 3rd Grade – 8 to 12 members (not to exceed 12)
  - d. 4th – 6th Grade – 10 to 15 members (not to exceed 15)
3. The League will assign girls to cheer squads using the following rules:
  - a. Guaranteed Assignments
    - i. Returning cheerleaders will be assigned to the same coach as in the prior year unless they have indicated on their registration form that they do not wish to return to their previous coach. It must be noted that this guarantee comes with the stipulation that the cheerleader meets the grade requirement for the squad.

- ii. Siblings of football players will be placed on the squad that cheers for the football sibling's team. It must be noted that this guarantee comes with the stipulation that the cheerleader meets the grade requirement for the squad.
  - iii. Cheer siblings that meet the grade requirement will be placed on the same squad.
  - iv. All Grade appeals must be approved by the PYSA Cheer Commissioner and Cheer Coach.
- b. General Assignments
  - i. Coach Request – a cheerleader may request a particular coach at registration. This request will be considered when making squad assignments; however, there is no guarantee.
  - ii. School – for new registrants, school will be the primary information used to make squad assignments. Where possible, cheerleaders attending the same school will be kept together. The number of cheerleaders registered for a particular school may make it impossible to keep all the cheerleaders on the same squad. In this case the date of registration will be the deciding factor.
- 4. The cheer coach will be given the opportunity to review the assignments and to provide input to the assignment process for those cheerleaders that have specified them as the “preferred coach” at registration.
- 5. The final roster will be provided to the Cheer Coach at the designated coach's meeting.
- 6. Cheer coaches must notify their team members within 24 hours of receiving their final roster. The PYSA Cheer Commissioner must be notified in a timely manner of any issues with the roster and this notification must occur before uniforms are ordered. Once uniforms are ordered, no changes to the roster may be made.

## **Practices**

Practice is defined as a gathering of cheerleaders, prospective cheerleaders, a squad or individual cheerleaders on a squad to discuss the subject of cheer, to view videos, to exercise or to study the sport.

1. A maximum of four (4) practices per week is permitted until the school begins.
2. Maximum number of weekly practices per grade level:
  - a. Kindergarten – 2 practices
  - b. 1st -6th Grade – 3 practices
  - c. An additional weekly practice can be added 2 weeks prior to the end of the season recital.
3. Kindergarten and 1st grade practices must not exceed 60 minutes and only one practice may be held per day. All other grade division's practices must not exceed 2 hours and only one practice is allowed per day.
4. All participants must be released by 9:00 p.m. on school nights.
5. The physical conditions of the cheerleaders must be monitored, especially during hot weather. Frequent breaks will be provided throughout the practice with water made available.

6. Practice will stop immediately if, in the coach's opinion, deteriorating weather might cause injury to the participants.

7. All practices will be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders.

8. Cheer coaches must register their practice location, days, and times with the PYSA Cheer Commissioner. Conflicts between practice locations will be resolved by registration dates.

### **Game Procedures**

1. Cheerleaders must arrive at least 30 minutes prior to game time for proper warm-up. Coaches may require additional time and will communicate that time prior to the beginning of the season.
2. At half-time, cheerleaders will take the center of playing field and be introduced to the spectators. The visiting squad will be introduced and perform at the center of the field first, then the home team will be introduced and perform at the center of the field.
3. All music played at PYSA events will need to be submitted to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner for approval 7 days prior to its planned usage. Allow one week for approval. (CD's distributed by the league are not required to be approved).
4. Following each game, the cheerleaders and coaches should line up with the football team and congratulate the opposing team on a good game, win or lose.
5. It is encouraged that at the end of the game, the cheerleaders are to meet with the coaches for any discussion/communication needed. No cheerleader should leave the field prior to being released by the Head Coach.
6. Cheerleaders should stand in a cheer stance while on the sidelines and the fields.
7. All music, dance & cheers must be done in good taste. Any performance viewed as improper may be immediately stopped by the PYSA Cheer Commissioner.

### **Stunting Safety Guidelines**

#### **Definitions:**

- Base – The bottom person(s) of a partner stunt or pyramid
  - Flyer – The top person of a partner stunt or pyramid
  - Girl(s) up – Designates how many flyers can be up on one base
  - Spotter – Any individual that is chosen by the Head Coach to assist with spotting (spotter's add support/stability, and act as an additional safety measure by being prepared to offer support to a cheerleader in the event of loss of balance or a fall). The spotter must be a registered coach or cheerleader from the squad. On occasions a parent may also be used as a spotter.
  - Cradle – A dismount from a stunt or pyramid in which the top person is caught in a face up, pike position before being placed on the floor or remounting into another stunt or pyramid.
1. Stunts are only to be performed if the squad is taught proper mounting, dismounting, and spotting procedures. The Head Coach is responsible for learning proper techniques prior to instructing the squad. Any stunt that is performed without using proper mounting, dismounting, or spotting will be called down immediately, whether during practice or a game. The stunt will not be performed again until approved by the PYSA Cheer Commissioner.

2. All stunts are limited to two girls up. Pyramids may extend to 3 girls up if the lower levels are on their hands and knees and the total height of the stunt does not exceed 10 ft.
3. No stunting is permitted on concrete.
4. Stunting guidelines are based on the grade level of the cheer squad.
  - a. Kinder/1st – may perform stunts and pyramids that are limited to one girl up and the flyers feet are at a maximum height of hop level with mandatory spotters on all flyers.
  - b. 2nd/3rd – may perform stunts and pyramids that are limited to two girls up and flyer's feet are at a maximum height of chest level with mandatory spotters on all flyers. The partner stunt, shoulder sit, is allowed since the weight is carried below chest level during the mount. However, a shoulder stand is not allowed. Cradle dismounting is not allowed.
  - c. 4th/5th – may perform stunts and pyramids that are without limits regarding a height level or flyers but requires mandatory spotters on all flyers at and above shoulder level. Cradles are allowed for dismounting, but no basket tosses are allowed.
  - d. 6th – may perform stunts and pyramids that are without limits regarding a height level or flyers but requires mandatory spotters on all flyers at and above shoulder level. Cradles and basket tosses are allowed with the proper amount of bases and spotters.
5. Landings for all jumps must bear weight on a least one-foot.
6. Prep to extension stunts with a cradle dismount require three bases to execute and perform. A fourth may be used, but will need to step out of the way at the time of the dismount.
7. Basket tosses, toe-pitch tosses, or similar tosses are limited to one flyer and must be dismounted to a cradle position by two of the original bases plus an additional spotter at the head and shoulder area. These tosses may not be directed so that the bases must move to catch the flyer.
8. The use of trampolines, springboards, or other height-increasing apparatus is prohibited.
9. These safety guidelines are general in nature and are not intended to cover all circumstances. All cheerleading gymnastics (tumbling, stunts, and pyramids) should be carefully reviewed and supervised by a qualified and knowledgeable coach. Any stunt or pyramid in question should be directed to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner.

### **Cheerleader Responsibilities**

1. Cheerleaders will sign and return the Code of Ethics to their Head Coach no later than the first practice.
2. Cheerleaders will be expected to respect their coaches' judgments and instructions.
3. Profanity and un-sportsmanlike conduct from any participant will not be tolerated.
4. Cheerleaders are required to attend all practices and games. It will be the responsibility of the cheerleaders to contact their coach prior to the practice or game if they cannot attend.
5. All cheerleaders will be required to attend and participate in a minimum of 75% of a team's practice in order to be considered for cheering at scheduled games. If a cheerleader does not meet the 75% minimum requirement prior to each scheduled game, the coach has the discretion of not allowing the cheerleader to participate in the half-time routine or one or more quarters of the game. Notice must be given to the cheerleader at least 24 hours prior to the game. The cheerleader will still be expected to be dressed and attend the game.

6. No cheerleader is to attempt any form of cheerleader gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids and jumps) without receiving proper training from a qualified instructor, trainer, or coach.
7. Cheerleaders must have their hair neat and pulled back (if longer than shoulder length) for all cheerleading practices and performances.
8. Cheerleaders must be in complete uniform for all games and without jewelry.
9. It is the responsibility of the cheerleader to learn all cheers and dance routines to the best of their ability.
10. Cheerleaders are responsible for cooperation with their teammates and coach(s) and must exhibit good sportsmanship at all practices, games, and other PYSA activities.
11. Each Cheerleader must remain on the sideline for the duration of the game.
12. There shall be no food or gum during pre-game warm-ups, games, or practices except during designated breaks. During breaks, cheerleaders may have drinks and snacks provided by a designated parent.
13. Cheerleaders are expected to dress appropriately for practices – comfortable clothing and tennis shoes (no sandals or flip-flops are allowed). Most practices are outside so dress for the weather.
14. Failure to comply with the above policies could ultimately result in suspension of cheerleader in future PYSA Cheer Events.

### **Parent/Guardian Responsibilities**

1. Parents are required to sign and return the Code of Ethics no later than the first practice.
2. Parents/Guardians are expected to cooperate with coaches and officials and support them in their endeavor to teach good sportsmanship and manners.
3. Parents/Guardians must see that their cheerleader is in uniform for all games and cheer activities.
4. Parents/Guardians must ensure that their cheerleader has transportation to and from practices and games. Be sure that your cheerleader arrives at the designated playing fields and is picked up on time.
5. Parents/Guardians should attend games and show enthusiasm for cheerleaders and football players.
6. Parents/Guardians are expected to ensure their cheerleader remains on the sidelines for the duration of the game.
7. For the safety of the cheerleaders, all communication during the game must go through the coaches.
8. Notify the PYSA Cheer Commissioner immediately with any concerns regarding any head and/or assistant coach.
9. Failure to comply with the above policies could result in suspension of child in future PYSA Cheer Events.
10. Parents/Guardians shall assist in League designated responsibilities; i.e. Concessions, Cheerfest, etc.

### **Uniforms**

1. Full dress uniforms shall be approved by the PYSA Cheer Commissioner
2. Uniforms must be neat and clean at all times. Cheerleaders not maintaining their uniforms to these standards will not be allowed to participate.
3. Any balance owed due to registration/uniforms will be taken care of prior to uniform distribution.

4. No jewelry, except for stud earrings, may be worn during practices or games.
5. All Head Coaches are entrusted with the responsibility of picking out the uniforms for their squad. The cost of the uniform has been included in registration and DOES NOT include cheer shoes. The Head Coach will also be entrusted with the responsibility of ensuring that the accessories purchased are maintained to a minimum and agreed upon as a squad. The total cost of additional items will not exceed \$75 and this DOES NOT include cheerleading shoes. All expenditures outside this amount are optional. Sponsorship money may be used to procure additional items above the \$75 limit. This amount is a maximum, and is not intended to be the recommended spending level.
6. Due to weather conditions, it may necessary for cheerleaders to wear leggings, a long-sleeve undergarment or a jacket with their uniform. If a specific team undergarment is declared mandatory by the coach, not optional, it must be covered in the \$75 additional cost items above.

### **PYSA Cheerfest**

1. It is mandatory that all teams participate in the Cheerfest unless excused by the PYSA Cheer Commissioner
2. Each team must perform a routine consisting of cheers, chants, and/or dances.
3. PYSA uniforms are mandatory at the recital. There will be no alterations of any kind to the uniforms. In keeping with other organized competitions, only regular uniforms, pom poms, cheer megaphones, and hand held signs may be used.
4. It is the responsibility of each head coach to select music, choreograph a routine, and prepare a selection of cheers to be performed at the recital. It is acceptable for the members of the squad to aid the coach in the choreography of the routine. Routines from Competitive Cheer programs may not be used for this event. It is acceptable to purchase videos or use routines taught at PYSA Cheer Camps for creation of the routine.
5. The music CD must be submitted to the PYSA Cheer Commissioner for approval at least one week prior to teaching the routine to the cheerleaders or one month prior to the Cheer Extravaganza, whichever occurs first. This CD must only contain the one song that will be used and will be kept by the PYSA Board for use in the recital. The CD will not be returned.
6. Each squad will be allowed a maximum of 3.5 minutes for their performance, not to exceed 4 minutes from entry to exit.

### **Parents and Spectators**

1. It is recommended that parents not stay at practices. If parents do stay, please refrain from any involvement as this distracts the cheerleaders and delays practice for all.
2. No siblings are allowed in the cheer area during practice or games.
3. Parents will sign a Parent's Code of Ethics prior to the season, and are requested to conduct themselves accordingly, and in a manner that shows good sportsmanship and respect to all involved.
4. Young athletes form attitudes on games and officials directly from what is demonstrated by their parents and the spectators. Parents and spectators who cannot demonstrate proper sportsmanship will be required to leave the game site and will not be allowed at the next game.
5. If a parent is ejected from the game their child may be subject to ejection from the game as well.
6. Parents ejected from the game will be advised to leave the field immediately and are considered ejected for a 24 hour period.

7. If a parent has a complaint concerning a game official or officiating, that parent should voice their complaint through the head coach, who will in turn discuss the matter with the official involved at the appropriate time. If satisfaction is not obtained at this level the parent has the right to file a formal complaint that will be handled by the PYSA Board.

### **Miscellaneous**

1. PYSA Cheer will furnish individual awards to all participants at the end of the season.
2. There will be no refunds of registration fees once the order is placed for uniforms.
3. If a PYSA cheer squad is assigned to support a PYSA football team participating in a league other PYSA; the rules, guidelines, policies and procedures, by-laws, etc of that organization must be followed as well.