



FIERCE ALLSTARS

PARENT PACKET

2023-2024
Season #12

WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

This handbook is intended to familiarize parents and athletes with the requirements and expectations of cheering with FIERCE ALLSTARS.

We ask that you please review both the *Parent Packet* and the *Financial Obligations* documents.

Making the decision to become involved with all star cheer is a huge time and financial commitment. We want you to make an informed decision as to whether or not we are the right program for you and your athlete.

When deciding if we are the right program for you, please ask yourself these questions:

- Is your athlete willing and able to practice from July to April?
- Is your athlete comfortable with performing in front of an audience?
- Is your family willing to make the commitment to travel to competitions in the Tri-State region?
- Is your athlete craving to learn more skills with regards to tumbling and stunting?
- Is your athlete willing and ready to be part of a team?

Please feel free to reach out to us if you have any questions or concerns regarding any of the information in these handbooks. We can be reached at fiercecheer015@gmail.com.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Our athletes, parents and cheer family should represent FIERCE with integrity and pride while showing the greatest sportsmanship while in and out of the gym. FIERCE will NOT tolerate bullying, gossip, cliques, profanity or drama. All athletes and parents should treat all teammates, athletes, parents, coaches, and competitors with respect, fairness and courtesy. Any form of disrespect towards FIERCE staff and coaches is unacceptable.

Athletes must arrive at all practice, competitions or any scheduled events on time. For safety reasons, no jewelry is allowed during classes, practice or competition. This includes all piercings. Nails should not extend past the finger tip. It is athletes' responsibility to wear the correct practice attire to each practice and competition. Personal items such as cell phones, water bottles, jackets and bags should be stored in the correct area. Good sportsmanship, polite manners, and good disposition are mandatory at practices, classes and competitions.

It is the parent's responsibility to know what is going on with your child's team. The REMIND app and Gym/Team Facebook pages will be used for updates and last minute changes especially on competition days. Email or Text messaging may also be used.

Athletes and family members should not use social media to post negativity about a fellow cheerleader, coach, parent, or FIERCE. Athletes may not wear their uniform outside of FIERCE events without permission from coaches prior to the occasion.

Anonymous emails/letters/texts will be ignored.

FIERCE maintains the right to refuse services at any time. The director or owner may change, add, or subtract any rule at any time. All consequences and disciplinary measures for inappropriate conduct will be at the discretion of the director and owner.

TEAM PLACEMENTS

Team placement sessions are essentially low-stress workouts. During the workouts, athletes show skills they have developed and demonstrate a potential to learn new skills.

After the final session of workouts, the staff assembles rosters for the upcoming season. There are many things considered when placing athletes and forming teams. Athlete individual skills, experience, requests, and what would form the most competitive and successful team are all taken into consideration.

Coaches have the final decision with team placements and we ask that you respect their decisions.

GYM CLOSURE DATES

Summer closure: 7/2-7/9/23

Independence Day: 7/4/23

Labor Day: 9/4/23

Halloween: 10/31/23

Thanksgiving: 11/23-26/23

Christmas: 12/23-1/1/2024

New Year: 1/1/24

Easter: 3/29-3/31/24

ATTENDANCE POLICY

From September through May, practice times usually remain consistent throughout the season and are only changed as needed. During important times of the season, extra practices may be scheduled and all athletes are expected to attend. Practices range from 1- 2 hours a day, 2-3 times a week.

Athletes are expected to attend all practices and competitions as a team. FIERCE realizes that athletes are involved in a variety of activities; however, we cannot make exceptions for schedule conflicts. Missing practice due to other sports will be **UNEXCUSED**.

Suitable candidates or alternates will fill in if your athlete is not at practice. An athlete's position will always be in jeopardy if they are constantly absent and may result in the athlete being moved to an alternate position or pulled from an upcoming performance at the discretion of the staff. It is the responsibility of the athlete to learn any changes prior to practices. The teams can only get out what they put in and attendance will determine the success of the team.

We highly encourage you to schedule your vacations within the gym closures.

The only acceptable excused absence is a school function that results in a grade, contagious illness, hospitalization or a death in the family. **Absences are NOT allowed the weekend and 2 weeks prior to a competition.** Please understand in competitive cheerleading there is not a "second string team" that can fill in like in most other sports.

SUMMER ABSENCE POLICY

We understand that during the summer months families want to have more flexible schedules. We will be starting practices in early July. These practices will allow your athlete to start conditioning in preparation for the season. We request that you notify us when you will be out of town on vacation. We need athletes to attend as many of these summer practices as possible.

SICK POLICY

FIERCE will manage illnesses and sicknesses on a case to case basis. It is very difficult to require a doctor's excuse every time your athlete is sick. We understand that sometimes your child may need rest due to a slight fever or stomach ache. Athletes are subject to replacement and removal any time an athlete is missing.

Please save the sick days for when your athlete really needs them. Athletes are often removed from our program for failing to follow/abusing these standards. **We highly recommend athletes coming to practice if the illness is not contagious so they are able to observe any changes being made to the routine.** An athlete will jeopardize his/her position if this standard is not followed.

An athlete with an extended sickness/injury that requires them to miss more than two **(2)** practices must provide a doctor's note with detailed information regarding the length of time an athlete can not practice/compete, when they are cleared to return and what conditioning they can do during their injury (if any). This includes dental, medical and any other health related issue that would prohibit an athlete from participating.

TARDINESS AND ABSENCES FROM COMPETITONS

All athletes are expected to be on time and on the floor ready for practice at their scheduled practice time. Athletes will be held accountable for any unexcused absences or tardiness. Each athlete has 3 unexcused between September and May.

All athletes are expected to be on time and competition ready at their scheduled competition meet time. Failing to attend a competition without notification will result in immediate termination from the program.

TEAM PRACTICE STANDARDS

APPEARANCE

There is to be **NO JEWELRY** worn at practices OR competitions, which includes all earrings, belly button rings, nose rings, eyebrow jewelry, and necklaces. We are not responsible for lost jewelry or items that are left behind.

Fingernails must be kept short and trimmed. Excessively long fingernails/acrylic nails are a safety hazard for all athletes. This is for the safety of your athlete and for athletes either flying or basing who might be injured as a result.

There is to be **NO GUM** at practices or competitions.

Athletes are expected to follow their teams practice wear schedule. Lost, misplaced or damaged clothing must be replaced at your expense. Any athletes late or dressed incorrectly will be held accountable.

TUMBLING REQUIREMENTS

Tumbling is a very important segment of competitive cheerleading. We understand that not every athlete is going to be an elite tumbler but it is expected and required that all athletes will attend weekly tumbling sessions. Group tumbling will be mandatory for the 2023-2024 season.

The best way to excel at tumbling is through repetition and drills. We believe in perfection before progression at FIERCE. We want athletes to master tumbling before progressing to the next skill. The higher level tumbling skills are dependent on a solid foundation of tumbling basics.

Athletes will be assigned to tumbling sessions at the beginning of the season.

Private Tumbling & Additional Cheering

Private tumbling doesn't replace group tumbling. It is supplemental. In the event that your account becomes delinquent, private tumbling will be suspended until your account is current.

Parents/guardian is required to stay on property when a youth is taking privates in the event that there are no other staff/ coaches present during the lesson. THIS IS MANDATORY.

We request that during the season you DO NOT take tumbling from instructors from other gyms. We also ask that you AVOID "OPEN GYMS" at other facilities.

Athletes are permitted to participate in side-line cheer.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

Before considering FIERCE or any program, please consider the financial commitment involved. We have a comprehensive monthly price that covers most of the expenses throughout the year. During the 2023-24 season, there will be 10 monthly charges beginning July 2023 through April 2024. The first month's tuition will be charged in July. For the remaining months, tuition is payable on the 1st of each month, payment after the 11th will result in a \$35 late fee.

We highly recommend parents utilizing GOMOTION to pay their monthly tuition.

All families should have a valid Credit Card or Debit Card registered online.

PAYMENT POLICY

ALL payments are due by the due date posted on the cost sheet and monthly calendars. These dates are determined well in advance to avoid late fees from event producers. A late fee will be assessed for payments made after the due dates.

The parent signing this contract will be responsible for all court fees in the event your account is taken to court due to unpaid fees/balances.

Any remaining account balances need to be paid before the due date or they will be automatically charged to your card on file on the 1st of every month. Please make payment arrangements if additional time is needed.

NO PAY NO PLAY

If a payment is not paid on the due date your athlete will sit out of practice and an alternate will fill in with the opportunity to take your athlete's spot until the fee is paid. After 3 practices of no payment, your athlete will be removed from the team and you will be responsible for the early termination fee. All balances must be current in order for your athlete to take participate in competitions.

Please see *FIERCE Financial Obligation* handbook for detailed requirements.

EARLY TERMINATION OF CONTRACT

The parent/guardian who signs this contract will be financially responsible for an inconvenience fee if your athlete quits, is pulled from the team for whatever reason, or is removed for disciplinary reasons. When an athlete quits after choreography, it requires the entire routine to be reworked.

ATHLETES JOINING MID SEASON

Athletes that join a team at any time during the season will be responsible for all season installment fees and choreography fees; tuition will not be charged for the months missed.

COMPETITION PRIZE MONEY

All monies won at or after an event will go towards the gym for equipment or gym improvements unless specifically awarded for a team's end of season bid competition.

CROSSOVER

If your athlete is a full-season crossover, there will be additional fees to cover competition and training costs. Specific athletes will be asked to cross over in the event of an injury or absence on another team. If you are asked to cross over, FIERCE will cover the additional fees for cross competitors.

CHOREOGRAPHY

Prep and Elite level teams will have choreography completed by an outside choreographer. Choreography will be completed on a designated weekend. The exact dates will be provided after team evaluations. Participation in choreography is MANDATORY.

Novice level teams will have in-house choreography.

COMMUNICATION

All communication with parents will be done via REMIND, FB Groups, emails, handouts, and calendars.

If you have any questions, complaints, or concerns with FIERCE and/or your athlete, please approach the coach in question *after* practices or competitions. You can also schedule an appointment to address any concerns by emailing or calling the front desk.

As a courtesy, FIERCE asks that parents/guardians refrain from directly approaching a coach during practices and competitions unless it is related to an urgent medical condition, safety concern, or an injury to your athlete.

Before approaching a coach with a concern that upsets you, please wait 24 hours to calm down before contacting the coach. If after 24 hours, you still have a concern or an issue with a coach, please contact them directly to discuss the issue.

COMPETITIONS

Parents will be responsible for getting their athlete to any and all competitions. While at competitions all athletes and families must uphold the highest standard of courtesy and respect by representing FIERCE with pride! Great Sportsmanship is a must. We ask that all teams stay to support and cheer on the other teams in our program, even if they are done with their performance. Athletes **MUST** be in uniform for awards and will not be allowed to leave before awards unless cleared by their coach. Coaches will **NOT** be responsible for holding any personal items; any and all items should be left with a parent or guardian.

PARENT CODE OF CONDUCT

FIERCE will not allow negative comments or bad reviews on any event producer's social media page. Parents shall not approach any members from an Event Producer for any reason unless to report an emergency. Parents are not allowed in warm-up areas at events. Any threats in regards to pulling your athlete from the team or quitting will not be tolerated. Severe consequences including up to removal of your athlete will be enforced. You will be responsible for any early termination fee.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

FIERCE is a non-profit organization and is protective of their image, reputation, and representation online. As a part of our program, athletes and parents/guardians have a responsibility to uphold our reputation.

Facebook, Twitter and other social media sites have increased in popularity globally, and are used by the majority of athletes in one form or another. Athletes should be aware that third parties — including the media, school faculty, future college recruiting coaches, and future employers — could easily access your profiles and view all personal information. This includes all pictures, videos, comments and posters. Inappropriate material found by third parties affects the perception of the athlete and the gym. This can also be detrimental to an athlete's future college options, or in other industries.

Examples of inappropriate and offensive behaviors concerning participation in online communities may include depictions or presentations of the following:

- Photos, videos, comments or posters showing the personal use of alcohol, drugs and tobacco including holding cups reasonably expected to contain alcohol, cans, shot glasses etc.
- Photos, videos, and comments that are of a sexual nature. This includes links to websites of a pornographic nature and other inappropriate material.
- Content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another cheer gym; taunting comments aimed at a athlete, coach or team at another cheer gym and derogatory comments against race and/or gender). No posts should depict or encourage unacceptable, violent or illegal activities (examples: hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, illegal drug use).
- Information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary to FIERCE which is not public information (examples: student-athlete injuries and eligibility status, travel plans/itineraries or information).
- For your own safety, please keep the following recommendations in mind as you participate in social media websites:
 - Set your security settings so that only your friends can view your profile.
 - You should not post your email, home address, local address, telephone number(s), or other personal information as it could lead to unwanted attention, stalking, identity theft, etc.
 - Be aware of who you add as a friend to your site – many people are looking to take advantage of athletes or to seek connection with athletes.
 - Consider how the above behaviors can be reflected in all Facebook applications. If you are ever in doubt of the appropriateness of your online public material, consider whether it upholds and positively reflects your own values and ethics as well as FIERCE.

CELL PHONE USE

ALL cell phones must be turned off and put away during practice times and prior to warmups in competition. This includes SMARTWATCHES.

There is to be NO videotaping of practices without permission from a coach. . Our program is designed to teach athletes discipline, responsibility, and accountability along with their development as a cheerleader and we have found that phones tend to get in the way of this.

In the event of an emergency, an athlete will be permitted to call their parent/guardian or utilize a coaches phone.

INJURIES/MEDICAL TREATMENT

In the event that an athlete is injured, please notify us as soon as possible. All injuries are treated on a case by case basis. If an athlete has a minor injury or uncomfortable feeling on any part of the body but is able to participate, please ensure necessary accommodations are made prior to their scheduled practice/meet time. For example, if a minor sprain needs to be taped before activity, please ensure they are taped up before their practice starts.

FIERCE will make changes to choreography prior to practicing and will choreograph routines based on the athlete's injury and length of recovery. Once the athlete has fully recovered there is a possibility he or she may or may NOT be choreographed back into the routine. It is the coach's discretion in replacing such individuals for the rest of the season.

All doctors/dentist appointments requiring an athlete to sit out will require a doctor's excuse. If your child requires medication due to a chronic illness (asthma, allergic reactions, etc.) we require that all medications be provided before practice or any event. All injured athletes must continue to pay their monthly tuition.

Concussion protocols are followed and an athlete must be cleared by their physician to return to cheer.

WARNING: Athletes will get bumps, bruises and injuries do occur, especially as athletes increase in age and skill level. No athlete wants to be injured, but it will happen at some point.

Your athlete **MUST** relay to a coach if they are injured and need assistance.

ATHLETE SAFETY AND COMMUNICATION POLICIES

Our teams are made up of minor athletes of different ages, and we aim to protect each of you from unwanted advances online, as well as ensuring that you operate within safe guidelines and conduct to prevent any perception of impropriety.

If you are experiencing unwanted attention or are concerned about any particular individuals, please alert your parents immediately and our team so we can address the situation immediately.

Our rules for digital communications follow those of SafeSport, a program developed by the International Olympic Committee to protect minor athletes.

STAFF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR ATHLETE PROTECTION

All FIERCE staff that will be interacting with your minor athletes are currently in good standing with USASF background checks. Copies can be produced at any time upon request.

We will have open, public chat communication channels with [FIERCE staff and their parents/guardians. This may be through IG group chats, GroupMe, iMessage, or similar.

FIERCE staff will never engage in digital communication directly with a minor representative of the company one-on-one.

SafeSport Electronic Communications Policy

Electronic communication includes but is not limited to phone calls, video calls, texts, social media platforms (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, WhatsApp, Snapchat, etc.), fitness applications, emails, and direct messaging that occurs between an Adult Participant and Minor Athlete(s).

- Must be Open and Transparent.
 - A parent/guardian, another adult family member of the Minor Athlete, or another Adult Participant must be copied or included on the communication.
 - This includes all communication initiated by a Minor Athlete.
- Only electronic platforms that allow Open and Transparent communication can be used.
- All team communication or communications from an Adult Participant to more than one Minor Athlete must copy or include another Adult Participant, or all the Minor Athletes' parents/guardians.
- All communication should be professional in nature.
- Organizations and Adult Participants must honor a parent/guardian's request to discontinue communication with their Minor Athlete, unless there is an emergency.

We do understand that cheerleading is a unique environment where minor athletes are often on teams and have personal relationships with adult athletes. There are exceptions provided by Safesport for these circumstances:

- Dual Relationship – The Adult Participant has an existing relationship with Minor Athlete outside of the sport program.
- Close-in-Age – The Adult Participant has no authority over the Minor Athlete and is not more than 4 years older than the Minor Athlete.

Is it against the Electronic Communications policy for a Minor Athlete to follow an Adult Participant on social media?

No. It is not against the policy for a Minor Athlete to follow an Adult Participant on social media, but it is against the policy to have a one-on-one conversation with that Minor Athlete through direct messages.

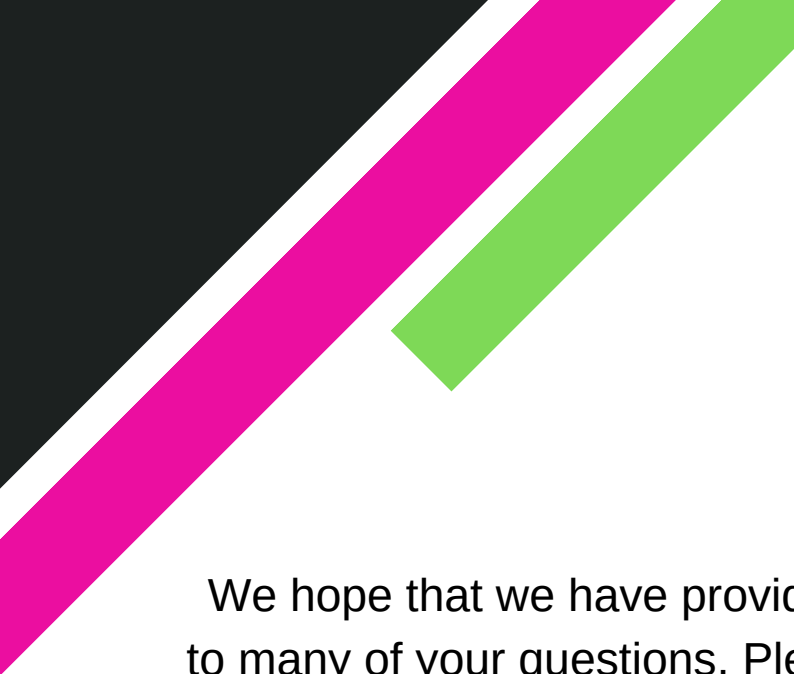
Can an adult athlete text their friend who is a Minor Athlete?

It depends. If that adult athlete is an Adult Participant, does not have Authority over the Minor Athlete, and is no more than four years older than the Minor Athlete, they can communicate one-on-one with the Minor Athlete. If they do not meet those requirements, they will need to copy another Adult Participant, the Minor Athlete's parent/guardian, or another adult family member of the Minor Athlete on the communication.

How should an Adult Participant respond if they receive a call from a Minor Athlete?

The Adult Participant should ensure that it is not an emergency situation, and then proceed to include another Adult Participant, the Minor Athletes parent/guardian, or another adult family member of the Minor Athlete on the call if possible. If this is not possible, the Adult Participant should reschedule the call for a later time.

More information about SafeSport can be found here: <https://maapp.uscenterforsafesport.org>



We hope that we have provided you with the answers to many of your questions. Please don't be afraid to ask veteran parents for clarification or assistance.

We were all new parents at one time!

Welcome to the FIERCE Family!

Please email fiercecheer2015@gmail.com if you have questions or concerns.

