



CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK

Colonial Beach Middle School

I. PURPOSE	2
II. MEMBERSHIP	2
A. Eligibility	2
B. Tryouts	3
C. Teams	3
III. COMMITMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, & EXPECTATIONS	3
A. General Commitment	3
B. Summer Commitment	3
C. Practice Expectations	4
D. Game Expectations	5
E. Safety	6
F. Health and Nutrition	7
G. Injuries	7
IV. CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE	8
A. Conduct	8
B. Absences and Tardies	8
C. Excused Absences	9
D. Unexcused Absences	9
E. Consequences	9
F. Challenge Resolution	10
V. AWARDS & LETTERING	11
A. Awards	11
B. Lettering	11
VI. UNIFORMS	11
VII. FINANCIAL INFORMATION	11
A. Financial Commitment	11
B. Fundraisers	11
VIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS	12
IX. CAPTAINS	12

CBMS DRIFTERS CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of the Colonial Beach Middle School (CBMS) Drifters Cheerleading program can be summarized in the following:

Enthusiasm - Cheerleaders will promote school spirit, which will generate pride and enthusiasm from the student body, staff, parents, and fans and direct it toward encouraging all athletes.

Excellence - Cheerleaders will develop an attitude of excellence by giving their very best effort to perfect every cheer and routine.

Example - Cheerleaders should be an example of character in what they say, how they act, and how they interact with others.

The CBMS Drifters Cheerleading Team will:

1. Consist of members who conduct themselves with character, integrity, and class.
2. Strive to be their best in every area of their lives.
3. Be unified.
4. Be team-oriented.
5. Respect others and themselves.
6. Be a respected team by the students, faculty, and administration.
7. Promote school spirit inside and outside the school.
8. Encourage their teammates and others.
9. Work to be the best cheerleaders they can be.
10. Practice every time like they are performing for a national championship.
11. Be recognized by other schools as one of the best cheer programs in the State.
12. Be in top-notch condition.
13. Arrive at games, competitions, and other events early and prepared.
14. Be on the cheer team because they love the sport of cheerleading

II. MEMBERSHIP

A. Eligibility

1. Cheerleaders are subject to the minimum academic eligibility requirements. If a cheerleader is failing (receiving an "F") in two or more classes, she is ineligible. Please see the Consequences section of this Handbook. Someone

wishing to try out for cheerleading may be asked not to try out if the athlete has been ineligible several times throughout the current school year.

2. All cheerleaders must submit to the Coach a VHSL Physical Examination form signed by a licensed physician (MD), physician's assistant (PA), or nurse practitioner (NP). Physicals must be turned in at the beginning of the season. You **MUST** have a physical before tryouts – no exceptions.
3. All cheerleaders must submit all district and school paperwork to the coach prior to tryouts.
4. No prior cheerleading experience is required; however, all applicants must be willing to learn tumbling, stunts, and routines.

B. Tryouts

1. All paperwork must be turned in **BEFORE** the first day of tryouts, to Coach Kari.
2. Students must attend the scheduled tryout clinic session(s) unless the head coach has approved otherwise in advance.
3. Wear any kind of Drifters shirt and black shorts for tryout days. You may wear tank tops, but you must not show cleavage.
4. Wear athletic shoes and **WHITE** socks, preferably cheer shoes.
5. Hair must be completely off your shoulders and out of your eyes.
6. Remove **ALL** jewelry. Even if you have a new piercing, you will be asked to remove it to participate.
7. Bring a water bottle filled with water.
8. Students already enrolled at the school during the tryout session(s) must try out during that time.
9. If new students come to the school, a special tryout will be scheduled if there is space on the team.

C. Teams

1. The size and number of teams will be officially determined the week of tryouts based on interest.
2. After tryouts, each cheerleader will receive a list of their strengths and areas for improvement.
3. Alternates will be required to practice with the team, dress out, and attend games.
4. Scores will not be distributed.

III. **COMMITMENT, RESPONSIBILITIES, & EXPECTATIONS**

A. General Commitment

1. Being part of the Colonial Beach Middle School Cheerleading Team is a year-round commitment. Please do not take this decision lightly.

B. Summer Commitment

1. A detailed calendar of events, practices, and camps will be provided during the week of tryouts for May - August activities.
2. Cheerleaders are strongly encouraged to attend all clinics and practices.
3. Please notify the coach in writing, preferably by adding to the BAND calendar, as soon as you know of all summer vacations and days the cheerleader will not be at practice or other events.
4. Summer practices will take place one to three times a week, with most of July off.
5. Cheerleaders will need to complete a summer workout schedule.
6. Cheerleaders must participate in at least nine practices starting on July 31 to be eligible to cheer at the first game.
7. Cheerleaders must participate in at least twenty practices starting on July 31 to be eligible to stunt at the first game.
8. The following will be required of the cheerleader before the first game:
 - a. Sharp, tight motions
 - b. All sidelines and cheers (around 75 cheers)
 - c. Up to 4 Half-time routines

C. Practice Expectations

1. Practice Times and Schedules
 - a. Cheerleaders will practice one to three times a week.
 - b. Generally, regular school year practices will take place after school between 5:00-8:00.
 - i. Coaches will set the days and times of practices and notify all cheerleaders in writing, via the BAND app of the required practice days.
 - c. Schedules will also be placed on the website.
 - d. Spring and Summer: A detailed calendar of practice and other events will be distributed at tryouts.
 - e. Fall: A detailed calendar with practices and other events will be distributed in early August.
 - f. Winter: A detailed calendar with practices and other events will be distributed in November.
 - g. Schedules will be based on the best information available when they are distributed. Cheerleaders and parents are asked to remain flexible and cooperative when last-minute changes to the schedule arise. Coaches are encouraged to limit schedule changes to minimize confusion.
 - h. Cancellations due to inclement weather will be announced as early in the day as possible so that rides home are not compromised. Practices will always be canceled in conjunction with school district cancellations.
 - i. Coaches may occasionally call additional practices or meetings for special events.
2. Practice Guidelines

- a. Cheerleaders must arrive to practice on time and ready.
- b. Mats must be rolled out prior to the designated practice start time to allow for the most productive practice.
- c. Cheerleaders must be dressed in designated practice clothes:
 - i. Soffe/cheer shorts - Black, white, yellow, grey. *Briefs should be worn under shorts.
 - ii. Drifter shirt or plain black or white shirt
 - iii. White socks/Cheer shoes.
- d. Hair must be pulled back from the face and shoulders - No hair should be in the eyes.
- e. Bring a FULL water bottle to every practice.
- f. No jewelry. It must be removed before practices or games. DO NOT get any new piercings once you become a cheerleader. You WILL be asked to remove all piercings for practice.
- g. No gum chewing.
- h. Nails must be short. False nails will be asked to be removed.
- i. Cell phones must be OFF, and you may not text or use the phone during practice or a break.
- j. Please bring a positive attitude to practice.
- k. Leave any problems at the door. If something needs to be dealt with in order to have a productive practice, please notify the coach in private PRIOR to practice starting.
- l. Each cheerleader needs to eat healthy throughout the day and drink plenty of water. Please do not arrive to practice with an empty stomach.
- m. Violating any of these guidelines will result in extra conditioning for the ENTIRE team. Repeated violations may result in benching or dismissal from the team.

D. Game Expectations

1. General Guidelines

- a. Cheerleaders MUST know all cheers, sideline dances, and half-time routines BEFORE school starts. If a cheerleader does not know all the routines, she will be benched from games until she knows all the material. This could jeopardize the cheerleader's ability to letter and compete.
- b. Must attend all games assigned.
- c. Must display high energy and interaction with the crowd. Cheer constantly.
- d. Appearance
 - i. Must be dressed in the proper uniform (shell, liner, skirt, briefs, socks, shoes, etc.) and ready (hair done, jewelry off, etc.) for the games a half hour prior to the game or at the scheduled meeting time.
 - ii. Uniform must be clean and not wrinkled.

- iii. Hair should be pulled off the face and shoulders and out of the eyes.
- iv. Nails should not be too long.
- e. Eat before arriving at the game or before the scheduled arrival time; you will not be allowed to eat during halftime.
- f. Do not leave the game until the end of the game unless permission is granted.
- g. Pay attention during the game.
- h. Do not talk on the sidelines.
- i. Display good sportsmanship to the opposing team.
- j. No gum chewing.
- k. Bring water bottles. You may only drink water or a sports drink right before and during the game—no energy drinks, sugary drinks, or junk food.
- l. Refrain from stretching in front of the crowd.
- m. Cheerleaders must know all the cheer sidelines before they can perform at games.
- n. Cell phones must be OFF, and you may not text or use the phone during games.

E. Safety

1. Every precaution will be taken to ensure the safety of the cheerleading team.
2. All skills will be taught properly and in the proper progression based on the ability of the team and the coach's judgment of their ability level.
3. Cheerleaders are prohibited from performing stunts or tumbling when a coach is not present.
4. In the event of an emergency, a coach will remain with the injured athlete until paramedics arrive.
5. One member of the team will be assigned to call 911, and another will be assigned to go to the front doors to guide paramedics to the location of the injured athlete and coach.
6. Once 911 has been called, the parent will be notified.
7. Treatment will be determined based on the athlete's best interest and emergency professionals' recommendations.
8. The coach will write an accident report within 24 hours of the injury and file it with the school.
9. Coaches will follow up with the athlete and parent within 24 hours of injury.
10. When an injury is severe enough to warrant a visit to the trainer, doctor, or hospital, the athlete must provide either a note from her doctor or verbal communication between the coach and the trainer before she will be allowed to actively participate in practices again. Until that time, and depending on the injury, the member must still attend all practices, games, and events in uniform but remain on the bench or sidelines.
11. Depending on the situation, if the injury does not warrant a 911 call, the coach will notify the parents during or after practice.
12. No coach may dispense medication of any kind to a student.

13. If a student has a life-threatening medical condition and requires prescription medication, an inhaler for asthma, or an epinephrine pen for allergies, the parent must notify the coach of the health plan in writing. (Refer to the student handbook for proper protocol.)
14. Students will be responsible for being aware of any allergen or activity that may trigger a life-threatening reaction and for keeping an inhaler, epinephrine pen, medication, etc., readily available for an emergency. Neither the coach nor the school will be held responsible for ambulance rides, hospitalization, doctor's fees, etc. if the student develops a life-threatening situation due to her own negligence or by not keeping necessary medications readily available. Parents are responsible for providing Health Plans to the coaching staff before the season starts.
15. If injured, treat injuries promptly and thoroughly.
16. Although injuries are unfortunate accidents, they may result in being removed from certain routines. Just because a cheerleader is cleared to participate on the day of an event or competition does not mean she will automatically be put back into the routine. Proper practice prior to a performance is important. A coach will make this decision on a case-by-case basis.

F. Health and Nutrition

1. Maintain a healthy diet.
2. Keep in good physical condition.
3. Get proper rest.
4. Water and sports drinks are the only beverages allowed during practice, camp, games, and competitions.
5. Cheerleaders are encouraged to eat lunch at school and bring a snack to eat before practice or games.
6. Cheerleaders are also encouraged to increase calcium intake during cheer season, as female athletes between the ages of 15-19 are twice as likely as male athletes to suffer stress fractures.

G. Injuries

1. If a cheerleader is injured for any reason and needs to sit out of practice or performance, they must have a doctor's note. The note must specifically say what the cheerleader is cleared or not cleared to do in the following four categories: cheers/dances, jumps, stunts, tumbling. Be SPECIFIC with the doctor about what your role is on the team. Describe what you do. Doctors in general are not educated on cheerleading.
2. You MUST be cleared for two of the four activities to cheer on the sidelines. You MUST be cleared for ALL activities to compete.
3. When a cheerleader is cleared to participate again, the coach will work to put the cheerleader back into the routine based on the following: length of time sitting out for an injury, the safety of the team, adequate practice time before the next performance, and several other factors.

4. The coaches will not tolerate one cheerleader's situation being compared to another's. Please respect the coaches' decision as the safety of the cheerleader and the entire team needs to be considered.
5. The coaches cannot guarantee the cheerleader will have the same spot in the routines when returning from injury.
6. Adequate practice time must take place before cheering at a game or performing at a game or competition. The coach will assess the circumstance and determine this.
7. Should injury and sitting out happen frequently, the coach may need to re-evaluate the cheerleader's position on the team.

IV. **CONDUCT & DISCIPLINE**

A. **Conduct**

1. By accepting the privilege and honor of being a cheerleader, the student accepts the fact that her actions are more prominent than those not associated with such an activity.
2. Because of this prominence and because members represent the school, exemplary behavior is mandatory at all times, anywhere in the school community, and at all functions where members are recognized as representatives of the school.
3. Any member of the cheer team who participates in any activity, whether in school or outside school, that damages the cheer team's reputation in any way may receive consequences and possibly be removed from the team.
4. Any member who violates the student and athlete code of conduct will also warrant the involvement of parents, administration, and possibly police.
5. Proper appearance is required at all times, with appropriate clothing for the occasion.
6. All members must show the utmost respect for the coaches, school staff, and, most of all, each other. Disrespectful attitudes will be addressed individually. If problems continue or worsen, they may result in benching or removal from the squad.
7. Be your best in practice, at games, and at competitions.
8. Show good sportsmanship.
9. No foul language should be used in practice, at camp, games, competitions, or other school events, or when in any uniform or clothing representing the school and the cheer team.
10. Members must display proper behavior even in cyberspace. Any information revealed on an internet site like Instagram, TikTok, Snapchat, or Facebook may result in school sanctions. Any photos of cheerleaders deemed inappropriate will result in an established consequence and must be removed immediately.
11. Public displays of affection are never considered appropriate, especially in uniform, at games, or in school. Excessive physical contact is unacceptable

and warrants a consequence established by the team and coaches at the beginning of the season.

12. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs are not allowed at any time. If engaging in these activities, it may result in the removal from the team.

B. Absences and Tardies

1. Cheerleaders will condition for being tardy.
2. Cheerleaders absent from practice for any reason will be required to do additional conditioning within a week of the missed practice.
3. Cheerleaders must provide a note or email from a parent (or teacher) if she misses practice, leaves practice early, or is tardy (when a parent/teacher can excuse a tardy).
4. If a cheerleader is absent from school, the parent must text or email the coach in the morning to excuse her from practice.
5. Notify the coach, in writing preferably, by text or BAND app, before practice if you will not be present. If it is within an hour before practice, please text the coach.
6. When a member is absent, it is her responsibility to call the captain to find out what was missed. This includes material that was taught on the day the member was absent.
7. The cheerleader must make every effort to learn the material before the next scheduled practice.
8. Excessive tardies and/or absences may result in being benched, placed on another team, or may be removed from the team.

C. Excused Absences

1. Personal illness or accident
 - a. If a cheerleader is injured and misses any practice or performance because of the injury, she must provide a doctor's release before she may resume cheerleading activities. Injured cheerleaders must attend practices and performances in uniform and support their squad unless they are physically unable to attend.
2. Funeral or death in the family
3. Weddings in the immediate family (parents, grandparents, siblings)
4. Special school activities which are approved in advance by the coach
5. If a cheerleader has had four or more excused absences, the coach will discuss this with a parent and cheerleader.

D. Unexcused Absences

1. Out-of-town trips and vacations during the school year
2. Work
3. Social gatherings
4. Failure to inform the coach in advance (exceptions are made if the situation does not allow for this).

E. Consequences

1. A cheerleader may be benched upon not complying with any part of this handbook.
2. Conditioning will be applied for not arriving ready for practice, including, but not limited to, wearing jewelry, not having shoes, not in proper practice clothes, etc.
3. Consequences will be applied for not respecting the rules, talking during practice, or having a disrespectful attitude.
4. An unexcused absence equals one bench from the next day or evening games. After two unexcused absences, the coach will discuss this with a parent and cheerleader. It may result in being moved to a different team, being benched, or removed from the team or competition team. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
5. Three unexcused tardies equals one bench from the next day or evening of games. Excessive tardies will be discussed with the parent and cheerleader, and further consequences may be enforced.
6. Disrespect or insubordination will result in additional conditioning, one bench from the next day or evening of games, and/or another consequence based on the situation.
7. If a cheerleader is ineligible for grades, she will not be allowed to wear her uniform to school or to games, but she will be required to attend all games and competitions wearing her warm-ups and sitting with the coach. An ineligible cheerleader can attend practice and participate, but she will work with the coach to see if time spent doing homework and studying would be more worthwhile.
8. If a cheerleader is ineligible for grades more than three times, she will be removed from the team.
9. Excessive absences, even if excused, are detrimental to the team. It may result in being moved to a different team, being benched, or removed from the team or competition team. This will be determined on a case-by-case basis.
10. If caught using alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, the cheerleader will be benched from the next two games for the first offense, which may result in dismissal from the team, based on the situation.
11. Alcohol, tobacco, and other drug usage on the first offense will likely result in dismissal from competing in competitions.
12. Repeated insubordination or an uncooperative attitude may result in dismissal from the team.
13. All unexcused absences may be under review on a case-by-case basis.
14. If a cheerleader continually breaks the rules outlined in this handbook, it may result in dismissal from the team.
15. Every attempt will be made to make consequences fair and equal and to make the consequences of actions known ahead of time. Parents will be informed of problem situations.
16. Because all situations may not be foreseen and thus outlined here, each will be dealt with in a manner decided upon by the coach with assistance from the administration if deemed necessary.

F. Challenge Resolution

1. Any problems that the students may have with the squad or the coach need to be addressed by the student first.
2. Always allow at least 24 hours for the coach to decide and readdress the problem. If talking to the coach does not change the problem, a parent may become involved in the situation. (Again, allow at least 24 hours for the coach to think about the problem, make a decision, or answer a question.)
3. The proper chain of command is as follows:
 - a. Student/coach
 - b. Student and parent/coach
 - c. Student and parent/ school administrator
4. Cheerleaders are encouraged to resolve problems between themselves or with the assistance of captains. If the situation does not change, the coaches need to be notified and will deal with personal relationships between team members according to the situation.
5. If any cheerleader feels her personal safety is threatened, she should notify the coach, school counselor, school resource officer, or administrator immediately.

V. AWARDS & LETTERING

A. Awards

1. Cheerleaders will be recognized in March each year at an awards ceremony.
2. Special awards will be given to cheerleaders who display excellence in cheerleading.

B. Lettering

1. Middle school will not have lettering

VI. UNIFORMS

- A. Each Cheerleader will be provided a uniform. It is expected that uniforms remain in good condition and that they fit. If any part of the uniform is not returned in the same condition it was given, it is the responsibility of the cheerleader to re-purchase these items.
- B. It is important that shoes are taken care of. They must be in good condition for competition. If they are not in good condition, a cheerleader may be asked to buy another pair of shoes.

VII. FINANCIAL INFORMATION

A. Financial Commitment

1. Cheerleading is a financial commitment. All cheerleaders are expected to make payments at the set due date.

B. Fundraisers

1. Fundraisers will take place throughout the year to help offset the cost of cheerleading.
2. Individual fundraisers are not mandatory but will benefit that individual by helping offset some costs associated with cheerleading. Anything leftover may be used to help cover general team expenses.
3. TEAM fundraisers are mandatory. All members are required to participate.

VIII. PARENT/GUARDIAN EXPECTATIONS

- A. Parents/guardians are expected to support the coach in following this Handbook, understanding that it is put in place in the best interest of the team.
- B. Parents/guardians are expected to ensure their cheerleader arrives at practices, games, and other activities at the designated time.
- C. Parents/guardians agree to notify the coach as far in advance as possible or as soon as they know about absences or tardies to practice, games, events, etc.
- D. Parents/guardians agree to carefully check the website calendar and weekly email update and notify the coach if they see a conflict with another school activity or if they see a mistake on the cheer calendar.
- E. Parents/guardians need to help enforce their cheerleader conditioning at home. Conditioning is essential to prevent injuries and ensure the cheerleader is in the proper condition to attempt a progression of skills at practice.
- F. If a parent/guardian has a concern, it is crucial they take the problem directly to the coach and not discuss it with other parents or cheerleaders.
- G. Parents/guardians understand decisions regarding the team and each cheerleader are made in the best interest of the team.
- H. Parents/guardians understand if they create conflict among the team, other parents, coaches, or administration, and it cannot be worked out with the coach, it will be taken to the administration.
- I. Parents/guardians will not drink alcohol, partake in tobacco (smoked or smokeless), or other drugs in the presence of school cheerleaders at scheduled team events. This includes when a parent/guardian is driving cheerleaders to an event.
- J. Parents/guardians will not drink alcohol or partake in tobacco (smoked or smokeless) or other drugs when wearing any school cheerleading apparel.

IX. CAPTAINS

- A. Shortly after tryouts, a captain and/or co-captains will be named for the team.
- B. A good captain leads by example. She respects and encourages her team members. She respects her coaches, teachers, and others who have authority over her. She is reliable and someone the team naturally looks to as a leader.
- C. The position will not automatically be given to the most senior member of the squad.
- D. The team will have a vote on captains.
- E. The coach will count the votes and may appoint a different selection for the captain if necessary.

- F. The entire team must respect the captain's position, whether or not she voted for the captain selected.
- G. The captain(s) leads the team on the sidelines.
- H. The captain(s) will help lead practices, including warm-ups and conditioning.
- I. The captain(s) will be given a list of specific responsibilities by the coaches.

NOTES

**** The coach reserves the right to make adjustments to this handbook during the season and will notify the team in writing of any changes.

****Please be sure to sign the agreement in the tryout packet and return it prior to tryouts.