Coaching Philosophy:

Coaching is about the athletes. As a coach, it is our job to help our athletes reach their goals and help create unforgettable positive memories. We want to create a program that students aspire to be on and the school and public respect. We believe that in order create this strong program, the coach needs to first get to know each athlete on an individual level, and be able to listen to her athletes, parents, administrators, and community. In addition, the coach needs to provide the best opportunity for her athletes to enhance or learn the skills of the game, and enforce athletes to practice like they will play, and play like practice. Incorporating these elements into the program, the coach will be able to better instruct the players and the team while providing them with a direction to meet goals. By confidently coaching, and putting our athletes first, we can help the athletes have an amazing season and perform to the best of their abilities.

During the season, team bonding and chemistry will be significantly important. This truly makes the team connect and work well with one another. Positive and memorable results are created with a team that enjoys spending time with each other. Dinners or celebrations outside of practice time help create this feeling. The team will also benefit by making appearances in the community, volunteering together or being a part of a large-scale event. When the community is involved, a fan base will grow, which will in turn inspires the athletes.

Objectives and Cheerleading Philosophy:

It shall be the purpose of the cheerleaders to positively build school spirit with good sportsmanship while continuously keeping morale high to support our teams. The cheerleaders will focus on the game or event and direct/unify the crowd’s response by leading cheers that the crowd will be able to follow. As individuals and as a squad, the cheerleaders will strive to uphold the highest personal as well as cheerleading standards. “It is all about positive sportsmanship. Do what is right. Do your best. Do not do anything that will hurt you or your team.”

A. This organization shall encourage participation of the student body in supporting Ankeny teams.
B. This organization shall promote events such as pep rallies, special events, and community events to promote school spirit.
C. This organization shall develop physical fitness and stamina.
D. This organization will develop cheerleading, football, basketball, and wrestling sport knowledge and appreciation.
E. This organization shall, by their own conduct, set an example of good citizenship and sportsmanship, and be an example of school spirit in action for others to follow.

Code of Ethics:

Eligibility:
Members must:
A. Be registered as a full-time Ankeny student in respective grades.
B. Maintain a good academic standing with the passing of ALL classes. Grade checks will be done throughout the year if you are failing a class you will sit out until it is a passing grade.
C. Have a satisfactory physical/medical release on file in the activities office.
E. Have proof of knowledge and acceptance of cheer squad rules and program book on file with the coach.
G. Meet all requirements as set by the IHSAA, IGHSAU, National Federation, and the Iowa Cheerleading Coaches’ Association.

**Conduct:**

A. Each cheerleader is a representative of Ankeny Schools at all times and as such is expected to conduct her/himself in and outside of class in an appropriate manner.

B. Each cheerleader is required to abide by all policies and regulations of Ankeny High School and its district as well as by the AHS Cheerleading Handbook.

C. Cheerleaders will display good sportsmanship at all times.

D. Cheerleaders will abide by the state cheerleading rules established by the state of Iowa and the American Association of Cheerleading Coaches and Advisors as well as the Iowa High School Athletic Association, National Federation, and Iowa Cheer Coaches’ Association.

E. Cheerleaders will abide by the Ankeny Community School District Policy for Student Eligibility in Athletics; including Board Policy - Use of Tobacco, and Board Policy - Alcoholic Beverages and Controlled Substances.

F. Failure to abide by policies and regulations established, or failure to accept responsibility as a cheerleader, may result in disciplinary action and possible dismissal from the squad. The appropriate disciplinary action will be determined by the coach and/or school administration according to the severity of each violation.

**Academic Standards:**

Academics come first. As a coaching staff we understand that school takes priority over athletics. However, as a student athlete, cheerleaders must learn to manage their time accordingly. The coaching staff always here to help with any questions or work and are willing to work with you towards your success. If you plan on missing an event due to an academic need, your coach must know prior to your absence. In addition, you need to provide your coach with a note from the teacher and a valid reason to miss the scheduled cheerleading event.

If a member of the squad is failing to pass a class, they will sit out the next cheerleading event. Once the failed grade is known, the cheerleader (and possibly her parents) will need to meet with their squad coach as well as the head coach in order to figure out the steps that need to be taken in order to bring the squad member back to a passing letter grade and able to participate.

**Cheerleading Events:**

**Tryout Procedures:**

1. Underclassmen MAY be placed on the varsity squads. They must score in the top 15% to do so.

2. Upperclassmen may choose to cheer for JV.

3. In the event that the cheerleader is not performing to the standards of the squad they made they may be reassigned to a different squad. This also applies to those who are in a lower level – if they are performing to a higher they MAY be moved up.
   a. Example i – If a Varsity member is not performing to the ability of the squad (not performing, goofing off or making bad choices) they will be moved down to JV.
   b. Example ii – If a Freshman or JV member is performing to a higher ability level in all aspects they will be moved up to the next higher level.

B. Football Squads will have tryouts in the spring of the previous school year.

1. Varsity Football will have a minimum of 12 members. A maximum of 20 unless there is a tie.

2. All members may double sport (fall and winter cheerleading)

3. Freshman and JV squads may have a minimum of 8 members.

C. Winter Squads will have tryouts in the spring of the previous school year.

1. Winter Varsity Squads (basketball and wrestling) will be composed of at least 6 members each.

2. All members may double sport (fall and winter cheerleading)

3. JV and Freshman winter squads will have a minimum of 6 members (divided into 2 or 3 teams of 6 that will rotate cheering for wrestling, boys basketball, and girls basketball)

D. State Competition Squad

1. Maroon (Music) and Gold (Cheer) squads will be determined during tryouts.

2. State Stunt will be determined during the Fall season.
3. All members will be a current fall/winter cheerleader.
4. Coaches will determine the number of squad members for each squad at try-outs.
5. Coaches will determine the number of competitions (at least one), not including state, attended by squad.

**Practices, Games, Competitions:**
The coach, assistant, or designated school official will supervise all practices, games, and competitions. Squad members are not released to practice stunts, pyramids or gymnastics without the direct supervision of the coach, assistant, or a designated school official.

A. In-Season Practices
   1. Practices may be before or after school on non-game/meet days.
   2. Practices may decrease in number as the season continues.
   3. Additional practices may be called as needed.

B. Off-Season Practices
   1. Practices will be scheduled and decided by the coach.
   2. Mandatory practices may be called by the coach in regards to informational meetings, pre-camp practices, fundraisers, etc.

C. Out-of-Town Contests
   1. **Cheerleaders will go to and return from all out-of-town contests with their squads by school transportation.** EXCEPTIONS can be made by parents communicating their coach in advance to explain the reason for the request, AND by then providing a written note (form from activities office) to the coach requesting the exception at least 24 hours prior to the event.
   2. Under no circumstances will a cheerleader leave the school grounds or other school while attending an event without the permission of the coach. Failure to abide by this rule will result in suspension or dismissal.

D. Competitions
   1. Our squads will compete in a minimum of one competition in addition to the State competition if all members are able to attend.
   2. Additional competitions will be attended if available and deemed necessary by coach
   3. All members on all competition squads must attend every competition.

**Schedules:**
Game schedules for all levels can be found on [www.cimlcentral.org](http://www.cimlcentral.org). This same site allows you to sign up for notifications regarding all changes and/or cancellations. Fall may also go to [www.ankenyhawkfootball.com](http://www.ankenyhawkfootball.com)

**Rules, Expectations, Consequences:**

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**Respect, Respect, Respect.** You will respect, coaches, teammates, teachers, your uniform, your school, host schools, the bus, the opposing team, the fans, etc. RESPECT!

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**Always be prepared.** This means to practice, games, events, competition etc. **You must have all your belongings with you: correct socks, bow, poms, bag, uniform, shoes, shirt etc. Failure to be prepared will be a failure to participate in the event.**

**Attendance:**

A. **ABSENCE FROM PRACTICES, GAMES, OR OTHER TEAM FUNCTIONS WILL NOT BE TOLERATED!** The only absences that will be deemed as excused are:
   1. Family emergency (i.e. death in the family)
   2. Academic reasons – Must have a pass from the teacher
   3. Personal illness – You must be absent from school to have it excused.

It is imperative that if you are going to miss for any of the above reasons, you notify your coach by no later than noon of that day. Although these are deemed as “excused” absences, they will not go without notice. Whether you are sick or making up a test with a teacher, your teammates were there working to get better and one may be rewarded by taking your place in a stunt, formation, routine for the overall
success of the team. A cheerleader will not be withheld from an event because of an excused absence, but may be withheld from performances within the event.

1. All practices, games, events, appearances, meetings must be attended unless excused by the coach. Do not tell your coach you will be absent -ASK. Simply bringing a written note or telling your coach you will be absent does not necessarily mean that an absence is excused. Any and all absences need to be excused by the coaches.

2. Absences for non-routine doctors’ appointments may be excused, if notice is given in writing by the parent/guardian to activities office and to the coach at least 24 hours in advance (except in the case of an emergency).

3. **ALL-DAY ATTENDANCE REQUIRED:** A Cheer Squad member must be present at school all day in order to cheer at practice or at that night’s game (In the case of an event on the weekend, the cheer squad member must attend the full day of school on Friday prior) unless a 24-hours’ notice has been given and approved by school administration. If a doctor’s appointment is scheduled during the day of an event, the appointment must be approved through the activities office in advance in order to participate.

4. All appearances, events, fundraisers, community service and school spirit opportunities are mandatory for all members. In most cases, a sign-up or schedule will be created by coaching staff to divide time between all squads and members equally.

B. Penalties for unexcused absences are as follows:

**Ankeny High School Student Handbook Policy- greater than 10 minutes late, it counts as an unexcused absence**

1. Any unexcused Tardiness - withheld from ½ of event or no stunting for that event (Coaches Choice). 2 tardys are equal to one absence. (this includes leaving early unexcused as well)
2. 1st Unexcused Absence - withheld from next competition/game
3. 2nd Unexcused Absence - Indefinite suspension from competition/game
4. 3rd Unexcused Absence - Dismissal from team (will need to assess commitment with Coach if they want to tryout again)

C. PROMPTNESS is a must! You will be expected to be on time to practices, games, or other team functions. Consequences for tardiness will be mostly, but not limited to, additional conditioning for the team or individual. Excessive tardiness may lead to dismissal from the team. Remember if you are on time you are five minutes late.

D. If you become ineligible at any point during your season you will not be permitted to dress out in your uniform on game days. Once you are eligible again you may dress out.

* Cheerleaders will not be cheering at district or state competitions for their sport or for the cheerleading competition if: a cheerleader has missed 2 or more games during the season or if they have served time under the Code of Conduct during season.

**Social Media:**

Social media, such as but not limited to Facebook and Twitter, have become a popular communication tool. Any student athlete in the Ankeny Cheerleading Program using social media to post derogatory comments and/or inappropriate photographs involving themselves, teammates, competitors, teachers, other students or coaching staff will incur consequences as determined by coaching staff. Consequences may include being suspended from team. Think before you post!

For information, updates and Hawk Cheerleading pictures follow us on twitter @AHS_HawkCheer

**Fundraisers:**

A. Junior Cheerleading Clinics/Camps

1. Jr. cheerleading clinics and a summer camp are hosted by Hawk Cheerleading in which all levels of AHS cheerleaders will teach k-8 participants cheerleading skills and a routine in the days in preparation for performances.
2. These are done in the summer as a camp and during fall and winter as a clinic.
3. Each cheerleader must work at least one camp/clinic. Sign ups will be held.

B. Car Wash

a. A minimum of one car wash will be held during the summer. Proceeds go towards the Cheerleading Account to help pay for uniforms and safety equipment.
b. Dates will be provided to cheerleaders and families.
c. Each cheerleader must work at the car wash or at a minimum of one car wash. Sign ups will be held.

C. Cookie Dough
a. Each Cheerleader is to sell 3 Tubs of Cookie Dough for the Cheer Account
b. After the first 3 tubs - The sales will benefit their personal cheering bill.
c. This will occur in the spring immediately following try-outs.

D. Sponsorships
a. Sponsors will be collected this year.
b. Every Cheerleader is to obtain $150 in sponsorships.
c. If you do not reach the minimum sponsorship amount you will not be on the Cheer Sponsorship Poster.
d. If you do not obtain the $150 sponsorship you will be required to do additional fundraisers until the $150 goal is met.

Other fundraisers may be held at the discretion of the coaches and cheerleaders. Parents will be asked to donate their time for assisting with all fundraisers.

Funds brought in by the cheerleaders are used to pay for coaches’ association dues, competition entry fees, uniforms, safety equipment, bussing to the games/van costs, cheerleading equipment such as signs and megaphones and materials (posters, paint, markers, etc.)

Lettering/Complete the season in good standing:
All Ankeny Cheerleaders have the opportunity to end the season in good standing and Varsity cheerleaders may receive a letter based on the following specifications. Sophomores and Freshmen do not have the opportunity to receive a school athletic/activity letter unless they hold a position on a varsity squad.

A. Cheerleaders must have completed the minimum 5 hours of community service/Service to the squad and have turned in completed forms to coach in order to end the season in good standing and/or receive an athletic/activity letter.
B. Cheerleaders must have attended the minimum amount fundraising events asked by coach at the start of season. Coaches will keep track of attendance at events.
C. If a member is benched 3 or more times consecutively or otherwise, she/he will no longer be eligible to receive an athletic/activity letter.
D. If a member has been dismissed from the squad, she/he will no longer be in good standing and will not eligible to receive an athletic/activity letter. In addition, the cheerleader will be unable to try-out the following year.
E. If a member quits any squad, she/he will no longer be in good standing and will not eligible to receive an athletic/activity letter. In addition, the cheerleader will be unable to try-out the following year.
F. If alternate/transition Sophomore or Freshmen cheerleaders cheer at or more than 40% of events, they will end the season in good standing. If alternate/transition Varsity cheerleaders cheer at or more than 40% of events, they will be eligible to receive an athletic/activity letter. (If cheerleader cheers for a Saturday wrestling tournament, it will be counted as 2 events).

Uniforms and Presentation:
The Ankeny High School Cheerleading ‘uniform’ will consist of poms, shoes, shell, skirt, briefs, no-show white socks, sleeves (unifit), bow, warm up jacket, pants, and camp wear. Alterations to any piece of the uniform must be pre-approved by the Coach. Rhinestones and any glitter items are NOT TO BE ADDED to ANY of the above mentioned pieces. If items are damaged from the previous year you may be required to purchase or rent a new item.

A. All members shall maintain their appearance in a neat and clean manner. The following items are mandatory concerning appearance at practice and official events.
   1. Members must keep nails trimmed below their finger-tips and have no acrylics for safety purposes. No polish on Game Days or Competitions.
2. Members must have their hair pulled up off their shoulders and away from their face. Any fly-aways are considered illegal. If you are unable to comply with this state rule you will not cheer.
3. Members are NOT allowed to wear jewelry of any kind for safety purposes.
4. Members must have NATURAL hair color promoting our All-American image.
5. At practices, members will wear required camp/practice clothing and cheerleading shoes (showing bra straps is not acceptable dress). Failure to abide by dress code will result in nonparticipation.
6. Members are not allowed to eat or chew gum during practices or games.
7. Hooded sweatshirts or clothing with pockets will not be allowed during stunting.
8. Anything worn outside of the formal uniform (listed above) during school, events, or games is not acceptable uniform wear and will result in consequences like conditioning or not participating in part of event.
9. When arriving or leaving a school event that requires a performance in uniform, all cheerleaders are expected to arrive in full warm ups (weather permitting) and in a change of shoes.
10. Only skin tone or majority color of uniform bras will be allowed under uniform. No exceptions.

B. All squad members will pay for their own briefs, unifit (sleeves), warm-up top and pants, socks, poms, shoes, bags, bows, camp/practice wear and other items as needed.
C. All squad members will use the uniforms purchased by the school. Uniform contracts will be completed to ensure care and a rental fee will be in place. All members will be responsible for the care and maintenance of the school-issued uniform. Once uniform is issued, if alterations are needed, the coach should be notified the day the uniform is issued to get uniform to fit properly. Replacement or repair cost of uniform pieces due to loss or damage will be the sole fiscal responsibility of each individual member.
D. AHS uniforms will always be worn in full to school on game days, meaning the shell and skirt with unifit (as appropriate for weather or event). If temperatures are below 70 degrees, unifit will be worn. **Flip-flops, t-shirts, and general sweatshirts will NOT be worn with uniform.** Warm-up jackets or other cheerleading issued clothing can be worn with skirt and shell for warmth.
   a. If you fail to wear your uniform to school on a game day you will be benched from that game.
   b. ANY ITEMS not issued by the cheerleading program are not permitted to be worn with the uniform to school.
E. Uniforms should only be worn by members of the program and should not be worn except for games, practices, and pep rallies or as decided by coaches.

**Contacting Coaches:**

A. Contact coach only after cheerleader has communicated situation with coach directly.
B. Should contact coaches directly, in person, or via email rather than by phone or text message.
C. In the event a player is ill and cannot contact their coach directly, a parent/guardian should contact the appropriate coach.
D. Should contact your grade level coach first with questions.
E. Contact coaches during regular office hours (9:00am - 5:00pm)
F. Please allow 24 hours for an email response.

**Appropriate Items of Discussion with Coaches:**

A. Anything regarding to what their student-athlete can do to improve as a student-athlete.
B. What post-high school playing level we, as coaches, see appropriate for your student-athlete.
C. Any injuries, illnesses and/or “personal issues” your student-athlete may be experiencing.
D. Off-season opportunities and/or activities their student-athlete should be engaged in.

**Safety:**
All members of the Ankeny Cheerleading Squad will abide by the Ankeny Activities Handbook as well as the IAHSA/ICCA Cheerleading Rules and this Program Book. All athletes must have a valid physical on file and be approved by the Athletic Trainer to compete.

**Be AWARE.** Look before you do a jump, motion, kick, tumbling pass, stunt. Please take a moment and be aware of your surroundings, who or what is nearby, is the ground in good enough condition to do this move, etc. Since some of our activities happen outside, be aware of the weather and bring proper gear to deal with potential weather. Being aware also includes making yourself familiar with the rules of Football and Basketball in order to understand the game that is being played around you and the safety concerns that sport brings to you as a cheerleader.

You should wear form-fitting clothes to practice, no jewelry, must wear clean cheer shoes, and hair must be pulled back out of your face. Other than your designated football cheer shoes, your competition shoes should only be worn inside and at practice. Please bring a change of shoes. When it gets cold outside, everyone should be wearing sweats and wear them when they leave practice. These are safety precautions that will protect your teammates and help you perform to the best of your ability.

Everyone must stretch before and after practice as part of the warm-up and cool-down. Cheerleading involves strenuous activity and to stay on your game and increase flexibility for stunts, jumps, and tumbling stretching must be taken seriously.

**Stunting:**

**No one hits the floor.**

Before performing any tumbling or stunting, each group or individual must be checked of by the coach. The coach has to approve anything new or advanced being tried before the action can be done. Always talk to the coach before trying a new move. Always talk to the coach before advancing in stunting and tumbling sequence.

Trust and communication are necessary. Bases and Backs need to make every effort to catch the top girl, use bear hug method if possible, and support each other. The top girl must be brave and fight to keep balance. If you fall, your hands need to go locked straight above your head and fall straight. Flailing your arms and legs will only make it harder to catch you and you may get more hurt in the process.

A. Safety is first and foremost. If the situation is not safe, you will not stunt.
B. Progression—perfection before progression. You must test and obtain approval from your coach to progress to the next level of stunting.
C. Drills and progressions must be followed, or you could be benched from stunting for a brief period of time or permanently.
D. Coaches will be the ones that will approve progression to the next stunt level.

**Personal Care:**

In a sport so highly team-focused, it is essential to minimize health and safety risks during the season. The team coming together as one is what makes a routine go from good to amazing and having one member missing can change everything. Some incidences cannot be helped; it is your responsibility and a critical part of the team puzzle to minimize health and safety risks so you can have a fun and memorable season!

**Nutrition:**

Stick to your normal diet as much as possible, but you can enhance it for better performance. You can refer to choosemyplate.gov for a balanced nutrition. As cheerleaders, you all need to eat regularly to supply your body with a constant source of nutrition. Staying hydrated is key! Whether it is through water or sports drinks, you all need to stay hydrated.

Before a game, you should eat something 2-3 hours before and drink water or sports drink about 45 minutes before. If you need a snack stay away from the concession stand and try a protein or granola bar.
**Fight Illness:**
Sleep is critical to preventing illness and making sure you are performing at your peak level. Try to get 8-9 hours of sleep a night. If you take a nap limit it to 15 to 45 minutes, these give your body just a little recharge without messing with your REM cycle.

Use basic knowledge and always wash your hands, cover your cough, sneeze into your elbow, not your hand, and avoid sharing water bottles.

Consider purchasing a hand sanitizer and a small first aid kit, filled with band-aids and your own personal items for quick access if needed, to stow in your cheer bag.

**Other Information/Notes**
Cheerleading Twitter @ahs_hawkcheer

Cheerleading Instagram ahs_hawkcheer
Squad Members & Parents:

It is imperative that both you and your parents/guardians understand the AHS Cheerleading Handbook as well as the AHS Activities Handbook. Please indicate that you have read and agree with the constitution by signing and dating the form below. Please return this form by the next scheduled meeting.

I hereby state that I have read and understand the contents of the AHS Cheerleading Handbook as well as the AHS Activities Handbook. I acknowledge that there are and will be consequences if the guidelines and rules are not abided by.

Cheerleader (print) ______________________________________

(Sign)________________________________  Date ___________

Parent/Guardian (print)_______ ________________________________

(Sign)_________________________________  Date ___________