

# 2010-2011 Cheerleader Handbook



A decade behind us...  
a bright future ahead.

Join the Star Family!

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Dear SilverStar Candidate and Parent,

I would like to personally welcome you to the world of all-star cheerleading! I am thrilled that you are interested in becoming a part of the SilverStar family. [This past season marked a decade of SilverStars in Whatcom County. It has been an incredibly rewarding journey - one that I invite you to become a part of.](#)

If you choose that this is the sport for you, you will be participating in one of the fastest growing sports in America. Competitive cheerleading is a tremendous team sport that will challenge you both physically and mentally. When all is said and done, you will be walking away from this season with lasting memories, the confidence and poise of the elite, and a feeling of accomplishment.

If you are new to this whole experience, take a deep breath. There is a lot of information to take in, not to mention the nervousness of attempting a new sport. Fear not - we are committed to keeping tryouts relaxed, comfortable and stress-free. ☺ We have an incredibly competent, equipped staff and are confident that we can help you reach your potential.

If you are returning to the Star Family, I want to thank you for your support and commitment as we continue to grow. Your participation has been a building block in our program. I look forward to working with you again and creating an even greater SilverStar legacy!

If you have any questions during this process, feel free to contact me at 676-0995 or [info@nwstars.com](mailto:info@nwstars.com).

Cheers,

Christina Archer  
President, NW Cheer

## ABOUT NW CHEER

Northwest Cheer is committed to creating, teaching and encouraging a higher standard of athleticism, leadership and character within cheerleaders. Our goal is to unite female students from different schools and districts with the purpose of reaching a common success through competitive cheerleading and exhibition performances.

We began in the summer of 2000 with a few phone calls to local coaches and cheerleaders. Our first team consisted of 25 high school girls. Since then, we have added minis, youth, and junior teams. We opened our own facility in October, 2005, equipped with a full spring floor!

Our organization continues to grow as the athletes continue to excel! We have 12 National/International Championship titles, 5 WA State Championship titles, 4 Grand Champion Titles, and over 35 regional competition victories.

Each season brings incredible blessings, special memories, and unique trials that spur us on towards growth. Through it all, we remain committed to being a positive influence on young ladies.





## EXHIBITION TEAMS

We will be offering some exhibition teams that will train for shorter seasons and perform locally and/or at minimal competitions:

- ☆ **Twinkles, Level 1** 4-8 years old  
Basic/Intermediate Stunting and Tumbling  
Spring Session May-June  
Summer Session August-September  
Fall Session October-November  
Winter Session January-February
- ☆ **Special Needs Team** 9-18 years old  
Session is October thru March

## COMPETITION TEAMS

The following teams are being considered for the 2009-2010 Season:

- ☆ **Starlets Extreme, L2** 7-11 years old  
Basic/Intermediate Stunting and Tumbling
- ☆ **Blue Squad, L3** 12-14 years old  
Intermediate/Advanced Stunting and Tumbling
- ☆ **Senior Extreme, L2** 12-18 years old  
Basic/Intermediate Stunting and Tumbling
- ☆ **Senior Elite, L4** 15-18 years old  
Advanced Stunting and Tumbling
- ☆ **Gray Squad** 14 years & younger  
Hip Hop focus, Auditions will be September
- ☆ **Black Squad** 14-18 years old  
Hip Hop focus, Auditions will be September





## **SELECTION PROCESS**

Official Tryouts are May 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> (see Tryout Details for more information). Candidates are evaluated on strengths and growth areas. All athletes train together for a matter of weeks to ensure adequate observation before final Team Placement decisions are made. Team selections are based on a candidate's age, abilities, and team needs. All team selection decisions are entirely up to the coaching staff and are final. Once teams are selected, stunt positions are assigned based on experience, team needs, and potential. Parental and candidate input is not permitted for these processes.

Anyone interested in trying out after Official Tryouts can set up a private tryout by contacting [tryout@nwstars.com](mailto:tryout@nwstars.com). These selections, team assignments, and stunt group positions are up to the discretion of the coaching staff.

## **CROSSOVERS**

Once team assignments are made, a Star may request or be offered a "crossover" option, which allows a member to be on 2 teams. If a Star is selected for this "double duty" option, her primary team will be her original team, and secondary team will be the team she crosses over to. Anyone expressing interest in this option must meet primary team's maximum level requirements. Each candidate will be individually evaluated to determine crossover status. She will be required to attend all practices for her primary team plus 1 practice per week for her secondary team. If her primary team obligations begin to suffer, this privilege can be taken away. If a Star chooses the crossover option, she must follow through with the commitment for the duration of the season.

There will not be any additional tuition for being on 2 teams. However, if a Star requests the crossover action, she will be responsible for any additional competition fees and 50% of the choreography fee.

## **ALTERNATES**

In some cases, a candidate may be selected as an alternate. Additional training will be required in order to improve in necessary areas. Alternates are expected to abide by the same policies and standards, and will be periodically evaluated for promotion.



# CHEERLEADER STANDARDS

NW Cheer is committed to Athleticism, Character and Teamwork. By choosing to be a member of this program, you will be instructed on and held to high standards and exemplary behavior. Your athletic abilities will be challenged and refined. Your character will be exercised and exemplified. And your definition of “team” will be transformed. The following are our standards and expectations:



## Athleticism

- ☆ Be All-Star...All the Time! Give your very best at all practices, and you and your team can achieve your very best! Giving less than 100% limits you and your team, and will only result in frustration, team division, and harder coaching!
- ☆ Take personal pride in your sport. Work hard to achieve your goals. Being good is fun - being elite is amazing! It will not be handed to you - those who work towards it will be fulfilled in their accomplishments!
- ☆ Be dedicated to personally work on growth areas outside of practice.
- ☆ Have a solid knowledge of cheer terminology, techniques and safety.
- ☆ Maintain good physical fitness. Stars will be asked to run an 8-minute mile, do quality push-ups, and do core-strengthening exercises on a regular basis. Stars should be able to perform their entire routine (including all elements) with energy & vigor.
- ☆ Stars need to have two 2-pound weights that can go on ankles or wrists (Stars under 12 can have two 1-pound weights). These need to be brought to every practice.
- ☆ Get your rest. Being tired doesn't lead to successful tumbling or safe stunting!
- ☆ Maintain healthy eating habits. Your body needs quality food and hydration in order to perform the tasks all-star cheerleading requires. Cheerleaders who neglect their nutrition often end up forgetting to “fuel” or settling for low-quality “fuel” - this hurts you, the stunt group you're working with, and the coaches who have to deal with your crankiness.



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## Character

- ☆ Be courteous, friendly and respectful to others.
- ☆ Be honest and truthful regardless of the consequences.
- ☆ Have a positive CAN DO attitude. Your coaches will push you to reach your potential - join their efforts!
- ☆ Have a healthy sense of self-esteem. This means that Stars refrain from negative self-talk and excessive acts of attention-seeking, and say thank you when given a compliment.
- ☆ Be an active listener and accept constructive criticism.
- ☆ Have good time management skills in order to balance personal time, family time, schoolwork, and cheer.

## Teamwork

- ☆ Be supportive of your teammates' successes & cheer for others.
- ☆ Be reliable. Unlike other sports, there are not people sitting on the bench or subs who can effectively fill-in for you. SilverStars have to step out in faith to trust each other - to trust that their teammate is going to be at practice, give full effort, and care about the squad's goals.
- ☆ Contribute positively to the working environment for your teammates. Whining, complaining, and laziness cheapen the sport, limit you from reaching your potential, and hinder your team from reaching its goals.

### **The following behaviors are not acceptable for SilverStars:**

- ✗ Insubordination or disrespect of any kind, including temper tantrums, outbursts, lack of participation/effort, talking back, eye rolling, etc.
- ✗ Challenging the authority of the coach at any time
- ✗ Gossip (regardless of the subject).
- ✗ Any partaking of tobacco products, alcohol, or illegal drugs.
- ✗ Being in the presence of illegal activities (underage drinking, drug use, etc.)
- ✗ Instigating, encouraging, or engaging in any physical violence or verbal altercations.
- ✗ Use of vulgar or profane language.
- ✗ Excessive public displays of affection.
- ✗ Inappropriate behavior in school.
- ✗ Inappropriate attire - in or out of practice.
- ✗ New piercings during the season.

Violations will be addressed immediately and handled at the discretion of the coaching staff.



## Online Profiles

When you become a SilverStar, you become a representation of our program, your teammates, and the sport of competitive cheerleading - even on the World Wide Web! It is important that any individual choosing to keep a MySpace (or any other online profile) recognize that there are certain expectations in terms of acceptable material. If you have any pages of the sort, your page will be monitored, and must be maintained accordingly. Here are a few guidelines:

- 🚫 NO photos of a SilverStars with alcohol, appearing intoxicated, or wearing excessively revealing clothing.
- 🚫 No content that consists of sexual, aggressive, or immature behavior.
- 🚫 No foul, vulgar, profane, or obscene language is permitted. This includes comments posted by others on your site.
- 🚫 No personal information shall be posted, including: Address, phone numbers, class schedules, etc.

It is highly recommended that SilverStars place a privacy block on their pages - therefore limiting their profiles and photos to approved "friends/buddies" only.

## PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- ☆ Stars are responsible to know the material assigned *before* practice begins. This means practicing on your own to know your parts (especially if you were absent). Practice time will be spent learning new material, improving areas of weakness, and mastering the routine.
- ☆ Once practice attire is distributed, it is to be worn to every practice. If you lose the practice attire, you will be required to replace it within two weeks.
- ☆ Practice time is not social time - excessive chit-chat wastes team time. Anyone not giving full effort will be asked to leave practice.
- ☆ Cell phones are not allowed in the practice area. If they ring, they will be answered by the coach who will then do all they can to make sure you will *never* let it happen again! 😊
- ☆ NW Cheer is not responsible for any items left at the gym. Our Lost & Found is donated at the end of each season.
- ☆ During open practices, cheerleaders are expected to stay focused on practice, and not interact with the spectators.
- ☆ Stars must check the Mail Center every practice.

## SCHEDULE INFORMATION

Competitive cheerleading is a year-round sport. The SilverStars training and competition season is approximately an 11-month commitment. We begin right after tryouts in May and practice, perform, and compete until the end of March/mid-April. We do our best to accommodate faith, family, school, and the many various activities our athletes are involved in. However, with so many school systems represented, it is impossible to accommodate every school's schedule.



The following is the preliminary schedule of gym closures and breaks for the 2010-2011 season:

Athletes get 3 weeks (6 practices) off to be taken at own discretion between May 17-Sept. 6 (vacations, sports/church camps, etc.).

**(EXCLUDING: CAMP WEEK & the practice before camp)**

*-Coaches request prior notice in order to maximize practice time*

*-No more than 4 in one month without prior permission*

May 31 <sup>st</sup>	Memorial Day
September 4 <sup>th</sup> -7 <sup>th</sup>	Labor Day Weekend
November 25 <sup>th</sup> -27 <sup>th</sup>	Thanksgiving Weekend
December 19 <sup>th</sup> -26 <sup>th</sup>	Winter Break
February 18 <sup>th</sup> -21 <sup>st</sup>	Mid-Winter Break (unless competing)

\*Open gyms - tumbling & stunting - may continue to be offered during breaks.

If practices/classes must be canceled due to emergency, weather conditions, or any other unforeseen circumstance, a coach/captain/Team VP will attempt to contact all members via phone or email



## ATTENDANCE EXPECTATIONS

All-star cheerleading is a TEAM sport. Without everyone present, the team cannot accomplish its goals. Practice is MANDATORY and absences should be avoided whenever possible. Any absence or tardiness results in the entire squad being inconvenienced, and others' sacrificed time becomes ineffective and unrewarding. Please consider the other members of your team when coordinating your schedule.

- ☆ Northwest Cheer works hard to respect and accommodate families, school, faith and more before setting a schedule. Once a schedule is set, we expect the same level of respect and consideration for the teams' time. When considering missing a practice, please keep your teammates and the progress of the team in mind.
- ☆ School is a top priority for every athlete. However, procrastinated schoolwork is not an excuse to miss practice. Plan ahead!
- ☆ An athlete is not allowed to miss practice for any reason the week prior to a competition. Doing so adds a lot of pressure to your teammates and coaching staff.
- ☆ We ask that all absences be submitted in writing (so we don't forget!). **Absence Request Forms** are available in the office and must be turned in 2 weeks *prior* to any absence.
- ☆ The following criteria are considered excused reasons to miss a practice with appropriate notice:
  - An official school function that directly results in a grade for the team member.
  - All immediate family weddings, funerals, or medical emergencies.
  - Any other significant commitment - up to the discretion of the coaching staff with prior approval. (This will be a *rare* case.)
- ☆ Be **ready** to begin practice at the scheduled time (ready is defined as: proper attire on, bladder empty, jewelry off, shoes on, etc.). Tardiness results in staying late after practice to do gym chores.
- ☆ Illness and injury are unfortunate. Unless contagious, we ask that you attend the practice and watch for any changes in choreography or modifications to the routine. If an injury or illness requires that an athlete must sit out of practice for more than a week, a doctor's note is required.
- ☆ All members are expected to take part in fund-raisers, community service projects, socials, etc.



## COMMUNICATION EXPECTATIONS

- ❑ Timely communication is required from all athletes and parents. In an effort to be adequately prepared and focused, staff phones will be turned off 2 hours before practice.
- ❑ For Junior & Senior team members, all communication concerning absences, injuries, and illness must come directly from the athlete. (For Starlets, parent communication on behalf of the athlete is encouraged.) This policy is in place to increase communication abilities and responsibility of our growing athletes.
- ❑ Text Messaging is not an appropriate means of dialogue - only reminders and quick-reply questions!
- ❑ Coaches are rarely available right before, during or immediately after practice to discuss any detail regarding cheerleaders, schedules, or events. Practice and competition times are protected for the teams and are not conducive for effective communication with parents or individual athletes. Parents should refrain from attempting to communicate with coaches during these times unless it is an emergency. Please utilize parent comment cards, email, or a phone call later in the week.
- ❑ Parent Comment Cards give you an opportunity to positively voice your opinion, express concerns for your athlete, give us new information that we may need to know, etc. You may indicate if you would like for someone to call you back or if you would like to make an appointment. We will try to get back to you prior to the next practice.
- ❑ Website Info - [www.nwstars.com](http://www.nwstars.com)  
Star Family Section Username: Stars; Password: \_\_\_\_\_

## PUBLICITY RELEASE

Performances, practices, and miscellaneous activities will be photographed and/or videoed. Northwest Cheer reserves the right to utilize these photos/videos in appropriate manners. No royalties or compensation will be provided for their use.



## PARENT EXPECTATIONS

The SilverStar Family consists of coaches, athletes, and their parents. We want it to be an exciting, positive experience for all members of our family. We ask that parents support and encourage our standards and expectations and provide a positive example for the Stars around them.

- ❑ Parents are asked to set an example of positive behavior and conduct for all of our team members. This includes refraining from rude and vulgar language, negative comments, gossip, and other inappropriate behaviors while in the presence of children or at any event the SilverStars are present at.
- ❑ Please keep in mind that coaches are well-trained and equipped and do not need parental assessments of their daughter's skill level, abilities, etc. The coaches not only have to make the best athletic decisions for the team, but also have to navigate the often fragile self-esteem issues these young ladies are dealing with. Please help your Star and the coaches by not placing value on specific positions, formations, activities.
- ❑ Be prepared for the inevitable:
  - There will be practices that your Star walks away feeling frustrated, discouraged, or with hurt feelings. As the adult she is going to vent to, please help her to process her feelings in a healthy manner and regain perspective.
  - There will be weeks that your Star is busy with school, cheer, birthdays, etc. Please help her to stay organized, efficient, and ultimately successful!
- ❑ Throughout the season, we will invite parents to view practices. This is an exciting opportunity to see the growing process that leads to the final product. Parents are there as spectators and not as coaches or critics. During open practices, we ask parents to refrain from interacting with the cheerleaders. Only coaches and cheerleaders are allowed on the practice floor.



- ❑ Please be creative and proactive in consequences for your daughter's misbehavior at home or in school. Prohibiting her from attending practice punishes every other athlete on her team. However, NW Cheer is committed to your daughter's academic and personal success as well as her athletic success. We are available to get involved to come up with a creative solution that will encourage higher levels of conduct and fair consequences for misbehavior. [If punishment includes restrictions from cell phone and/or internet, we ask to be notified. We often use these methods for communication.]
- ❑ When a question or concern arises, we ask that parents exercise healthy communication and time boundaries when seeking clarity. If for some reason, you become unhappy with a NW Cheer decision or process, please request a meeting with the appropriate staff person in order to address the issue at hand. As a staff, we operate by a 24 hour rule when addressing conflict. We ask that parents refrain from negative discussions with other parents or with their Star. This will end up having a negative effect on all parties involved.
- ❑ Being our biggest fans, parents are a welcome part of our performances and competitions. These events can and will have moments of tension both for the athletes and the staff. We ask that parents remain positive and supportive throughout event days. At no point should a parent confront a competition official or judge, be disrespectful to another program or hosting venue, or be disruptive during team practices and warm-up times.
- ❑ If a parent becomes problematic in behavior, attitude, or financially, the Star's ability to participate may be affected.
- ❑ Communication is provided primarily in the following ways:  
On our website [www.nwstars.com](http://www.nwstars.com), Weekly emails sent from Team VPs, Monthly Newsletters, Quarterly Parent Meetings (at least one parent is encouraged to attend). At times, we may also post announcements at the gym and give handouts at practices. **It is solely your responsibility as a parent to keep up with these regular updates.**



## FINANCIAL POLICIES

As with any extra-curricular activity, all-star cheerleading is a financial investment. Each family is responsible for the financial commitment outlined upon selection for a team.

- ❑ NW Cheers accepts money order, check (made payable to NW Cheer), debit and credit cards (service charges apply).
- ❑ Monthly Tuition is due by the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month. A 10% late fee will automatically be added to your account after the 5<sup>th</sup> of the month. NW Cheer reserves the right to suspend participation for non-payment of tuition and fees when necessary.
- ❑ Student Staff options are available to help qualified athletes earn money towards their account. This option is only available for Stars that begin in May. *\*This is replacing scholarships*
- ❑ **Family Discount for Monthly Tuition:**
  - ☆ \$10 off for the second participating sibling
  - ☆ \$15 off any additional siblings
- ❑ Tuition and fees are determined based on the whole season. Fees are non-refundable and not prorated based on absences, holidays, weather, participation, etc. Likewise, if a coach calls an extra practice, you will not be charged an extra fee.
- ❑ All tuition and fees must be current in order to receive any clothing/uniform items or to participate in competitions.
- ❑ There will be a \$25 processing fee added to your account in the event of a returned check.
- ❑ Replacing team members and rearranging routines can be taxing on the team and the staff. For that reason, there will be a \$75 termination fee for any participant who chooses to withdraw or is removed from a team anytime after camp. She will also be responsible for any fees incurred on behalf of her, including registrations, items ordered, return fees, etc. All previously paid and invoiced amounts are non-refundable.
- ❑ Should you choose not to pay your invoice in full you will be assessed a 10% interest fee for each 30 days of delinquency. Once your account is delinquent past 90 days without payment you will be sent to collections. You will be required to pay all charges that are past due on your account plus interest and all expenses including reasonable attorney fees and third party collection fees.
- ❑ NW Cheer is committed to a new fundraiser every month. These can help towards Nationals, uniforms and competition fees.



The following are projections for the 2010-2011 season:

<b>STAR PAYMENT PLAN:</b>	<b>Account total divided into equal monthly payments</b>	<b><i>\$10 off every month for any family participating in this option!</i></b>
<b>Tryout Fee</b>	\$30*	50% off for continuing members <i>*Doubles after camp</i>
<b>Monthly Tuition</b>	\$80 for all athletes <i>*Discounts available on Star Payment Plan!</i>	Due by the 1 <sup>st</sup> of the month; After the 5 <sup>th</sup> , add 10% late fee. Family discounts apply.
<b>Uniform Fee</b>	\$100-\$500 (varies based on items ordered)	30% non-refundable deposit due upon selection; Monthly payments should be made throughout the summer; Final balance due by September 1 <sup>st</sup>
<b>Camp Fee</b>	\$220 \$250 for L4	Due by June 15 <sup>th</sup> 10% off for continuing members
<b>Choreography Fee</b>	\$100	<i>For anyone who joins after camp</i>
<b>Competition &amp; Nationals Fees</b>	\$500-\$1400 (varies based on selected competitions and team placements)	30% due October 15 <sup>th</sup> 30% due November 15 <sup>th</sup> Final balance due February 15 <sup>th</sup> <i>*Monthly fundraising is available</i>
<b>Termination Fee</b>	\$75+	Anyone who chooses to withdraw or is removed from a team after camp

## UNIFORM INFORMATION

All shells & skirts (unless purchased) are property of NW Cheer. They must be kept in good condition and returned at the end of the season. They are not to be loaned out for any reason.

Uniforms should be washed in cold water and laid flat to dry.

Supplemental Orders: If you outgrow or lose something (or want additional SilverStar items), NW Cheer will place orders on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month.

## CHOREOGRAPHY POLICY

All SilverStar music and material (including dance, cheer, jump sequence, stunts, etc.) is for SilverStar use only. It may not be used or re-taught outside of Stars without consent from NW Cheer.



## COMPETITION EXPECTATIONS

- ☆ All athletes must adhere to an 11:00 p.m. curfew the night before a competition to ensure adequate rest & proper readiness. Parents and athletes should take responsibility in following this set time.
- ☆ Fingernails must be sports length. Nail polish, if worn, must be clear or natural color.
- ☆ Stars must bring their weights to every competition.
- ☆ Uniforms must be cleaned and pressed, and shoes must be clean prior to competitions.
- ☆ Squad members must have the same uniform look (including hair, make-up, lipstick, etc.).
- ☆ Stars will remain in full uniform for the duration of competitions and events (until the end of awards) unless otherwise instructed (this includes hair and shoes).
- ☆ A true family supports each other in all situations. The Star Family (Stars and parents) is asked to support all teams at the competitions with cheers and standing ovations. The athletes appreciate the noise and it creates a strong presence.
- ☆ All Stars will travel to competitions and events as a team. Stars are able to return from competitions and events with their team or their own parent. For liability reasons, there are no exceptions.

## CLASSES

Cheer 101 Classes are offered on a regular basis. This is a 4-week session focused on teaching basic cheerleading skills, including motions, jumps, voice technique, and more.

Cheernastics Classes are offered every week in order to help cheerleaders master the tumbling side of the sport. The classes are divided based on USASF Levels: L1, L2, L3, L4+.

*(All classes are available to competition team members at no extra charge.)*



## TRYOUT DETAILS

<u>Optional Prep Clinics</u> Learn the basics, sharpen your skills, get some extra help! \$5 per clinic	Tuesday, May 4 <sup>th</sup> Wednesday, May 5 <sup>th</sup> Thursday, May 6 <sup>th</sup>	7-9 p.m. 7-9 p.m. 7-9 p.m.
<u>Tryouts - Day 1</u> For new candidates & continuing Stars *Photos	Friday, May 7 <sup>th</sup>	6:00-9:00 p.m.
<u>Tryouts - Day 2</u> Both sessions for new candidates Morning session for continuing Stars	Saturday, May 8 <sup>th</sup>	Session I - 9-11 Session II - 11-2 p.m.

### What to Bring:

- Application/Medical Release Form
- Signature Page (signed by Parents & Cheerleader)
- \$30 Annual Fee (50% off for continuing SilverStars)
- Water Bottle

### Appearance:

Put a little effort into your appearance! Have a polished, neat appearance! (Your photo will be taken)

Tennis Shoes

Athletic Shorts - Star colors

T-shirt or Tank Top - Star colors (must fit well enough for bras and bellies to be covered throughout activities)

Hair must be pulled back - neat and clean, with a ribbon (bangs should be out of face)

### Be Ready For:

You will learn a cheer, dance and jumps.

You will be asked to demonstrate any tumbling skills (forward roll thru full).

It will be a learning environment! Brand new athletes will have extra opportunities for hands-on help from the instructors during tryouts and are encouraged to attend Prep Clinics to learn the basics of what we are looking for.