



- **ALPHARETTA
JUNIOR RAIDERS CHEER
PROGRAM GUIDE**

ALPHARETTA JUNIOR RAIDERS CHEERLEADERS

YOU are Leaders.

YOU represent this program, your coach, your school, and your community.

YOU are a role model whose very essence is to bring cheer, boost spirit, and radiate positivity.

Lead by example - all the time - everywhere!

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PROGRAM OVERVIEW

ABOUT

The Alpharetta Junior Raiders Cheerleading Program (AJRC) is a Non-Profit Corporation volunteer-led Sideline program aligned with the Alpharetta Junior Raiders Football (AJRF) Program and feeding to Alpharetta High School's (AHS) Sideline Squads. Our goal is to not only prepare our participants for the athletic demands and rigor of the High School Program, but to foster Team Spirit, Leadership, and Character Development through the Middle School years. Our program is open to all rising 6th, 7th & 8th grade athletes whose place of residence is within the AHS attendance zone, regardless of whether they attend public or private school.

ORGANIZATION

The Program will be managed with a volunteer team of parents, cheer coaches, and high school student coaches. This includes an Executive Board consisting of a President or Co-Presidents, Secretary, and Treasurer. The Extended Cheer Board consists of the Executive Board, Sideline Team Director, Uniform Director(s), Spirit Wear Director, Special Events Coordinator, Volunteer Coordinator and Football Liaison. Squads will be managed by Team Managers (volunteer parents), Coaches (gym practices) and Student Coaches. All Families not signed up for one of the volunteer roles mentioned above will be required to contribute to the program through a minimum of 1 volunteer position. Volunteer opportunities will be presented at the beginning of the cheer season. This might include ticket sales at a home game, helping with uniform distribution, delivering snacks to a practice, or helping with the End of Year Banquet. AJRC Policies & Procedures have been set forth to ensure a fun, safe, and equitable environment for all participants at all times. AJRC is committed to careful observation and monitoring of safety measures, including proper stretching. The AJRC Program strives to elicit enthusiasm and interest in the sport of cheerleading, while encouraging confidence, and improving each cheerleader's individual skills and abilities.

EXPECTATIONS BEHAVIOR

1. AJRC is an inclusive, positive, and welcoming environment for all participants. Any and all individuals who participate in the program or are affiliated with AJRC are expected to model behavior that, at all times, aligns with our inclusive and positive spirit. This includes, but is not limited to cheerleaders, parents, guardians, Student Coaches, etc.
2. For Sideline Cheer, we follow the AHS Cheerleading format. If the players are playing, the cheerleaders are on the track cheering, regardless of weather. All quarters, cheerleaders are to be on the track in formation. All cheerleaders must know the required cheers.
3. AJRC cheerleaders are expected to support and encourage every teammate, thus creating and maintaining a safe, fun, and welcoming environment for all involved.
4. AJRC cheerleaders are to respect all facilities that we utilize including gyms, fields, bathrooms, and other event locations. This includes leaving no trash behind and not defacing property.
5. Any and all individuals who participate in the program or are affiliated with AJRC are expected to treat all coaches, team parents, and fellow AJRC cheerleaders with genuine courtesy, kindness, and respect in all forms of communication – in person as well as electronic (including but not limited to email, text, social media).

- A) There will be zero tolerance for arguing, gossiping, or slander. Accordingly, a single confirmed/documented violation of this policy may be sufficient grounds for immediate dismissal from AJRC.
 - B) There will be zero tolerance for physical fighting, repetitive and targeted bullying, and cyberbullying. Accordingly, a single confirmed/documented violation of this policy may be sufficient grounds for immediate dismissal from AJRC.
6. Regarding social media, any and all individuals who participate in the program or are affiliated with AJRC who initiate or participate in any posting, sharing, sending, liking, commenting, etc. of any image, text, post, photo, video, poll, etc. that is negative, derogatory, demeaning, embarrassing, etc. towards another member of the program (teammate, coaches, players, parents, etc.) is in violation of the AJRC behavior expectations and as such, a single confirmed/documented violation of this policy may be sufficient grounds for immediate dismissal from AJRC.
 7. Absolutely no alcohol or drug use will be tolerated! This includes smoking, vaping, drinking, or the use of any illicit drugs or controlled substances. AJRC follows the Fulton County School District's policy regarding drug and alcohol use.

APPEARANCE

1. A tidy personal appearance and good hygiene are to be presented at all times.
2. Wear game-day shirt to school every Friday before games.
3. Dress out in full uniform for every game including game day bow, cheer shoes with white AHS cheer socks, and warm up jacket/leggings/rain poncho(weather dependent) as indicated weekly by Team Managers. Midriiffs and undergarments (bra straps, etc.) are not to be seen peeking out from under clothing.
4. Wear full practice uniform to designated weekly practices including practice shirt, black athletic shorts/spandex, cheer shoes with white no-show socks, and hair in a high ponytail.
5. All Uniform pieces (including shoes and practice uniforms) are not to be worn for activities other than cheer during the cheer season and are to be kept in excellent, stain-free condition.
6. Hair is to be worn in a ponytail for all games and practices. For cheerleaders with short hair where a ponytail is not feasible, hair must be pulled back away from the face. All cheerleaders are expected to wear the designated hair bow for all games.
7. Jewelry may be a safety hazard, and therefore STRICTLY PROHIBITED at practices and games. This includes necklaces, bracelets, anklets, earrings, or body piercings (even under clothing), nail & hair rings, adorned hair pins, watches and fitness trackers, string, or woven articles, etc. Taped or hidden jewelry is not acceptable. No new piercings until the season concludes. Medical devices are permitted.
8. AJRC Sideline Cheer is in large part an outdoor program. To that end, games and events may take place in variable weather conditions, including rain, extreme heat or cold, etc. Cheerleaders and parents/guardians bear sole responsibility for being prepared for these conditions.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. AJRC should be a priority over all other extracurricular activities.

2. A single absent cheerleader diminishes the entire team's opportunity to efficiently and safely practice and perform their halftime routine.
3. Cheerleaders must arrive on time, in full dress, to every practice, game, and event as communicated by Team Managers, Coaches, and Student Coaches.
4. We make every effort to schedule a series of summer practices. While not mandatory, attendance is expected if in town during said practices. **Cheerleaders are expected to know all cheers by the start of the season.** If a cheerleader fails to know a cheer, they will sit down and sit out a quarter of the game. If a cheerleader fails to learn the halftime routine, the cheerleader will not perform the routine until the coaches determine the cheerleader can perform the routine satisfactorily.
5. Season Practices for Sideline Cheer are weekly in August, September, and October and are **MANDATORY**. Cheerleaders who miss practice at Georgia All Stars cheer gym will not participate in the halftime performance that Saturday (this is for safety purposes).
6. AJRC cheerleaders who are unable to cheer due to injury must attend each practice, game, or event in full dress/uniform, and sit with the Student Coach/team.
7. For Sideline Cheer, as a general rule, if the football team is playing, we are cheering...rain or shine.
8. Official GMSAA schedules will be released in August, until which, we anticipate a regular season game every Saturday in September and October. In addition, cheerleaders must plan to cheer at all playoff games which occur on Saturdays in November. **ALL GAMES, INCLUDING POSTSEASON, ARE MANDATORY.**
9. While we have made our best effort to publish as many dates/schedules as possible, there will inevitably be changes. These changes do not excuse cheerleaders from AJRC mandatory events.
10. For Sideline Cheer, a responsible parent, guardian, or designated adult must be present at all games for the entirety of the game. In cases where a designated adult is present rather than a parent or guardian, the Team Managers must be made aware of the identity of the designated adult. This is for safety reasons in case of injury or illness.

ABSENCES

All absences (excused and unexcused) and/or tardies for mandatory practices/games/events are to be communicated to AJRC at ajrcheer@gmail.com and Team Managers via Band App. **Known absences must be communicated before that week's practice.** Communication through another cheerleader is not acceptable.

EXCUSED ABSENCES

- Mandatory school event (chorus, band, etc.)
- Personal illness
- Religious holiday
- Family emergency
- Injury

TARDIES AND UNEXCUSED ABSENCES

- First time tardy offense will result in a warning; excessive tardies are not permitted
- Any absence that does not meet the requirements of an excused absence is unexcused

DEMERIT SYSTEM

AJRC cheerleaders are required to act beyond the standard expectation of conduct, as they represent the AJRC Program as well as the entire Alpharetta Raiders community. Being a cheerleader is both an honor and a privilege; appropriate behavior and attitude are necessary at all times.

The main goals of AJRC are to:

- Create a culture based on respect
- Set clear rules and behavioral expectations/parameters
- Build strong character while improving athletic skills, commitment & teamwork
- Establish logical consequences for ignoring, disregarding, or defying rules
- Instill personal responsibility, honesty, and accountability
- Foster understanding of how to contribute positively to a team/group
- Eliminate/discourage negative behaviors
- Learn to accept praise and criticism

To achieve these goals, we use a demerit system. This demerit system is our primary disciplinary tool, and it serves as a general guideline for the expectations of every AJRC cheerleader.

- Demerits may be issued for situations not specified on this list.
- Extreme violation of rules will result in an automatic dismissal (subject to Board approval).
- Any cheerleader dismissed from the program will not be refunded any program costs or fees.

ACCUMULATION OF DEMERITS

Demerits are cumulative throughout the season and can be given by Team Managers, Coaches, Student Coaches, and Board Members. All Coaches, Team Managers, and Board Members reserve the right to assign demerits as they deem necessary. Demerits are tracked by Team Managers. If 10 demerits are accumulated by a cheerleader, he/she will be placed under review of the board and may be dismissed from the squad. Depending upon the reasons for which a cheerleader is dismissed, it may be possible for the cheerleader to try out for AJRC the following season. Cheerleaders may be dismissed from the squad for situations that warrant dismissal. Any potential dismissal situation will be reviewed by the AJRC Board in conjunction with Team Managers. Please note that during the course of the season, the demerit system applies while in or out of uniform. Cheerleaders receive demerits during the cheer season starting from program participation commitment through the end of season banquet.

REASONS FOR DEMERITS

Below Violations = 1 Demerit

- Gum/candy at practices or games
- Jewelry at practices/games (including stud earrings and apple watches)

Below Violations = 1 Demerit AND may be required to sit out first quarter of current game or following game

- Disrupting practices/games (unnecessary talking, playing, or moving out of assigned position or use of cell phone)
- Not following instructions
- Not being dressed/prepared for practices or games (*benched until appropriate attire/equipment is obtained*)
- Negative Attitude

Below Violations = 1 Demerit AND may be required to sit out for halftime routine of current game

- Continued Failure to learn performances or cheers
- Arriving late to or leaving early from practices or games without prior notification/approval

Below Violations = 2 Demerits AND may be required to sit out for ½ of following game or ½ of current game

- Insubordination, disrespectfulness or bad attitude towards Coaches, Board Members, Team Managers, fellow cheerleaders, and other individuals who participate in the program or are affiliated with AJRC
- Unexcused absence at practices/games WITH prior notice to ajrcheer@gmail.com AND Team Manager via Band App (**2 unexcused absences are permitted from game/practice before demerits incur*)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct

Below Violations = 5 Demerits AND may sit out entirety of following game (must attend)

- Absence from practices/games WITHOUT prior notification to ajrcheer@gmail.com AND Team Manager via Band App
- Inappropriate conduct at school or school -related activities. This includes but is not limited to any and all forms of school suspensions. If this occurs, the cheerleader must self-report to AJRC.
- Any violation of Behavior Policies 5A (refer to page 3/4 of this document)

Below Violations = 5-10 Demerits AND benched until reviewed by AJRC Board and Team Managers

- Any violation of Behavior Policies 5B, 6 and 7 (refer to page 3/4 of this document)

NOTE: Any known absences from practices or games MUST be reported to AJRC at ajrcheer@gmail.com. and Team Managers via Band App. Please do this as soon as possible so the team can make game day adjustments. Also notify your Team Manager.

CHEERLEADER AGREEMENT

I hereby pledge to be a positive cheerleader, ambassador for the school and a good role model for the AJRC Program.

I have read, understand, and agree to the AJRC Program Guide, and its expectations, responsibilities, and policies. I am committed to making the program a positive experience for my teammates and myself. I furthermore understand and agree to the consequences for failure to abide by the AJRC Program Guide, its expectations, responsibilities, and policies. I understand that the Team Managers and AJRC Board have final say in all disciplinary consequences, including dismissal from the AJRC Program.

I agree to the time commitment required, and will honor AJRC, and all that it entails. I agree to be governed by the expectations, responsibilities, and policies outlined in AJRC Program Guide, the Fulton County Schools Student Code of Conduct and Discipline, as well as the GMSAA safety standards. Finally, I agree to prioritize AJRC over all other extracurricular activities.

PARENT AGREEMENT

I have read, understand, and agree to the AJRC Program Guide, and its expectations, responsibilities, and policies. I, furthermore, understand and agree to the consequences for my child's failure to abide by the AJRC Program Guide, and its expectations, responsibilities, and policies. I understand that the Team Managers and AJRC Board have final say in all disciplinary consequences, including dismissal from the AJRC Program.

I agree to the time commitment required from both my child, myself and/or another adult parent or guardian. I agree to all of the financial obligations associated with AJRC. I understand that **all fees are nonrefundable**. I agree to allow my child to participate in the AJRC Program, and to be governed by the expectations, responsibilities, and policies outlined in the AJRC Program Guide, the Fulton County Schools Student Code of Conduct and Discipline, as well as the GMSAA safety standards.

TRANSPORTATION LIABILITY RELEASE

I give my child permission to ride to/from practices, games, and events in the personal vehicle of AJRC parents and chaperones during the entirety of the current cheerleading season. I understand that AJRC parents and chaperones will take every precaution to ensure my child's safety while riding in their vehicle. My child understands that they are to always wear a seat belt during transport, and behave in a respectful manner, which is not distracting to the parents and/or chaperones while driving. I, hereby, release, and agree to hold harmless the Fulton County School District, the AJRC and AJRF Programs, as well as any of their board members, coaches, team parents, volunteers, chaperones/drivers, and/or parents from any and all liability claims or demands for injury, sickness, or death, incurred in connection with transportation or carpool to any AJRC and/or AJRF practice, game, competition, or event.

PHOTO & VIDEO RELEASE

I give permission for AJRC and AJRF to publish photos and videos of my child, and our family, while attending any AJRC and/or AJRF practices, games, and events. I give permission for all aforementioned photos and videos to be published on any internet-based platform, including, but not limited to, jrroiderfootball.com, ajrcheer.com, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok, etc. I also give permission for all aforementioned photos and videos to be published on signs/flyers, and publicly displayed as a means of AJRC and/or AJRF advertisement/promotion. I, hereby, release, and agree to hold harmless the Fulton County School District, the AJRC and AJRF Programs, as well as any of their board members, coaches, team parents, volunteers, and/or parents from any and all legal or liability claims related to publishing photos and videos of my child, and our family, while attending any AJRC and/or AJRF practice, game, competition, event, or carpool.

MEDICAL & LIABILITY RELEASE

I hereby acknowledge the physical risk associated with cheerleading. In consideration of the opportunity to participate in the AJRC Sideline CheerProgram, I do hereby waive, release, and hold harmless the Fulton County School District, the AJRC and AJRF Programs, Georgia AllStars Cheerleading, as well as any of their board members, coaches, team managers/parents, volunteers, chaperones/drivers, and parents for any and all liability claims for injury, sickness, or death incurred as a result of participation in the AJRC Program, including practices, games, events, and carpool. This includes but is not limited to any sickness or death incurred as a result of COVID-19.

I give any AJRC and AJRF board member, coach, team managers/parent, or volunteer, permission to seek medical attention for my child in case of emergency. I grant emergency medical staff permission to administer immediate treatment to my child, should they be injured. I understand that, in the event of a serious and/or life-threatening emergency, my child will be taken to the nearest hospital or medical facility.

I understand that my child must be covered by their own health insurance and if my child is not covered by health insurance, I assume full responsibility, financial or otherwise. As a safety precaution, I give permission for any allergies, medical conditions, and/or health concerns previously disclosed to AJRC to be shared with the AJRC and AJRF Program members, including the AJRC and AJRF Board, Team Managers, Coaches, and any other program participants deemed necessary at the discretion of the same.

CONCUSSION AWARENESS INFORMATION & GMSAA CONCUSSION POLICY

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the facts presented in the Concussion Information & GMSAA concussion policy below.

DANGERS OF CONCUSSION

Concussions at all levels of sports have received a great deal of attention and a state law has been passed to address this issue. Adolescent athletes are particularly vulnerable to the effects of concussion. Once considered little more than a minor “ding” to the head, it is now understood that a concussion has the potential to result in death, or changes in brain function in the short-term or long-term). A concussion is a brain injury that results in a temporary disruption of normal brain function. A concussion occurs when the brain is violently rocked back and forth or twisted inside the skull as a result of a blow to the head or body. Continued participation in any sport following a concussion can lead to worsening concussion symptoms, as

well as increased risk for further injury to the brain, and even death. Player and parental education in this area is crucial – that is the reason for this document. Refer to it regularly.

COMMON SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF CONCUSSION

- Headache, dizziness, poor balance, moves clumsily, reduced energy level/tiredness
- Nausea or vomiting
- Blurred vision, sensitivity to light and sounds
- Fogginess of memory, difficulty concentrating, slowed thought processes, confused about surroundings or game assignments
- Unexplained changes in behavior and personality
- Loss of consciousness (NOTE: This does not occur in all concussion episodes.)

BY-LAW 2.68: GMSAA CONCUSSION POLICY: In accordance with Georgia law and national playing rules published by the National Federation of State High School Associations, any athlete who exhibits signs, symptoms, or behaviors consistent with a concussion shall be immediately removed from the practice or contest and shall not return to play until an appropriate health care professional has determined that no concussion has occurred. (NOTE: An appropriate health care professional may include licensed physician (MD/DO) or another licensed individual under the supervision of a licensed physician, such as a nurse practitioner, physician assistant, or certified athletic trainer who has received training in concussion evaluation and management)

- a) No athlete is allowed to return to a game or a practice on the same day that a concussion (a) has been diagnosed, OR (b) cannot be ruled out.
- b) Any athlete diagnosed with a concussion shall be cleared medically by an appropriate healthcare professional prior to resuming participation in any future practice or contest. The formulation of a gradual return to play protocol shall be a part of the medical clearance.
- c) It is mandatory that every coach in each GMSAA sport participate in a free, online course on concussion management prepared by the NFHS and available at www.nfhslearn.com at least every two years – beginning with the 2013-2014 school year.
- d) Each school will be responsible for monitoring the participation of its coaches in the concussion management course and shall keep a record of those who participate.

PROGRAM COMMITMENT CHECKLIST

Please visit AJRCheer.com to electronically sign the agreements and waivers listed below. Electronic signature of all agreements and waivers is required to participate in the AJRC program. Electronic signature of the agreements and waivers affirms your family's commitment to the upcoming AJRC season.

REQUIRED AGREEMENTS & WAIVERS CHECKLIST

- Cheerleader Agreement
- Parent Agreement
- Transportation Liability Release
- Photo & Video Release
- Medical & Liability Release
- Concussion Information & GMSAA Concussion Policy