**White Diamonds Cheerleading Handbook - 2020-2021**



Welcome to The White Diamonds Cheerleading Program. Thank you for your interest in White Diamonds All-Star Cheerleading Program. As we prepare for our new season, we will continually be changing and improving to keep up with the demands of the all-star cheerleading competitions.

The mission of White Diamonds Cheerleading Program is to enrich the lives of youth and their families through the sport of competitive cheerleading. Our goal each day is to teach our cheerleaders the value of commitment, hard work, integrity, leadership, self-confidence, a positive attitude, and a love for the sport. We accept all skill-levels, regardless of previous training or experience. Cheerleaders participating and performing at their personal best, is all that is required. Winning a competition is a blessing, but achieving your own personal goals, doing your very best, with a positive attitude, is winning!

Every family is important to our program. We have prepared the following information to help each family understand the commitment level that is expected from each Cheerleader and their parents. Please take time to carefully read over the handbook in full. The White Diamonds Cheerleading Program expects 100% positive encouragement from each cheerleader, and their parents, for the entire cheer competition year.

White Diamonds Cheerleading Program is a recreational program, but it is also competitive, fun and very rewarding. Competitive cheerleading is not for everyone, however if you and your child are committed to being the best teammate possible, working hard to achieve goals and support the Program, please join us! We welcome all skill levels regardless of previous training or experience, we will find a place for you. Good luck and we look forward to having you as part of the White Diamonds Cheerleading squad. Please note, ***White Diamonds Cheerleading Program will perform according to Varsity Recreational Cheer and Dance Level 1 -2 Safety Rules and Guidelines.***

Thank you*,*

*Lanita Wasson,*

*White Diamonds Cheerleading Program, Head Coach & Program Manager*

*AACCA, YCADA, AYC, & NAYS Certified - NYSAA Administrator - USASF Member*



**Everyone associated with White Diamonds Cheerleading (i.e., coaches, cheerleaders, volunteers, family members, etc.) is expected to uphold a high level of sportsmanship and character. This handbook is provided as a guide to the specific policies and procedures of our program.**

**WHAT IS ALL-STAR CHEERLEADING?**

All-star cheerleading squads are formed for the primary purpose of competing. All-star cheerleading is a sport that requires a lot of hard work, and dedication. However, it is also a fun and exciting opportunity for the kids to build self-confidence, as they reach individual and squad skill goals. Competition offers an exceptional experience performing can only bring, and meeting new people making new friends, while doing something they really enjoy.

**WHAT DO THEY LEARN?**

The White Diamonds curriculum covers every aspect of cheerleading. They will learn motion technique, cheer, jumps, dance, partner stunts, pyramids, tumbling, and spirit. They will also learn teamwork, setting goals, self-discipline, self-confidence, commitment, and respect for themselves and their Coaches. Many Cheerleaders leave this Program to move on in their Cheerleading career by joining school squads or traditional All-Star programs, building on skills learned within this program.

**PRACTICES**

Our squads typically practice a total of 2-4 hours a week for the bulk of the season. This is typically broken into 1-2 practices every week. There will also be a **White Diamonds Cheerleading Competition Squad Camp June or July 2020. Additionally, Special Saturday Practices will be held in September, October, November and January, as the Squad prepares choreography for the Competition Routines.** Practice and Camp schedules will be determined on the convenience and availability of the Coaches, majority of the Cheerleaders, and practice space availability; convenience of coaching staff rules. Parents will be notified months in advance of these specific dates, so that everyone will have time to work around these Special Saturday practices. Practice times and dates will change periodically to meet the instruction needs for a clean competition routine, some months have more or longer practices than others. Parents will always be notified as promptly as possible. ***Our goal is to send our Diamonds to the big show with a clean and successful routine!***

**ATTENDANCE**

Attendance is very important to the success of the team. **Practices are mandatory during Competition Season.**  We begin the Cheer Season with Cheer Skills Practices. Attendance and commitment are required for the Competition Season. Excessive absences may result in your cheerleader losing her spot on the Competition Squad, resulting in a bump back down to Cheer Skills (if class is available), or she/he may be placed out of a stunt group to a less crucial position. Please don’t let that happen, but facilitate your cheerleader getting to practice every time. Once practice times are set, everyone is expected to be there. This is a squad sport. No cheerleader is more or less important than any other squad-member. You can get a lot accomplished in a 2-hour practice if everyone attends. If squad-members are missing, the whole squad suffers. Each cheerleader has to be committed to themselves, their goals, and the other members on the squad. **White Diamonds does not discourage cheerleaders from participating in other activities.** **However, this is a very committed sport and attendance is very crucial to the success of the whole team**. We understand some practices will be missed due to illness and family emergencies, but please keep absences to a minimum! Please notify the Coach asap if a Cheerleader must miss practice, so the squad can work around his/her absence.

**Competitions are mandatory during the Competition Season.** It takes the squad in its entirety to perform to the best of the squad’s’ ability. **You will have all of these dates in plenty of time to make any arrangements needed.** All we ask for, is that the cheerleaders and their parents, commit to a Squad Camp in June or July, 1-2 nights a week for practices, a few extra weekend practices during the competition season, and 1-3 exhibitions and competitions per season. The only way to guarantee that a cheerleader will be able to compete at every competition, is for the cheerleader to attend the required practices and be confident in performing the skills and routines of their cheerleading squad. (We do understand that situations come-up, illnesses, family emergencies, etc., we will do our best to respect the cheerleader and his/her family’s situation. Please let us know if the cheerleader will not be attending practices, so we can work around them. You will probably miss some practices. However, we are asking that you and the cheerleader, please valiantly do your very best to make it to practices.)

**GENERAL RULES**

1. Challenging the authority of the Coaches, Program Manager, or Southwest Community Center Staff, by cheerleader or parent, will be grounds for dismissal. Any concerns may be respectfully discussed with the Head Coach/Program Manager, Lanita Wasson, or Michael Harris, Southwest Community Center Director. We all want the best for the cheerleaders, so let’s work together and provide a positive encouraging system of support for them.

2. No profanity during practices, or other White Diamonds activities. Cheerleaders and parents, you are always a role model for someone else, so please keep a positive and respectful code of conduct. You are representing the White Diamonds. Negative attitudes are contagious, let’s lift up our Diamonds, not bring them down.

3. Grace and patience will be exemplified and practiced, and are important elements of this Program. However, it is still the responsibility of each cheerleader to adhere to the appropriate behavior of a White Diamonds Cheerleader. Participation in the White Diamonds Cheerleading Program, is a privilege and an honor, please exemplify the standards that a Diamond should. Courage, kindness, forgiveness, patience, understanding, and grace is to be practiced toward Coaches, Cheerleaders, facility staff, and the general public. Honor your uniform, Sparkle and Shine like a true Diamond! Cheerleaders are to have patience, show grace, and always BE KIND FIRST! Everyone has bad days, some personalities will not work together smoothly, but we will ALWAYS RESPECT EACH OTHER. ***Bullying, Exclusion, Gossiping, and Negative Criticism will NOT be tolerated, and WILL result in a disciplinary action.***

4. **Three (3) Strike Rule - First disciplinary action will be a Verbal Warning, Second Offence will result in a Formal Written Warning, Third Offence may result in complete dismissal from the White Diamonds Program, and all monies paid, and/or proceeds of fundraising earned, will be forfeited. This decision will be the sole discretion of the Program Manager.**

***We participate in cheerleading to have fun, so let’s work together, be encouraging and patient with one another. Everyone has bad days, let’s show each other kindness always. You will succeed if your teammate succeeds!***

**CHEERLEADER EXPECTATIONS**

1. Each cheerleader must be willing to work hard and strive for excellence.

2. Cheerleaders must be on time to all activities! They should wear the required practice or performance uniform, shoes, and socks. **No jewelry.** Hair should be pulled back away from the eyes and face, if long enough a ponytail is preferred. **Cheerleaders are to wear athletic shoes, and SOCKS, to each practice!! -** No Jeans, No flip-flops, etc.. Cheerleaders should pack for contingencies, extra undies, socks, shorts, items for personal hygiene, deodorant, hair brush, and pony-tail elastics, etc.. (we will purchase Squad bags to carry these items as soon as funds are built up.)

3. Cheerleaders will do everything in their power to achieve personal and squad goals. Always striving to be the best White Diamonds Competition Squad! All it takes, is commitment, dedication, and performing at your individual best! Going to the big shows is so much fun!!

4. Each cheerleader is responsible for finding out any missed information if practice is missed.

5. There is to be no chewing gum or eating during practice. However, we will allow short breaks for small snacks and drinks.

6. **NO CELL PHONES DURING PRACTICE** – Cell Phones should be turned off. Ringing cell-phones are an unnecessary distraction that can be dangerous. Cheerleaders will be able to check for messages at breaks. In case of emergency - parents may contact the **Head Coach, Lanita Wasson at 501-213-7369.**

7. **CHEER DIAMOND OF THE WEEK!** Special recognition is awarded each week to the most deserving Cheerleader. The requirements are initiative, effort, attitude, and growth. A Diamond Board is kept with each Cheerleader’s Name and Displayed in a highly visible area of the practice facility.

Each week Cheerleaders earn Diamonds for new skills mastered, extra-special behavior, and extra Diamonds are earned for being awarded Cheer Diamond of the Week. Winner of the Cheer Diamond of the Week will also be published in a flyer displayed at SWCC, and the White Diamonds Cheerleading Facebook and Website pages, as well as earn one of the coveted unique Diamond Bows, that the Cheerleader may wear to Practices. We want to motivate the Cheerleaders to do their very best, by receiving the recognition they’ve earned. Boys will earn Rhinestones to their Practice Uniform tops.

8. **CHEER DIAMOND OF THE YEAR!** A beautiful trophy will be awarded to the most deserving Cheerleader at the end of season Diamond Awards and Showcase. The requirements are initiative, effort, attitude, and growth. The Coaches will nominate 3 deserving Cheerleaders, and their Squad will vote on the winner.

9**. DIAMOND AWARDS AND SHOWCASE -** Each Cheerleader will be awarded a specific treasured award, tailored to them, e.i. ‘Best Motivator’, ‘Best Friend’, ‘Best Cartwheel’, etc..

**PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS**

1. To make sure your child is on time to attend designated practices, fundraisers, and especially Competitions, and that the Cheerleader be appropriately dressed.

2. Parents are to inform the Coach if the cheerleader is to be late or absent from practice.

3. FEED YOUR CHEERLEADER! Cheerleaders burn a lot of energy at practices and Competitions, please make sure they have a light meal with protein and complex carbs BEFORE practice. It is also recommended to send healthy snacks with them. HYDRATE YOUR CHEERLEADER! Please make sure you Cheerleader has at least one (1) bottle of water before practices. The Program Manager will attempt to keep crackers, cheese and fruit on hand to purchase at minimal cost, if possible… but PLEASE FEED YOUR CHEERLEADER.

4. Fulfill any financial obligations. Fundraising participation is encouraged, but the final financial responsibility is on the parents***.***

5. Parents are to encourage and provide positive support for all squads and students.

6. **Parents are not allowed in the Practice area**. Parent Volunteer positions may be available to support the squad, and we appreciate your time and consideration. However, it takes a special personality to work safely with all the tumbling, jumping, stunting, and keep eyes on ALL CHEERLEADERS, not just your child! Please understand safety is always the priority. It is not always safe to have parents in the Practice Area. Cheerleaders watching parents watch them, can be a dangerous distraction. We will have many opportunities for parents to see the progress of the Cheerleaders in an appropriate manner and time. Additionally, any Parent who volunteers to assist the Head Coach or work directly with the Cheerleaders, must be able to respect the authority and training style of the Head Coach, as well as have a clear background screening.

6. **Parent Volunteer Position – Lead Fundraiser is NEEDED.** Please see the Program Manager/Head Coach if you are available to assist with this crucial role. Background screening required.

7. **Parent Volunteer Position – Team Parent is NEEDED.** Please see the Program Manager/Head Coach if you are available to assist with this crucial role. Background screening required.

**INJURIES & LIABILITY**

Injuries may occur. White Diamonds Cheerleading Program, Southwest Community Center, or the City of Little Rock, or any volunteer or paid-staff member of White Diamonds Cheerleading, Southwest Community Center, or City of Little Rock, is not liable for any expenses arising from injuries resulting from participation in this cheerleading program. The Head Coach has had extensive training and worked with many different squads, and will be as vigilant as possible, but sport injuries do sometimes occur in cheerleading as with any sport. Cheerleaders participate at their own risk. Please see **Cheerleader Enrollment Forms.**

**WHITE DIAMONDS CHEERLEADING EXPENSES**

Parents may pay into their Cheerleader’s Account at any time to go towards costs of Competition Uniforms and Fees. Parents will be sent receipts and frequent notices of account balances. These accounts will be transparent, and debits/credits and expenses paid from all accounts, will be available to the Facility Manager, and Parents at any time. Please visit <https://whitediamondscheerleading.yolasite.com/> to make payments on-line with credit/debit card.

100% of any Fundraising, will go towards respective Cheerleader accounts to be used for Shoes, Bags, Performance Uniforms and Competition Fees. Only those who participate in fundraising benefit from fundraising.

***-Cheer Skills***

**$15 Monthly Participation Fee - Payable City of Little Rock, Southwest Community Center**

Practice Uniform - (Two (2) plain Black T-shirts, without wording or graphics (NO CROP TOPS – TUMMIES ARE TO BE COVERED!) - and Two (2) plain Black Shorts, without wording or graphics (shorts should be modest enough to provide appropriate coverage) – Parents Purchase Separately). **Please don’t buy shoes unless absolutely necessary**. Simple clean shock-absorbing shoes are fine, they do not need to be new, just in good condition. We will purchase matching Squad Shoes and Bags as soon as the squad has earned the funds in the Cheerleader Accounts. (Squad Shoes and Bags are part of the Performance Uniform).

*FREE!* Practice Cheer Bows - are part of the required Practice Uniform and will be awarded at no cost. Cheerleaders work to earn ‘Cheer Diamond of the Week’, who will earn a uniquely decorated bow for Practices. Boys will earn Rhinestones on Practice Uniform tops. The goal is for each Cheerleader to earn this coveted honor.

***-Competition Squad***

**$15 Monthly Participation Fee - Payable City of Little Rock, Southwest Community Center**

**\*$100 Performance Uniform** ***(Payment Plan Available)*** – (Girls - Performance bag, shoes, bow, socks, poms, uniform top, skirt, and boy-leg briefs. Boys – Performance bag, shoes, uniform top and bottom (shorts or pants tba)).

**\*$170 ($85 Each Competition) *(Payment Plan Available)*** - We will Schedule for 2. Fees are due in advance of deadlines!

\*All cheerleaders are encouraged to participate in the fundraisers. Each Cheerleader who participates, will have a portion of proceeds applied to their Cheerleader Account, and may be used to fund Competition Fees and Competition Uniform Fees.

**\*$ Warmups** - Cheerleaders participating in parades and moving on to the Competition Squad will need a Black Zippered Hoodie and Pants (no elastic around ankles) and preferably simple black fleece. White Diamond Team embellishment will be provided.

\*Various travel fees may apply if the squad travels overnight to an event. Most events will be local, but a special event may be scheduled which might require overnight travel expense. This would only be done if all Cheerleaders have funds available.

\*Fundraisers will be available to assist with fees for Competition Squad – and participation is required for everyone on Competition Squad. The Weekly Practice Fees are an integral part of covering these fees as well.

**Total Fees payable to WDC – Head Coach/Program Manager - $270**

**See *Payment Plan***

***ALL FUNDRAISERS Directly Benefit your Cheerleader!***

***We are a NOT-FOR-PROFIT, Community Based, Volunteer Managed Program.***

**COMPETITION FEES**

Meet fees will vary depending on which company is hosting the competition. The meet season usually begins in November and ends by April. We will usually do one – three exhibitions and competitions during the season. We may only ‘visit’ a competition as spectators as well, early during Cheer Skills to allow the girls to get familiar with the stage lights and sounds, before committing to the Program. Visiting a competition early on, also encourages the Cheerleaders, since they will see what they are working so hard for as the season progresses. Meet fees are not White Diamonds Cheerleading fees. However, they are required fees for Competition Squads, which have to be paid to the hosting gym or event producer, before your child will be allowed to compete. \***Competition fees - $85 each (Total $170 yr).**

**\*FUNDRAISING - Parent Volunteer Position – (Lead Fundraiser is NEEDED.** *Background screening required.)*

Several fundraising events will be available, and all cheerleaders are encouraged to participate. Many girls will need sponsorships and fundraising proceeds to cover participation fees on the Competition Squad. Only those participating in the fundraising activity will benefit. It is possible to pay for many Program fees with fundraising proceeds. ***However, Fundraising takes parent participation and involvement!*** A Parent Volunteer, working under the supervision of the Program Manager/Head Coach, may be responsible for organizing fundraising events. All parents are expected to assist. However, we do not expect parents to do all the work! MOST OF THE WORK SHOULD BE PERFORMED BY THE CHEERLEADERS THEMSELVES! Cheerleaders earning their own Uniform and Competition Fees is a good way to learn discipline, dedication and work ethic. If needed, please take advantage of these fundraisers so your child can participate. Only those participating will reap benefits of fundraiser proceeds. **BEGGING FUNDRAISERS STRICTLY ARE PROHIBBITTED.**

**COMPETITIONS**

-The coaching staff will choose all competitions.

-All squads will perform; some may perform more than others.

-Competition season begins in November 2020 and will run through April 2021.

-Competition Practices begin in late July 2020.

-Attendance, respect for Coaches and teammates, participation in fundraisers, and performing at your individual best, constantly working to improve skills, is a must for a winning Competition Squad.

-At this time, we are not going to specify which events we will attend. However, Parents will be notified months in advance of the events, etc.. Coaches will decide on what competitions the squads will attend as spectators, exhibitors or competitors. We will get the list out to you as soon as we have decided on them.

***Winning is a Blessing, something we strive for, but each cheerleader performing at THEIR OWN PERSONAL BEST, is their own TROPHY. We may not win competitions every time, but we will do our best every time, learn from our mistakes, and move on, always improving.***

**COMPETITION SCHEDULE AND PROCEDURES**

All cheerleaders will need to be evaluated by the coaching staff in order to be properly coached for the 2020-2021 competitive season. Please remember this is a ONE-YEAR COMMITMENT. Competition Practices begin in July 2020. All candidates must respect their participation on this squad by working at Fundraisers, attending all Cheer Skills’ Practices, behave in a manner exemplifying White Diamonds’ standards, and Parents must fill out and return the Competition Squad Registration Form no later than May 31, 2020, to participate on the Competition Squad.

**AGE DIVISIONS**

**Currently** – ONLY running one - **Varsity Recreational Level 1 or 2 Jr Squad, Ages 11 to 14, as of August 31, 2020.**

Divisions may be added depending on interest and practice facility availability.

**TIME-LINE**

*January 2020 – May 2020* - Cheer Skills Practices – Tuesdays and Thursdays, 6:30pm – 8:30pm***.*** Monthly Activity Fee of $15.

June or July 2020 – White Diamonds Competition Squad Camp - Monthly Activity Fee of $15.

*July 2020 – April 2021 -* White Diamonds Competition Season and Squad Practices Begin. Monthly Activity Fee of $15.

Thank you for your interest in **White Diamonds Cheerleading Program**. We appreciate your consideration and hope this program is what you are looking for. We look forward to working with you in the future and expect an outstanding season. Please help us by following the guidelines set forth in this Handbook.

**NOTE:** Please fill out completely the**ACKNOWLEDGEMENT, AUTHORIZATION AND WAIVER/RELEASE FORM,**

***Statement of Commitment, and Registration Form*** with ***Medical Information.***

**Turn in all the WDC Registration Forms, with required fees, to Lanita Wasson, Head Coach & Program Manager.**

***Payment Plan***

**White Diamonds Cheerleading**

**Uniform Fees**

**Practice Essentials Fee**

*($40 – Cheer Shoes, Squad Bags, Poms)*

**Performance Uniform Fee**

*($60 – Performance Uniform)*

**Competition Fees**

*($85 - Competition 1)*

*($85 – Competition 2)*