

Casteel High School



Cheer

Handbook & Expectations

2019-2020

Head Coach
Sabrina Romonoski

I. Athlete Expectations

Commitment

- Varsity Cheer (alternates included) has the longest season of any sport on campus. Our season encompasses both the fall and winter sports seasons, as well as any extended competition seasons (February - April). It is expected that each athlete is committed from the time of tryouts to the end of the season, which ends with the final basketball game and/or final competition.
 - Commitments include attendance at practices, games and any other required activities, such as competitions, fundraising, community events, performances, or participating in school spirit activities. These commitments may occur on weekends and/or during school breaks that include but are not limited to: Summer Break, Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and President's Day.
 - Casteel Cheer supports and encourages involvement in school activities and sports on campus; however, Casteel Cheer obligations are still expected to be met by all athletes, regardless of outside commitments.
 - Athletes must let Head Coach know if they're involved in other Casteel activities. Together, the athlete and coach will determine how to share time/commitment between Casteel activities.
 - Note: Sharing time/commitment between Casteel activities may limit the athlete's involvement in the team. If the athlete isn't attending practices, he/she may not be able to be placed in a routine. This will be determined by the coach.
 - It is not recommended for athletes to have jobs. If an athlete chooses to have a job during season, Casteel Cheer should obligations are still expected to be met by the athlete.
 - Tardies and absences for jobs or outside activities/sports will not be recognized as "excused."
 - Cheer team members are expected to know all cheers, chants and routines prior to a game/performance. If an athlete does not know the material prior to the game/performance, s/he will not participate in the performance. Performance readiness is determined at the coach's discretion.
- IV/Game Day Cheer season encompasses both the fall and winter sports seasons (July-February). It is expected that each athlete is committed from the time of tryouts to the end of the season, which ends with the final basketball game, whether regular season or play-off game.
 - Commitments include attendance at practices, games and any other required activities, such as fundraising, community events, performances, or participating in school spirit activities. These commitments may occur on weekends and/or during school breaks that include but are not limited to: Summer Break, Fall Break, Winter Break, Spring Break, Labor Day, Veteran's Day, Martin Luther King Jr. Day, and President's Day.
 - If involved in an outside studio or other activity on campus, Casteel Cheer obligations are still expected to be met by the athlete.
 - It is not recommended for athletes to have jobs.
 - Tardies and absences incurred due to jobs or outside activities will not be recognized as "excused."
 - Cheer team members are expected to know all cheers, chants and routines. If an athlete does not know the material prior to a game/performance, s/he will not participate in the performance. Performance readiness is determined at the coach's discretion.

Student

Parent

II. Team Policies

Attendance

- All team members are expected to attend all scheduled cheer events on time, dressed and ready to participate. This includes practices, games, and other events required by the coach (including, but not limited to: camps, clinics, team tumbling, fundraising, appearances, and volunteer events).
- Excused absences include only those absences incurred due to an illness that is contagious and excused by a doctor. Absences due to *immediate* family emergencies will be excused with written notice from parent.
 - Official absence documentation must be given to the coach at the following practice or emailed to the coach within 24 hours.
 - Messages delivered by another teammate will not be accepted.
- Unexcused absences may include appointments, family events (i.e. birthday celebrations, relatives in town, etc.), and vacations.
- In all cases of absences, the athlete and/or parent is required to communicate the absence prior to the practice or event missed - no exceptions.

- Results of missing a practice, whether excused or unexcused, may include non-participation in performances or competitions. Participation readiness is determined at the coach's discretion.

Attendance (continued)

- Injured or ineligible athletes are expected to attend all practices and events.
- Attending cheer practices/events should not be used as a child's personal punishment from a parent.
- If a cheerleaders' attendance is affecting the team performance and dynamics, he/she may be placed on a strict attendance contract before possibly being dismissed from the team.

Student

Parent

NFHS Spirit Rules and Team Safety

1. No jewelry or any kind may be worn at any cheer practice, event, or while in uniform.
2. No glitter is to be worn at any cheer practice, game, or performance.
3. Hair must be in a secure ponytail and off the shoulders at all cheer practices, games, performances, or events unless otherwise stated by the coach.
4. Fingernails must be kept short. Artificial nails are not permitted. Nail polish may only be worn at games or events when permission is given by the coach. No nail color may be worn at competitions.
5. Practice clothes must be acceptable for athletic activity and appropriate shoes must be worn at all times.
6. Gum chewing and eating is considered hazardous(?) and will not be permitted during practices or performances.
7. Team members will travel to and from away games and competitions on school-provided transportation according to CUSD policy. Approval of an athlete leaving an event with a parent/guardian will be approved on a case-by-case basis and will require further documentation that requires parent signatures prior to the event.

Student

Parent

Communication

- Due to the length of the Cheer season, communication is considered vital.
- Athletes are expected to learn to communicate for themselves, with teammates, coaches, teachers, and staff. Athletes are expected to come directly to their coach with any concerns including, but not limited to: practices, skills, placement, injuries, tardies, absences, routines, competition, or personal matters affecting the team and/or program.
 - Athletes are expected to communicate (even anonymously) any concerns regarding teammates and/or concerns that may negatively affect the Casteel Cheer program. Athletes should include any documentation necessary to address these concerns with the coach and/or team.
- Athletes and parents are expected to follow the 24-hour rule (wait 24 hours after an event before addressing concerns with coach) and follow the correct chain of command when a concern arises. To ensure the most effective resolution, the athlete, not the parent, should communicate directly with the coach(es) with any concerns. Parents should communicate directly with the coach before considering reaching out to the Athletic Director, Principal, or other CUSD personnel.
 - The coach(es) will make every effort to respond within 24 hours of receipt of email during the regular school week (Monday-Friday). Please remember that when coaches aren't at work/practices, they are with their families and may not be able to respond immediately.
 - **Please do not use coach(es)' personal devices to discuss cheer-related questions or concerns.** This includes texting or calling on their cell phones or messaging them on social media.
- The coach(es) will not discuss the following issue with parents: performances, rank within the team, other teammates, scheduling of practices/events.
- Failure to follow the communication expectations may result in consequences at the coach(es)' discretion.

Student

Parent

Performance/Competition:

- Participation in performance/competition is at the discretion of the coach(es). The coach has the responsibility to choose the members that will participate based on skill level, attendance, attitude, and the overall needs of the team.

- The coach is solely responsible for the removal and/or addition of athletes from performance/competition routines due to skill gain/loss, disciplinary action, consequence of poor attendance, attitude, or work ethic, consequence of disrespect and/or inappropriate behavior made by either the athlete or parent, or as a consequence of lack of communication by either athlete or parent.

Performance/Competition: (continued)

- The coach has the responsibility to choose the division, size, and/or level of the team(s) will be competing at for each competition. These decisions may be changed at any point throughout the year.
- It is expected that all team members commit to compete for the entire competition season, whether they are in or out of competition routines.

Student

Parent

Costs

- All costs were explained in the tryout packet that parents/athletes were required to sign prior to try outs.
- All athletes and their families are responsible for their individual costs.
- If items are lost or damaged, athletes are responsible for purchasing and replacing these items at their cost.
- Fundraising is not optional and may help offset some of the individual costs.
- There will not be any refunds after money is paid into the cheer accounts.
- There will not be any refunds if an athlete quits or is dismissed from the team.

Student

Parent

Eligibility and Grades

- All athletes are expected to maintain passing grades (As,Bs,Cs), good attendance, exceptional class performance, and positive teacher recommendations for tryouts as well as during their time on the team.
- Below-average grades (Ds and Fs) are unacceptable and district policy will be followed.
- Grade checks will be provided weekly and teacher check-ins will be completed at least once a month.
- Unacceptable classroom behavior and/or below-average grades may result in a reflection/redirection plan and/or benching from performances and games. Recurring ineligibility may result in an academic contract for the athlete prior to dismissal from the team.
- Academic concerns (low grades, poor test grades, studying for midterms/finals, etc.) are not acceptable reasons to miss practices, games, and events. Athletes/parents are encouraged to address these concerns with coaches if applicable.

Student

Parent

Character

- It is expected that members of the Casteel Cheer team will conduct themselves as official student representatives of not only Casteel High School, but also of the Chandler Unified School District.
- Athletes will promote good sportsmanship and school spirit through cooperation, respect, and courtesy to teammates, other students, coaches, volunteers, faculty, and administrators.
- Athletes will maintain a good attitude during both team activities and academic classes.
- Athletes will accept the responsibility of providing positive leadership both when cheering and not cheering.
- Athletes will strive to exhibit strong moral character and conduct by being dependable, trustworthy, loyal, and respectful of the rights of others.
- It is expected that athletes learn to work as team, despite any personal differences that may arise.
- It is expected that athletes will lead by example both on and off campus.

Student

Parent

Athlete Behavior/Conduct

- Athletes will not use profanity or inappropriate gestures.
- Athletes will not disrespect teammates or other students.
- Athletes will not disrespect coaches, teachers, or any other adult.

- Athletes will not use, or attempt to use, possess, sell, or assist any other students in the use of illegal substances including, but not limited to: such as vapes, tobacco, alcohol, illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, or steroids.
- Athletes will not exhibit any behavior that is considered detrimental to others, including his/her team or school. This includes, but is not limited to: illegal acts, insubordination, theft, vandalism, fighting, possession of a weapon, lying to school officials, falsifying information, hazing, bullying*, cyberbullying*, harassment*, intimidation*, or public sexual acts.
 - * Please refer to CUSD’s definition of these terms on last page of this handbook.

Athlete Behavior/Conduct (continued)

- Athletes will not display poor sportsmanship.
- Athletes will follow all school and district rules, including dress code.

Student

Parent

Social Media/Electronics

We support and recognize the student-athletes’ rights to freedom of speech, expression, and association, including the use of social networks. In this context, however, each athlete must remember that representing Casteel Cheer is a privilege. As a team member, it is expected that you will portray yourself, your team, your school, and your school district in a positive manner at all times. This includes ALL social media outlets.

- If an athlete utilizes social media accounts, s/he is responsible for anything that is posted on these platforms. This includes, but is not limited to: photos, statuses, tweets (“likes” or “retweets”), groups joined, pictures posted of the athlete, and statuses or tweets that others post to a cheerleader’s page.
- If an athlete is sending messages as a joke, but a teammate or coach could read or interpret it as a mean or derogatory comment, s/he should not send it. Comments, symbols, or insinuations regarding the use of drugs, alcohol, smoking, vaping, parties, or anything that could mean dismissal from the team should not be made.
- Posting/sending “nudes” (partially or fully) of any kind, even privately, is legally classified as distribution of child pornography and may result in immediate dismissal from the program.
- Any posts deemed inappropriate by the coach may result in benching, suspension, or dismissal, depending on the severity of the post. Consequences given to a team member will be at the sole discretion of the coach.
- Any program member that has social media accounts must follow the Casteel Cheer accounts as well as allow the Casteel Cheer accounts to follow them. This includes all personal, spam, and “fake” accounts.
- If an athlete adds/creates an additional account (other than the ones listed in the tryout packet), it is his/her responsibility to notify and share his/her username with a coach immediately.

Student

Parent

Team Image Rules

- Excessive public displays of affection will not be allowed while an athlete is in uniform.
- Spirit clothing will be worn when assigned (practices, school, and events.)
- Athletes should be in full uniform as directed by coach. Athletes will not cheer/perform if they aren’t correctly dressed. Additional consequences may be given for incorrect attire.
- Cell phone use is not permitted at any cheer practice or event without permission of the coach. Coaches will collect cell phones during practices, games, camps, and competitions as necessary. Coaches will provide another way for parents to communicate with coaches in case of an emergency.
- Athletes will maintain a natural hair color for all cheer activities.

Student

Parent

Athlete Behavior Incidents

If a problem occurs that affects the team, the coach(es), the individual, or the school, coaches will follow the steps outlined below. It is our hope that these steps will assist in building cohesion and trust within the team, maximize practice time, and reference the three C’s of Casteel High School, as well as address the standards and expectations that are expected from a Casteel Cheerleader. This includes, in or out of uniform, at school, during practice, or games, on social media, or at a school-sponsored event. Problems may include, but are not limited to: poor attitude, gossiping, disrespect, defiance, bullying of any sort, academic concerns, misuse of social media.

Steps to Resolve Behavior Concerns:

1. Cheerleader will receive a reprimand from the coach(es), giving the athlete a chance to correct the problematic behavior. The athlete may also receive additional fitness. The discussion will be documented by the coach and parents may be notified.
2. If a problem continues, the coach(es) will phone or schedule a meeting with the cheerleader's parents to discuss consequences for the behavior. This may include: benching from practice, game, or performance. This will be documented by the coach and parents will be notified.

Athlete Behavior Incidents (continued)

3. If the unfavorable behavior continues, the athlete will be referred to the Athletic Director for further guidance and a meeting will be set with the coach(es) and cheerleader's parents. The discussion will be documented by the coach. At this point, consequences may include:
 - a. Benching from practice, game, or performance (may not dress out with the team)
 - b. Suspension from the team for a set period of time, determined by coach
 - c. Dismissal from the squad

Note: If the problematic behavior becomes serious enough for the possible dismissal of a member of the team, the member and his/her parents will have full prior knowledge (based on the steps above) and have the opportunity to discuss the matter with the coach(es). Final decisions may not be made immediately, but will be made by the Head Coach with the approval of the Athletic Director.

Student

Parent

Quitting and Dismissal Policy

Cheerleaders are held to a high standard as visible members of the Casteel High School student body. Coaches expect all team members to be an exemplary role model for their fellow classmates and to the Casteel community at large.

Members will be automatically dismissed from the team for the following reasons:

- Out-of-School suspension
- Academic ineligibility on a continued basis (see above section "Eligibility and Grades")
- Continued behavioral concerns
- Participation in illegal activities

Please note that in case of dismissal/resignation from the team:

- All donated or fundraised monies on behalf of the athlete will be donated to the cheer account for general program needs. No exceptions.
- Outstanding balances owed for items/services received and/or ordered are required to be paid.
- All Casteel spirit wear and uniforms must be turned into Coach within 48 hours of leaving or being removed from the program. Items that a cheerleader has purchased will be returned to him/her at the end of the season. All items that arrive after a cheerleader has left or been removed from the program will be given back at the end of the season.

Student

Parent

Uniforms and Spirit Attire

- All uniforms are the property of the school and are assigned to each member for use during the season.
- Any damage or loss to the uniform(s) and/or spirit attire will be replaced and paid for by the individual responsible.
- Uniforms should only be altered only when pre-approved by the Head Coach.
- Uniforms are only to be worn when designated by the coach and for designated activities. They are not to be worn at any other time or for any non-team function and must not be worn by a non-cheer team member.
- Appropriate-colored and strapped sports bras must be worn with spirit attire and uniforms.
- Uniform spandex shorts will be decided by the coach and all athletes are responsible for purchasing at least one pair, to be worn at all games and performances.

Student

Parent

Videos and Choreography

- All routines and choreography, including cheers, dances, stunts, tumbling, etc. are the property of Casteel Cheer and shall not be shown or discussed with others.
- Posting videos of routines, choreography, transitions, or tryout material on any online site such as YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or any other social media/web-based site is **expressly forbidden** without prior approval from Head Coach.

Student

Parent

Injuries

- Athletes must report pre-existing or new injuries to coaches immediately.
- If an injury occurs during the season, athletes must see the athletic trainer prior to seeing a doctor unless instructed by coach and/or athletic trainer.
- Detailed doctor's notes must be provided for any injury - this must include any restrictions.
- Any type of release given by a medical professional must be followed by a release from the Casteel athletic trainer before participating, no exceptions.
- Injured athletes are required to dress out and attend practices, games, and competitions, or other cheer events just as they would if not injured. Exceptions to this policy are made at the sole discretion of the Head Coach.

Student

Parent

Varsity Letter Policy

- Varsity athletes who remain in good standing throughout the full season are eligible to earn a varsity letter.
- Athletes must participate in more than half of the competition season to be eligible to earn a varsity letter.

Student

Parent

*CUSD Bullying Policy

Bullying = a repeated act occurring over an extended period of time, and may include, but is not limited to, verbal, written/printed or graphic exposure to derogatory comments, extortion, exploitation, name calling, or rumor spreading either directly or through another person or group or through cyberbullying; exposure to social exclusion or ostracism; physical contact including but not limited to pushing, hitting, kicking, shoving, or spitting; damage to or theft of personal property.

Cyberbullying = any act of bullying committed by use of electronic technology or electronic communication devices; telephonic devices, social networking, Internet on school computers, networks, forums and mailing lists, or other District-owned property, and by means of an individual's personal electronic media and equipment.

Harassment = intentional disruptive or threatening behavior by a student(s) to another student(s); includes, but are not limited to, stalking, hazing, social exclusion, name calling, unwanted physical contact, unwelcome verbal or written comments, photographs and graphics; harassment, direct or indirect, may be related but not limited to, race, religious orientation, sexual preference, cultural background, economic status, size or personal appearance.

Intimidation = intentional behavior by a student(s) that places another student(s) in fear of harm of person or property; may be manifested emotionally or physically, directly or indirectly, and by use of social media. Students are prohibited from bullying, harassing, and intimidating others on school grounds, school property, school buses, at school bus stops, at school sponsored events and activities, and through the use of electronic technology or electronic communication equipment on school computers, networks, forums, or mailing lists. If an athlete is experiencing any of these problems from a teammate, please report the situation immediately.

Chandler Unified School District and Casteel High School
Cheerleading Handbook and Expectations Acceptance Form

I, _____(athlete), have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Chandler Unified School District and Casteel High School Cheerleading Handbook and Expectations. I am aware of, and understand, all expectations and policies outlined in the tryout packet and handbook. I will do my best to be a positive representative of the Chandler Unified School District, Casteel High School, and the Casteel Cheer program.

I, _____(parent of athlete), have read, understand, and agree to abide by the Chandler Unified School District and Casteel High School Cheerleading Handbook and Expectations. I am aware of, and understand, all expectations and policies outlined in the tryout packet and handbook. I will do my best to be a positive representative of the Chandler Unified School District, Casteel High School, and the Casteel Cheer program.

By signing below, the student athlete and the parent acknowledge that they have read, understand, and agree to abide by the rules and procedures contained in this handbook.

Athlete's name (printed)

Athlete's signature

Date

Parent name (printed)

Parent signature

Date

**A copy of this handbook will be posted on the CUSD Casteel Cheer website. If an update need to be made throughout the season, updates will be sent out to athletes and parents and posted on the website in a new document. Changes/Updates will be in red.