2026-2027 Menahga High School Cheerleading Handbook

Welcome to the Menahga High School Cheerleading Program! This handbook serves as a guide to our expectations, practices, and the standards set forth by the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL). Our goal is to foster school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, and ensure a safe and positive environment for all participants.

🏫 Program Overview

Cheerleading at Menahga High School is a non-competitive, sideline activity that supports athletic programs. Our primary objectives are to:

- Boost school spirit
- Promote good sportsmanship
- Develop positive crowd involvement
- Help student participants and spectators understand and achieve the educational objectives of interscholastic athletic programs

Sports include:

- **Fall:** Menahga Football Cheer
- **Winter:** Menahga Girls & Boys Basketball Cheer, UNC Wrestling Cheer

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📅 Practice & Season Schedule

- **Practice Schedule**: Fall season will begin Monday, August 10th, 2026. Winter season will start Monday, November 2nd.
    - **Practice time:** Practice will be Monday-Friday from 3:30-5:30 during the school year. Practice in August will be Monday-Friday from 4:00-6:00.
    - **Wednesdays:** Practice will end at 5:30, but to allow those participating in church activities to get where they need to be on time, they may leave at 5:00.
    - **Pick up:** Depending on the season, we will typically be practicing in the Sensory Room in the Elementary for winter and the Multipurpose gym for fall. Please allow for a little extra time once practice is finished, to allow for cheerleaders to get changed and out the door to you.
- **Phones:** Cell phones are not allowed during practice or games.
- **Clothing**: Loose or slippery clothing is not permitted during practices.
    - Flyers must have shorts on at practice.
    - Shirts need to have sleeves.
    - Cheer shoes must be worn at practice.

📋 Eligibility Requirements📚

To be eligible to participate in the cheerleading program:

- **Physical Examination**: A current physical examination must be on file with the school.
- **Academic Standing**: Students must meet the academic eligibility requirements set by the Menahga Public School Board.
- **Behavioral Expectations**: Students must adhere to the school's code of conduct and MSHSL bylaws, Menahga Public School Board, and Menahga Cheer Handbook.
- **Conditioning:** Cheerleaders are required to attend at least 10 practices before they can cheer at a game/meet.

🏆 Conduct & Sportsmanship

Cheerleaders are expected to:

- **Positive Representation**: Represent Menahga High School with pride and respect.
- **Sportsmanship**: Promote good sportsmanship at all times.
- **Behavior**: Maintain appropriate behavior during practices, games, and school events. This also includes the locker rooms.
- **Interaction**: During games/meets, it's fine to check in with parents during half time, however, cheerleaders should stay together during breaks, not wander around with friends.

📱 Social Media & Communication

- **Representation**: Cheerleaders are representatives of Menahga High School both online and offline. Do not post anything inappropriate, especially when in uniform.
- **Conduct**: Maintain appropriate conduct on social media platforms.
- **Communication**: Stay informed by following our Menahga Cheer Group on the GroupMe App. I request that cheerleaders and parents/guardians join the group.
- **Problems/Concerns:** If there is a problem or concern, please feel free to message me, and I will get back to you as soon as possible.

🏈🏀🤼 Game/Meet Days

- Cheerleaders must be present at school the day of a game/meet in order to cheer; cheerleaders must follow Menahga High School activities daily attendance policy.
    - This will be explained to the squad prior to the first game/meet or first day of school.

- Cheerleaders are not allowed to be on their phones during games. I will keep everyone updated on the progress of the games on the GroupMe app so rides can be planned.

    - **Be aware**, games don't always go according to plan and can run longer/shorter than usual.

    - The coach will stay until all cheerleaders are picked up or rides have been confirmed.

    - Cheerleaders will need to be picked up at the High School doors, not the Elementary, unless told otherwise.

- Be dressed and ready when they arrive.
- Have on proper uniform (this includes socks!)
- Warm up time is not "get ready" time
- Be to the school an hour before football and basketball games start
    - To stretch & warm up
    - To run through cheers, school song, and stunts

- Be to the wrestling meets 45 minutes before the meet starts
    - To stretch & warm up
    - To run through cheers & school song
    - Cheerleaders will need to get dropped off and picked up at the Sebeka School when the meet is there.
- **Home Games:**
    - Cheerleaders will only cheer at home games, with the exception of playoffs/state tournaments.
    - Home games for football/basketball will be at Menahga High School.
    - Home meets for wrestling will be at both Menahga High School and Sebeka High School.

🎽 Uniforms & Appearance

- **Uniforms**: Uniforms are property of the school and must be returned at the end of the season. Uniforms must be clean and in good condition. Failure to return uniforms **WILL** result in a fine.
- **Game Days:** All parts of the uniform must be worn on game day.
    - That includes: Warm-ups (fall), skirt, crop, shell, correct socks, cheer shoes, & bow.
    - Poms and pound mats (wrestling) must be with.
- **Jewelry**: All jewelry is prohibited during practices and games.
    - If you are planning on getting a new piercing, wait until after the cheer season is over. They will still need to be removed at practice and games, even if they are new.
- **Hair**: Hair must be worn away from the face and off the shoulders. Style will be determined before game day and all girls are expected to match.
- **Nails**: Due to safety, Nails must be kept short; artificial nails are not permitted, that includes glue on nails. On game days, nail color will be natural, no colorful polish colors.
    - Failure to comply will result with nails being trimmed to meet required length.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for the purchase of shoes and socks. Prices may vary. Coach will inform families of required shoes and socks. It is the family's responsibility to purchase. Both can be used for multiple seasons, as long as they are in good condition.

🛡️ Safety & Injury Prevention

- **Spotting**: Stunts and pyramids will have spotters as needed.
- **Conditioning:** Cheerleaders are required to stretch daily before practice and games/meets.
- **First Aid**: Coaches have basic first aid knowledge and a first aid kit available.
- **Weather Conditions**: If school is canceled, sports are canceled as well. The school will typically send out an instant alert too.

For more detailed information on MSHSL cheerleading rules and policies, please refer to the official MSHSL website: MSHSL Cheerleading Rules and Policies.

A digital copy will be made available to allow access to internet links listed in this handbook.

Katie Novak - Head Coach
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📝 Acknowledgment

By participating in the Menahga High School Cheerleading Program, students and parents acknowledge and agree to adhere to the guidelines set forth in this handbook and the MSHSL bylaws.

Please return asap:

Student's Name: _____

Student's Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone Number: _____

I plan to cheer for:

___ Football Cheer Only ___ Basketball/Wrestling Cheer Only ___ Both

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____ Phone Number: _____

Please return this form to Coach Katie on or before the first day of practice.
Students will not be allowed to participate until this is turned in.