

Fort Calhoun High School

Varsity Cheerleading

2025-2026

Handbook



Eligibility

- 8th, 9th, 10th, 11th grade students
- Must have written permission slip from parent(s) or guardian(s) in order to be eligible for tryout

A Cheerleader

- Is a member of a group and must be dedicated, cooperative, respectful, and open minded to all members of the squad.
- has a responsibility to the school to promote and uphold school spirit.
- represents the school and the community at all times, so must maintain high personal standards.
- must be a leader and promote student body participation and good sportsmanship.

Selection

- Selection will occur during the spring semester of the previous school year.
- Tryouts will be scored by competent judges. The panel will consist of judges from outside the school.
- Candidates must turn in five teacher evaluation forms, sing the school song, and turn in their permission forms before trying out.

Tryout scores will be based on the following:

- Teacher evaluations 20%
- Tryout 80%

Squad size and leadership

The number of cheerleaders selected every year may vary. This number will depend on the number of candidates and the ranges of scores after tryouts.

A captain and a co-captain will be chosen using a variety of criteria. Each candidate will complete an essay. They will also have an interview with Mrs. Lienemann and Ms. Bruening..

The sports we cheer for are as follows:

- Varsity Football
- Varsity Volleyball
- Varsity Boys Basketball
- Varsity Girls Basketball
- Varsity Wrestling (TBD)

a. All cheerleaders will work together for varsity football. All cheerleaders *will be required* to cheer at home football games. Cheerleaders will be expected to cheer at all away football games.

b. All cheerleaders will work together for varsity volleyball. All cheerleaders *will be required* to cheer at home volleyball games during the week. Weekend games will not be required. Cheerleaders will be assigned to away volleyball games.

c. All cheerleaders will be encouraged and awarded points if they attend home softball games, cross-country meets, and wrestling meets.

d. A schedule will be created for winter sports. All cheerleaders will be assigned cheer responsibilities. All cheerleaders are responsible for their own schedules. Each cheerleader must find her own replacement and report the change to the captain and sponsors.

e. All cheerleaders will work together for girls and boys varsity basketball. All cheerleaders *will be required* to cheer at home girls and boys basketball games. Cheerleaders will be assigned to girls and boys away basketball games.

f. Cheerleaders *will be required* to attend all tournaments that are for varsity athletics. This includes conference tournaments, sub-districts, districts, and state. Attendance for these events *is required*, even though there may be no notice given.

g. Due to the possible conflicts in schedules all cheerleaders should be willing to help out whenever needed and are encouraged to cheer for extra activities. If a cheerleader is going to miss an activity for any reason, including illness, they need to contact the sponsors. The cheer squad will always cheer when at least 3 cheerleaders are present. In the event of a rescheduled contest they will not be required to cheer if we cannot get enough members to attend.

h. Cheerleaders who are participating in a sport will not be required to cheer the same evening as their own event. Cheerleaders who participate in a Varsity girl's basketball game for four quarters will not be required to cheer for Varsity Boys basketball in the same evening. Letter points will not be taken, but none will be received either. Lettering may be more difficult for cheerleaders in many sports.

i. The squad may compete at cheer competitions throughout the school year. All squad members will *be required* to attend practices and compete in the performance.

j. Cheerleaders will follow the attendance policy in accordance with the school handbook.

k. Cheerleaders will ride **school provided transportation** to and from all activities.

l. Cheerleading is a time consuming activity with many weeks having activities nearly every night. Therefore students who have a job as well as other school activities may find the task of keeping up with the schedule overwhelming. While we cannot refuse a cheerleader who has a job, it is important to note that **WORK IS NOT AN EXCUSED ABSENCE**. It is the responsibility of the cheerleader to notify the employer of the commitments that might interfere with the work schedule.

m. We recognize that we have many candidates who are involved in other activities within the school. The squad will always try to substitute for one another in order to cover for absent team members who are participating in a game, contest, or other school activity. Therefore no cheerleader should ever feel that they must miss a school activity due to cheerleading conflicts. **If a cheerleader is so busy that conflicts are a continuing problem, that individual may want to consider not trying out next year.**

n. Fundraising will be done throughout the year in order to support cheerleading activities, school spirit needs, competition cheer music & choreography, pay for cheerleaders to be admitted to all conference and district level tournaments, and the many other needs that might come up throughout the year. Participation in team fundraisers *is required*.

Captain/Co-captain and Selection

Three cheerleaders have been selected as captain and co-captains to represent the 2025-2026 squad. The sponsors reserve the right to determine how they were selected. The selection process may be different each year. Considerations included but are not limited to: years as a cheerleader, letters earned, total points from tryouts, total points from the previous year, essay and leadership qualities. The captain and co-captains will be assigned specific responsibilities as directed by the sponsors to help with communication, organization and leadership. As a result of their responsibilities captains will be held at a higher standard than other cheerleaders. They will always have the sponsor's support and assistance. If at any time they are not fulfilling their duties it is the sponsors discretion whether they will remain in their leadership position. Cheer captain and co-captain positions will not allow them to be captain or co-captain on the dance team.

Team Officers and Selection

Officer positions with varying responsibilities will be available to the team. Cheerleaders interested in one of these leadership positions will fill out an application after tryouts. Selection will be determined by the sponsors after an interview with the applicant. Must

have been on the team for at least one year to qualify. Notification of position will be announced after interviews are concluded. Officer positions will vary year to year depending on the team needs.

Uniforms and Appearance

1. Uniforms are to be purchased by the individual cheerleaders. They are ordered and paid for by the end of the previous school year. **Cheerleaders must pay for their uniforms before they take them home.**
2. Uniforms should always be clean.
3. Length and style should be decided upon by squad members, parents, and sponsors. Sponsors have the right to determine the length of skirts and tightness of all fits on tops.
4. Uniforms are to be worn throughout the day of the event.
5. Jewelry that does not go with the uniform should not be worn. Excessive jewelry such as necklaces and long dangle earrings or hoops should not be worn. Only one ring and studded earrings permitted.
6. Uniforms worn by the squad should match.
7. A new uniform will be introduced for the 2025-2026 school year.

Camp

1. Cheerleading camp *is essential* for all members if the sponsors choose to attend or host a camp.
2. Cheerleaders must find their own source of funding.
3. The squad will provide fundraisers to help defray the costs of uniforms and camp.

Conduct and Responsibilities

1. A cheerleader shall not chew gum or eat while on the field or court.
2. A cheerleader shall not sit in the stands or leave the squad until halftime of the end of the game. They should be ready to cheer immediately after half time.
3. A cheerleader should promote good sportsmanship at all times.
4. Cheerleaders should be present at least fifteen minutes before an event: wearing uniforms.

5. When cheerleaders are allowed to ride the team bus they must follow the rules of the coach in charge.
7. All pep rally activities must be approved by the principal, athletic director, and the sponsor.
8. Cheerleaders will be present for all required activities and scheduled practices. All practices are private. Only sponsors and Fort Calhoun varsity cheerleaders are allowed. The attendance policy will be strictly adhered to throughout the school year.

Attendance Policy

Tardy to practice	- 2
Tardy to game/bus	- 3
3 accumulated tardies= 1 unexcused absence	- 5
Unexcused absence- practice	- 5
Unexcused absence- cheering	- 10
2nd unexcused absence	- 20
3rd unexcused absence	- 35

3 STRIKE RULE

- If you miss 3 duties unexcused (practice, meeting, cheering, regardless of the activity) you will not be eligible to cheer for your next event and will lose points for that event.
- If unexcused absences are an issue 5 or more times for a cheerleader she will not be eligible to try out the next year for the squad.
- If athletes reach 3 meetings or more with sponsors and/or parents and/or administrators due to behaviors or negative leadership, they will be asked to leave the team and will not letter that year.

Cheerleaders will follow all the outline rules in the activities handbook set up by the Fort Calhoun schools.

All cheerleaders are required to have a physical participating in any activity.

Cheerleaders who engage in high-risk behaviors such as drinking or use of illegal drugs, including vaping will be reprimanded according to the school handbook. They will also forfeit their varsity letter for that year.

All cheerleaders are expected to be active members in POPP.

Summer Schedule

The cheer squad practices 2-3 times a week throughout the summer. During this time, much of the planning and practicing for yearly events occurs and a productive summer can really relieve some of the stress during the school year. Practice days are T/TH 9:30-10:30 am. A third day could be added depending on team needs. 2 points are awarded for every practice they attend.

Summer strength and conditioning will *be required* 2 times per week and will determine athletes placement in the competition cheer.

State Cheer Competition

State Cheer Competition is not a tradition and it will not be a guaranteed competition we attend each year. It will need to be earned and the sponsors reserve the right to decide if the team will compete based on several factors throughout the year. Factors can include, but not limited to, team cohesiveness, practice attendance, leadership, and team gpa.

Spirit Team

A collective team including the cheer & dance team together. Both the cheer and dance team sponsors will decide when a spirit team is more appropriate at an event or activity.

All cheerleaders will turn in a personal summer schedule to the sponsor in MAY. Dates will be marked on the master schedule for vacations, etc. Cheerleaders must inform the captain if they will be gone on a day NOT marked on their personal calendars.

Required events and practices

Camp	(date to be set in June, July, or August)
Homecoming week decorating	(Sunday week before)
Homecoming cleanup	(Friday & Sunday of Hoco Week)
All individual events assigned to a cheerleader (throughout the year)	
Elementary cheer camp	(September/October)
Winter Formal set/clean up	(Friday in December)
Competition practices	(TBA)
Competitions	(State-February and various)
All Conference tournaments	(VB and basketball mid-season)
All sub-district tourneys	(end of each season)
All district finals	(end of each season)

Point system

The sponsors have the right to add/deduct points as they feel necessary. Inappropriate behavior regarding conduct of sportsmanship will be dealt with individually as it occurs. Every cheerleader begins the summer with 0 points. It requires 175 points to earn a varsity letter.

Activity	Points Earned	Activity	Points Lost
Cheer-Volleyball	5	Incorrect Uniform	4
Cheer- Football	5	No poms	2
Cheer- VB Tri	10	Unsportsmanlike	5
Cheer-Wrestling Dual	5	Ineligible	5
Cheer-Wrestling Tourney	10	Late Locker Stickers	5
Cheer- Basketball (each game)	5	2nd time LS	10
Softball/XC Attendance	3	3rd time LS	20
Perform-Competition	5	Missing Hoco Deco/CU	10
Locker Stickers	5	Missing Winter Formal & Decorating	4
Banner	5	Winter Formal - Left Early	2
Poster	5	Missed POPP Event	2
Run Through	10	No Fundraising	2
Parents Night Stickers	4	Home Varsity Game	5
Hoco-Decorating/Clean up	10	Away Varsity Game	3
Homecoming Float	5	Conference, Sub-District, District, State Game	4
Community Event	2	Leaving game early	2

Awards

The squad will recognize members who have gone above and beyond the total points needed for a letter. For 175 points a letter is awarded, for 225 points a certificate of excellence will be awarded, and for 260 points a certificate of superior cheering will be awarded.

Parent Permission

Our son/daughter has our permission to try out for Varsity cheerleading at Fort Calhoun Junior Senior High School. We have thoroughly read the cheerleading handbook and will assist in every way to see that these rules and regulations are followed. We understand that failure to follow these rules and regulations in the handbook, the activities handbook, or directions given by the sponsor will mean dismissal or suspension of the squad.

We understand that the school and advisors assume no financial responsibility for the uniforms or any other expense of being a cheerleader. We also understand that the school and advisors assume no responsibility for any accident or injury that might occur at school, during an event, or away from school grounds. Insurance may be purchased for these purposes. We also understand that if the school is unable to provide transportation, we shall provide that transportation with the prior notice given to the sponsor and administrator.

We shall encourage and strive to make it possible for our son/daughter to be a good leader at Fort Calhoun High School.

Athlete Name

Address

Phone

City

State

Zip

Parent Signature

Date

Student Signature

Date

Emails for Wednesday April 2nd after tryouts