

GYMNI[★]KS

CHEERLEADING



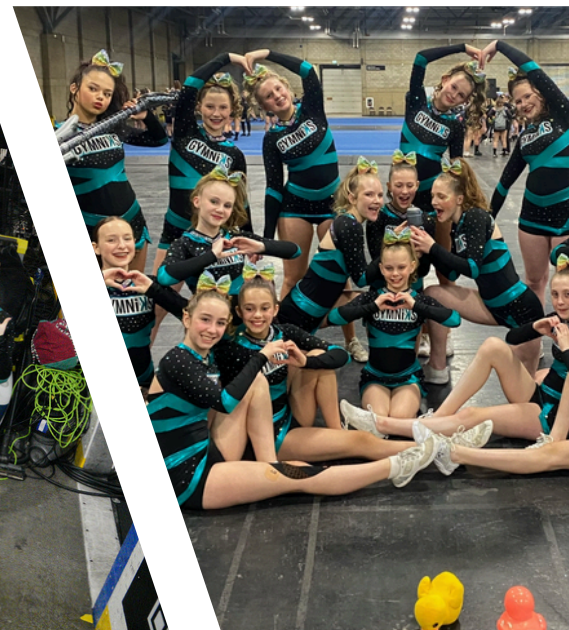
2026 - 2027 PROGRAM HANDBOOK

WELCOME TO

SEASON 18

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Grande Prairie Gymnastics Gymniks All Stars Cheerleading! We appreciate your interest in the program and would like to provide you with all the necessary information to set our athletes up for success in our cheerleading programs. We are one of the top performing clubs in the Province of Alberta and match great coaches with great athletes. Your child has been given the opportunity to train with highly skilled coaches, which provides the athletes and the parents life changing experiences by working hard and working together.



WHAT IS ALL STAR CHEERLEADING



All Star Cheerleading is a competitive sport that involves athletes performing a 2 minute and 30 second routine composed of tumbling, jumps, stunting, pyramids, and dance. This routine is performed and scored against other competitive teams at various local, regional, national, and worldwide competitions.

Cheerleading is comprised of skills such as tumbling, jumps, stunting, pyramids and dance. When we refer to tumbling, we are referring to gymnastic type skills like cartwheels and back handsprings. Jumps are when athletes do different kinds of leaps. Stunting refers to a group of two or more individuals that elevate another athlete in the air. This may also include coed stunting with only one base and one flyer. Pyramids are a form of stunting, but are done as a large group and are interconnected. Dance is a portion of a routine that consists of choreographed, high energy dance moves. Putting all of these skills together creates a routine. Cheerleading is one of the few sports that cannot be done in its entirety without the whole team being present.



The Team Mentality

All Star Cheerleaders are dedicated to the sport and athleticism of cheerleading. Parents and athletes must be aware that cheering All Star is a large time commitment. It is akin to the high commitment level of a club soccer team or a traveling baseball team. Normally, seasons begin with tryouts in the spring with light to heavy practices in the summer, followed by a competition season running from winter to the spring of the following year. A typical commitment lasts 8-11 months. Practices can be 2-3 hours long and as often as 2- 3 times a week. **These practices are mandatory since many elements of a routine cannot be done without everyone there.** In addition, we require and/or encourage tumbling sessions or other private sessions to improve skills. Most teams will attend 3-6 competitions a season, which usually consist of a total weekend commitment, if not more. It is a full schedule for the average child to balance both All Star cheerleading and school commitments. Many have a hard time managing other sports and activities while cheering All Star.

Every All Star cheerleader should be aware that this is a team sport. **Decisions are made based on what is best for the team and the performance.** There may be times when a parent or athlete may question a coach's decision. Before discussing these issues with any gym staff, you should always ask yourself whether this decision was better for the team, regardless of personal placement. There will always be ups and downs in an All Star cheerleader's career, but these decisions are always made for the greater good of the team in mind. Our program will always do what is in the best interest for GYM->TEAM- >ATHLETE





PROGRAM PHILOSOPHY

We strongly believe that working to always be the best you can be is more important than winning. Self-discipline, commitment, dedication, determination, responsibility, receptivity, application, emotional control, and self-confidence are all individual qualities the program aims to achieve. The individual team members will also sometimes learn to sacrifice immediate satisfaction for the pursuit of long-term goals. We believe the team aspect of this sport will stimulate the development of many social skills, such as cooperation, respect for others, leadership, trust, sharing, empathy, and being able to make sacrifices for others. We feel that with respecting this philosophy, we will be developing better athletes and well-rounded individuals as a whole.

GOALS OF THE PROGRAM

The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society's competitive program goals are:

- To give athletes and teams the opportunity to benefit from a challenging level of training and competition.
- To offer a challenging and rewarding program that will stimulate the personal growth of each athlete involved.
- To develop the best, well rounded athlete possible.
- To provide the opportunity for young athletes and teams to achieve their training goals.
- To proudly and tastefully represent Gymniks All Stars.





CLUB HISTORY

The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Club was founded in 1973 by a group of parents who shared the same passion for gymnastics. Bethe Goldie, who later became Physical Educator instructor at the Grande Prairie Regional College, pioneered a tradition of coaching excellence the Gymniks can be proud of. Initially trained in “set up, take down” multipurpose facilities, the GPRC gymnasium served as Grande Prairie Gymnastics (GPG) first training center. Many years later, the Club moved to a Richmond Industrial Park 3000 sq. foot multipurpose center located next to Tartan Auto Body. The first “dedicated space” facility was acquired through the purchase of a 10,000 sq. foot warehouse located behind the Quality Hotel in the industrial park. In September of 2005, GPG moved to their new world class 50,500 sq. foot training center, considered to be one of the biggest gymnastic training centers in the country

GYMNIKS ALL STAR CHEERLEADING HISTORY

The Gymniks Cheerleading Program was started by the Grande Prairie Gymnastic Club in early 2009. A proposal was made by Lindsay Morrison, which was passed by the board, and the program was granted a trial run with a few recreational classes and a summer camp session. After success in the way of athleticism and teamwork was seen in these classes, the cheer program became a permanent program in the Grande Prairie Gymnastics facility. In the fall of 2009, the first competitive team was formed. Since then, the program has taken off to become a huge part of Grande Prairie Gymnastics as well as the community of Grande Prairie. The cheerleading program continues to grow every year, showing huge success both on and off the mat. This season will be our 18th Competitive Cheer season!



IMPORTANT DATES 2026-2027



Date	Event	Description
May 11 th	Invasion Tryouts	Open Tryouts for Invasion. All athletes born in 2011 and earlier are welcome to attend.
May 11 th - 13 th	Tryouts	Tryouts for U8, U12, U16, U18 and all new athletes.
May 26 th	Signing Day	Signing Day for Sergeants, Recon, Intelligence, Code Teal, and Invasion.
June 2 nd	Elite Team Practice	Elite teams (Sergeants, Recon, Intelligence, Code Teal, Invasion) start practice - once per week on Tuesdays. No team practices on June 23, and 30th.
June 22-26th tentatively depending on choreographer	Mandatory Stunt Choreography	Code Teal and Invasion
July	No Cheer	No cheer practices occur during the month of July. No Optional Skills Camp this year. Tumble camps are available through the gym under summer camps.
August 11 th	Elite Team Practice Resume	Elite Teams resume practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays.
August 17-21st	Choreography	Sergeants, Recon, Intelligence, Code Teal, and Invasion.
September 9 th	Team Signing Day	Athlete Signing Day for Snipers, Caliber, and Stealth.
September 10 th	Practice and Tumble Classes Begin	All teams and tumble classes start.

IMPORTANT DATES CONTINUED



Date	Event	Description
October 11 th - 12 th	No Practice	Thanksgiving weekend - No competitive cheer
November 11 th	No Practice	Remembrance Day - No cheer or tumble
November TBA	NWP Performace	Wolves performance at Northwestern Polytechnic
December 13 th	Christmas Show	Annual Christmas Show Times TBD
December 18 th - January 2 nd	No Practice	Christmas Break - No cheer or tumble *Practices resume Sunday, January 3rd
January 31 st	No Practice	No practice or tumble classes
February 15 th - 16 th	Family Day Weekend	Family Day weekend - No cheer or tumble
March/April	Team Photos	Day and time TBD
March 26 th - April 1 st	Easter/Spring Break	Spring Break - No cheer and tumble *Code Teal and Invasion will practice during this time
April 3 rd	Coronation Day	Time and location TBD
April 4 th	Showcase Day	Year End Showcase
April 21 st	End of Season	Last Day of Cheer

COMPETITIONS 2026-2027

Tentative Competition Schedule

Final schedules will be released closer to competition.



Event	Date	Location	Teams Attending
<u>Cold Snap</u> *The Cheerleading Worlds Bid	January 15-17	Edmonton, AB	Commanders, Caliber, Stealth, Recon, Sergeants, Intelligence, Code Teal, *Invasion
<u>Cheerfest</u> *The Cheerleading Worlds Bid	January 29-31 Tentatively	Abbotsford, BC	Stealth, Recon, Caliber, Sergeants, Intelligence, Code Teal, *Invasion
<u>True North</u> *The Cheerleading Worlds Bid	February 26-28	Edmonton, AB	Commanders, Caliber, Stealth, Recon, Sergeants, Intelligence, Code Teal, *Invasion
<u>Warman Cheer Classic</u> *The Cheerleading Worlds Bid	March 5-7 th Tentatively	Warman, SK	Code Teal, *Invasion
<u>Rise Up</u>	March 13-14	Edmonton, AB	Commanders, Caliber, Stealth
<u>Alberta Cheerleading Provincials</u>	March 19-21	Edmonton, AB	Recon, Sergeants, Intelligence, Code Teal, Invasion
<u>All Star Cheer Extravaganza</u>	April 9-10	Edmonton, AB	Commanders, Caliber, Stealth, Sergeants, Recon, Intelligence
<u>*The Cheerleading Worlds</u>	April 23-26	Orlando, FL	*IF A BID IS RECEIVED: Invasion
<u>The Summit Championships</u>	April 29-May 2	Orlando, FL	Code Teal

PRACTICE SCHEDULE 2026-2027



Team	Times	Days
Majors Level 1 (pre-competitive)	2:00-3:30 pm	Sunday *September-April
U12 Level 1 Commanders (novice)	4:00-5:30 pm	Sunday and Wednesday *September-April
U12 Level 1 Caliber (prep)	6:00-7:30 pm	Monday and Wednesday *September-April
U16 Level 1 Stealth (prep)	6:30-8:00 pm	Monday and Wednesday *September-April
U12 Level 1 Sergeants	4:00-6:00 pm	Tuesday and Thursday *June-April
U12 Level 2 Recon	4:30-6:30 pm	Tuesday and Thursday *June-April
U16 Level 2 Intelligence	5:00-7:00 pm	Tuesday and Thursday *June-April
U18 Level 2 Code Teal	6:00-8:00 pm	Tuesday and Thursday *June-April
Open Level 6.0 Invasion	8:00-9:30 pm	Tuesday and Thursday *June-April



COACHING



Developmental & Competitive Staff

The following coaches are the primary developmental and competitive coaches that will be working regularly with your athletes.

ICU = International Cheer Union

NCCP = National Coaching Certification Program

CIT = Coach in Training

Lindsay Morrison, Program Coordinator and Coach: ICU Level 5/6, NCCP Foundations, NCCP Trampoline 1, ACA Coach Mentor

Chelsea O'Brien, Coach: ICU Level 5/6, NCCP Comp 1 trained, NCCP Level 3 Trampoline trained

Kinsley Mackenzie, Coach: ICU Level 2, NCCP Foundations, Comp 1 trained, Trampoline Foundations

Summer Letkeman, Coach: ICU Level 2, NCCP Foundations, Trampoline Foundations

Bria Shillington, CIT: NCCP Foundations, Trampoline Foundations

Brinley Glenn, CIT: NCCP Foundations

Abbie Batt, CIT: NCCP Foundations, Trampoline Foundations

Sophie Penney-Reid, CIT: NCCP Foundations, Trampoline Foundations

Locklynn Hippard, CIT: NCCP Foundations, Trampoline Foundations

Rayah Quarrie, CIT

Poppy Napier, CIT: NCCP Foundations

Coaches in Training (CIT's) are comprised of athletes who are in the program that show amazing leadership skills, are great mentors for the younger athletes, and are dedicated to the sport of cheerleading. These coaches will be seen throughout the season working with the younger athletes of the program. The CIT's are a very important part of our program and future growth of the sport of cheerleading, as well as our gym.



TRAINING EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES



Practices

The coaches may prescribe training volumes that differ from athlete to athlete, depending on fitness level, age, maturity, injury, and time of the year. The coaching staff also has the final word on practice days for each athlete. They are to be adhered to. There is a possibility of scheduling changes, so please double check with your child's coach if you are unsure. Practice schedules are to be closely followed. We ask that all athletes commit to the full training program unless otherwise instructed by the coaches. Practices are structured so that each training segment is important. Early dismissal must be cleared by the coach and may be granted for school/family functions, when recovering from injury, or other special circumstance. If your child is going to be late or absent, you must call the gym. Please keep in mind that when an athlete is late, it interrupts the practice and effects the quality of their warm up.

Expectations

Athletes must arrive in a timely manner to be ready to go by their start time. They are expected to be mentally ready to work hard at each practice session. To develop their athletic qualities, each athlete has to be willing to meticulously go through every prescribed conditioning exercise or routine, every practice. Athletes in competitive groups must be prepared to practice their dance and routine counts at home. If an athlete is absent for routine changes, they may return to practice finding they have a new spot within the routine. It is the athlete's responsibility to learn the changes in a timely manner. At practice, they must be active listeners and remember that constructive criticism is to help them grow in their training and is in no way meant to be negative or personal. Athletes will possess a positive attitude, attend all scheduled practices and events (unless prior permission to be absent has been granted by the coach), and maintain a high standard of conduct when engaging in activities representing the team. All athletes are to cooperate with each other and follow the direction and instructions of the coach at all times.

Teams

Team placement for the upcoming year will be assigned after team placements (tryouts) each year. Coaches and the Program Coordinator have the final decision on this matter, and the decisions made are non-negotiable. Please remember we are always looking at the best interests of all the athletes and teams.

TRAINING EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES



Athlete Evaluations

The progress of each athlete will be monitored by regular physical and technical assessments. Athletes will be tested every spring. If evaluations show very little to no progress, a parent meeting will be called to present a strategy that will remedy the situation. Every athlete wishing to compete in the upcoming year must participate in team placements. Positions on the Competitive Teams are limited and in high demand, and therefore not guaranteed from year to year. Team placements, along with factors from the last year (i.e., attendance, commitment, behavior, work ethic, and coachability), will be taken into account to determine the groups and your athlete's placement for the upcoming season.

Absences

Cheerleading is a demanding sport that takes full commitment from both parents and athletes. We encourage parents to look up a video of an all-star cheerleading routine and imagine if one of those athletes were missing. It is essential that all athletes attend all practices and events, as it is important that every athlete is present for the entire team to be able to practice and perform every skill. It is essential that all team members participate in all scheduled events. Athletes must participate in all scheduled competitions. Unexcused absences within the competition season may result in the athlete's dismissal from the team. Below are some examples of how we will base absences. Final decision on dismissal will be up to the Coach/Program Coordinator.

Excused Absence: graded school event, illness, death in the family

Unexcused Absence: (including but not limited to) homework, birthday parties, other sports, vacations, work

As we are a TEAM, there is no opportunity to choose to stay home or take a day off. If this were to happen, it would affect the individual athlete's training as well as all their teammates training. We have a commitment to each other to support one another in our training, please take this seriously. Please understand that if every athlete were allowed to miss one practice, we could have as many as 20 practices without full team attendance. When one person misses practice, their entire stunt group is unable to be productive. If there is a scheduling conflict, it needs to be communicated to the coach(es) as soon as possible in order to come up with a solution. You may call the front desk at 780-539-1414.

A three-strike rule will be in effect for the season. Three unexcused absences will result in a meeting with the Program Coordinator, where an Attendance Improvement Plan will be created. At this time, if the improvement plan is broken, the athlete will be removed from the program.

TRAINING EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES



Holidays

During the year, we do not train on statutory holidays, but some groups will train through Spring Break and Winter Break; however, training times may be adjusted. Please check with coaches before planning any vacations.

Additional Training

As a Grande Prairie Gymnastics and Cheerleading member, any additional training camps and private lessons must be sanctioned by the club's coaching staff. Parent led training decisions in this area are not allowed, this includes training with outside clubs and coaches. During the season of regularly scheduled training, competitive athletes are not permitted to participate in any external gymnastic or cheer type programs or classes. Our staff have a particular coaching style, and we would like to avoid coaching confusion, potential injuries, and any other changes an external coach may make to the athletes training. Summer camps or other special events may be permitted, please check with your child's coach to ensure the event is approved.

Club Hopping

If an athlete leaves our program and joins another competitive gymnastics or cheer program, they may not rejoin our competitive programs within the same competitive year. These athletes may be welcome to join a recreational program until the new cheer season begins, where they may try out for team placements. There will be no promise of competitive placement, as we reserve the right to evaluate the athlete and uphold our standards of team placements.

Training Attire

At each practice, athletes are to be wearing proper indoor shoes and clothing for workout, including shorts/capris and their team practice shirts, which are to be purchased at the beginning of each training year. For safety reasons, no baggy clothing is allowed. Hair must always be tied up and off the face while in the gym or while participating in any demonstrations. No headbands are allowed. If your athlete wears glasses, a glasses strap is required for practice and performances. No jewelry or gum is allowed in the gym for the safety of all athletes. Nails must be kept short as to not injure self, or another athlete during activity.

TRAINING EXPECTATIONS AND POLICIES



Equipment and Facility

Gymnastic equipment is very expensive and hard to replace. Therefore, we ask that athletes, parents, and siblings respect and adhere to the following requests:

- All exterior footwear must be taken off in the front lobby.
- Parents, relatives, friends, siblings, and visitors are restricted to the viewing area (if open) located on the second floor.
- Spectators should remain seated and away from the railing at all times.
- Please refrain from talking with your child (such as asking them to show you skills, etc.) while you are up in the stands. This is a safety risk for all athletes in the gym.
- Athletes are asked to properly store all personal items in a locker (please bring a lock that can be removed every practice), or hung on a hook in the lobby or in their bag. Items should not be left lying around the gym. All items are left at your own risk. The gym is not responsible for any lost or stolen items within the gym or change rooms.

Electronics and Social Media

Electronics such as cell phones and other devices are not to be used during practices. If the coaches are instructing an athlete to contact their parents, they may use the gym phones. Video and photos of training sessions are not to be recorded on personal devices and are not to be posted on social media, unless approved by the coach. This is very important for the protection of individual and team privacy.



PROGRAM FEES



Program Fees and Payment

Each member of the Gymniks All Star Cheerleading program is expected to promptly pay their program fees. If a payment plan is chosen, monthly fees must be paid by the 1st of every month for the duration of the program. The program runs anywhere from early June through the end of April (depending on which team your child is on). The total annual fee can be paid up front or will automatically be split into equal monthly payments based on the length of the program. Fees cover the athlete's training cost, which includes regular practice, one hour tumbling class per week, as well as facility and administration costs, coach's wages, and coaches' travel expenses.

Monthly fees do not cover any costs related to competition uniforms or personal travel expenses. All competitive families are to have a valid credit card on file at all times. The payments will come automatically off your credit card on the 1st of each month. If you wish to pay cash or debit, you may do so at the front desk, but this must be done before that date, or your credit card will be charged.

If payments are declined, there will be an additional \$25 charged to the account. If the account is not paid by the 15th of the month, the athlete will not be allowed to participate in programming. If two payments are late, the remaining amount of the program will be required in full immediately, and the payment plan will no longer be offered. Upon registration, there is a mandatory AGF/ACA registration/insurance fee. The Alberta Gymnastics Federation (AGF) and Alberta Cheer Association (ACA) registration fees allow your athlete to be in the gym.

Grande Prairie Gymnastics General Refund Policy

If Grande Prairie Gymnastics cancels your class due to enrolment or scheduling issues, you will receive a full refund with no additional administrative fees. If withdrawing for any reason after the start of the 2026/2027 season, one month's written notice is required, and only fees for the months after withdrawing will be cancelled. If you are currently in a month that has been paid, no partial refunds will be given for that month, and the next month will be considered the full one month's notice. If paid in full, a prorated refund, based on the above policy (less the Alberta Gymnastics Federation, ACA insurance and membership fees), will be given when written notice of cancellation is received.



PROGRAM FEES



Additional Approximate Fees Breakdown

Item	Approximate Cost	Recurrence
Annual AGF Membership/ Insurance	\$65	Annually
Cheer Canada, ACA Fee, and ACA Insurance	\$70 approx.	Annually
Jacket*	\$105	Optional
Uniform	\$500	Biennial
Shoes	\$70 - \$170	As needed

Competition fees will be included in registration fees.

Travel/Hotel Expenses are based on personal preference (unless team travel, or stay and play is taking place). We strongly encourage you to purchase refundable travel expenses.

Uniforms are re-designed on a biennial (every two years) basis, you may need to purchase a new uniform each year, depending on the year and the growth of the athlete. We are on the first season of the uniform cycle.

Our Pre-Competitive Team Majors does not purchase a competition uniform, instead they will purchase a branded tank top and short set for their practices and performances. Details to follow.

*Practice gear and jackets are **NOT** mandatory this year. Optional gear to be announced at a later date.



POLICIES



Gym Wide Fundraisers

As an established society, we are fortunate to have a long-standing partnership with the Swan City Rotary Club, which provides us with the opportunity to participate in gym wide fundraising events. Grande Prairie Gymnastics is a founding member of the Cash and Camping and the Cars for Christmas Lotteries, now owned and managed by the Swan City Rotary Club. Our partnership with the Rotary Club helps us keep our fees competitive by using funds raised from these lotteries to offset coaching costs for our competitive programs. Shifts for gym wide fundraisers are mandatory. The number of hours of fundraising work will be proportional to the number of athletes in the program and the number of children a family has in the specified programs. (i.e. If a family has two daughters on the competitive team, the parents will have to work twice the number of fundraising hours.) You will be notified well in advance when you are required to participate in fundraising duties. Families will be required to sign up for these shifts using the sign-up link emailed to you. Volunteer time slots fill up fast, so please check your email regularly. Buying out your volunteer hours for \$180 is also an option. If your athlete voluntarily decides to leave the program partway through the year, you are still responsible for the buyout of your hours.

Competitive Program Fundraising

This policy outlines the guidelines and procedures for fundraising activities within the Grande Prairie Gymnastics Society. It applies to all members, parents, and affiliates involved in the competitive Women's Artistic Gymnastics, competitive Cheer, and competitive Trampoline Gymnastics programs. This policy provides transparency, accountability, and fairness in all fundraising activities. Program fundraising opportunities are outside of the society's required gym wide fundraising expectations. This policy will be distributed once the season has commenced.

Vacations

We respectfully request that competing athletes not take extended vacations during our competitive season, which runs from January 1st through to the end of the season (April or May). Any vacations booked during competition season must be communicated to the coach as soon as travel plans are made, as any time away is going to affect the athlete and the entire team's training plan, and the coach needs to accommodate for this. Not communicating travel plans during competition season is possible grounds for dismissal.

Nutrition

Your child's nutrition habits will affect their training. They are hardworking athletes and therefore need their sustenance. Eating something really heavy or unhealthy before practice will affect how they feel during practice and how hard they can work. Please refrain from sending candy or junk food as snacks, as it is imperative to have them eat a healthy meal or snack before practice.

POLICIES



Injuries

Although Grande Prairie Gymnastics provides an extremely safe training environment, injuries may still occur. Every athlete has sport related accident insurance through their Alberta Gymnastic Federation membership. In the case of a very light and simple injury, the coaches may prescribe a time out before resuming training. If a more serious injury happens during a practice session, the coaches will call the parent or guardian at home or work to inform them and arrange transportation. For administrative purposes, a written report will be completed of the incidents leading to the injury and a description of the perceived nature of the injury. The coach will provide a verbal report to the parent or guardian, and the parent or guardian will be required to sign the written report. In this instance, the coach may request that the parent or guardian contact a doctor within 24-48 hours of the injury to get a professional assessment and seek advice regarding appropriate treatment. For your child's safety, prior to the return of an athlete that has been subject to modified training or time off for ANY reason, we require that you provide a medical note 100% clearing your child to return to the program, stating the date of your child's expected return to full-time practice. These notes will be required to say what injury they have been cleared from. During injury recovery, if possible, the athlete should continue to attend practice in whichever capacity they can.

Training While Injured Protocol

If an injury occurs and the doctor has been seen, please discuss the injury and doctor recommendations with your coach. The coach will then develop a modified training plan to accommodate the injury. It is important that the athlete continues to condition where possible, and stretch during this time, as well as work any skills or choreography they are allowed to do. Fees will not be pro-rated for injuries, as competitive athletes are expected to continue attending training. If an injury is extensive beyond the norm, please talk to your Coach to work out specific training adjustments that need to be made.



24 - Hour Cool Down Policy

We will enforce a 24-hour cool down period for all concerned parents or guardians. It is not the responsibility of the coaches to hear from upset parents immediately after practices or competitions. Coaches are trying to do what is best for all the athletes. The parent or guardian must respect the 24-hour cool down period and bring their issue to the coach 24 hrs after the situation to be discussed in a calm, collected manner. Keeping a log of your thoughts and events leading up to the situation will be very beneficial. The coaches have every right to refuse to listen if a parent does not follow the 24-hour rule.

We will make every effort to respond to your concern within 48 hours from the first point of contact, or prior to the next practice, but under special circumstances, there may be a longer waiting period.

1. If either party requests a face-to-face meeting, it should be scheduled, the topic(s) to be discussed in the request included, and either the Executive Director or a Parent Liaison from the board must attend the meeting. An email between all parties is the suggested communication, as then everything is documented.
2. After a face-to-face meeting, an email summarizing the meeting and documenting future actions agreed upon in the meeting should be sent. It will be the responsibility of the party requesting the meeting to send the follow up, (unless it is decided in the meeting that a different party will do the follow up - for example, the Executive Director could send the email). If there is disagreement on the wording of the follow up email then the Executive Director is to work with the parties to come to an accurately worded and agreed upon document.
3. All communication (whether written or verbal) is to be respectful and professional. (This includes communication on BAND).
4. Replies to initial communication to happen in a timely manner. "Timely manner" is open to interpretation, so for clarification purposes is one to two business days.



SPECIAL EVENTS



Performances

Your child's group may perform in demonstrations or events throughout the year, such as the Festival of Trees and half time shows at NWP. Participation in these shows is mandatory, so please ensure your child is available to attend all events. Should you have a schedule conflict, please let the coaches know as soon as possible, as this affects the group routine. Our program also hosts an annual Christmas Show and Spring Showcase, both of these performances will be at the gym and are mandatory for all athletes to attend. These event dates will be posted in advance for athletes to plan their participation. Please note that performances at the beginning of the season are typically shorter as athletes learn fundamentals and new skills and begin preparing their routines. Performances will grow in length as the season continues. This progression is important for all athletes and team safety.



COMPETITIONS



Waivers

Most competitions require a waiver to be signed prior to the competition. This waiver can be different depending on the competition producer. A parent or guardian must sign the waiver prior to the athlete being able to compete. Athletes will not be allowed on the mat without these waivers being signed. Please do not leave your athlete with the coaches for competition without ensuring you have signed any required waivers. When available, waivers will be distributed and collected prior to team travel to the competition.

Competition Schedules

An exact schedule for the competition is usually released 1 week before the event. Every team will have a warm up time, check in and a competition time for each day. Times can range from 7:00am until 10:00 pm, depending on the size of the event and the age/level of the team. In addition, these times may change from day one to day two. From warm up to performance time, the difference can easily be 2+ hours. As competition schedules can fluctuate and change without notice and are out of our control, please plan to be at the event all day when planning for travel and hotels.

Our gym would like all families and athletes to support each team in the program. This means you will not only be there for your own child's performances but for many others as well. This all being said, we recommend you plan a full day for any competition until you receive the exact schedule. For two-day events, on the first day, you should expect your athlete to compete once and then cheer on other gym teams. On the second day, your athlete will perform, cheer on other teams, and attend an awards session.

Once you arrive at the competition, you will need to drop your athlete off with their coaches or team assistant. We will let you know ahead of time via BAND or email when and where to do this. Your athlete needs to arrive ready to perform, in full uniform attire, including hair and make-up. You may not see your child for several hours after this.

Consult the BAND app for all team news. The competition schedule will be posted as soon as it is released. All team members are expected to get themselves to and from the competition, and all travel costs will be the responsibility of the parents.

COMPETITIONS



Priority Seating

Most competitions we attend will have “priority seating” available. This means that families and friends of our gym can go to a sectioned off area of seats to cheer on their team while they perform. Typically, these seats are in an area that gives the best view of the team performing. You usually enter the priority seating on one side and exit on the other. This area is only for friends and family and is cleared out after each performance. Check your schedule and plan to be at the entry for priority seating one or two performances before the team you are waiting to see.

Awards

Awards will either be on the first or second day, depending on whether it is a one or two-day event. In between your performance time and awards, athletes are expected to stay at the venue. Depending on the competition, coaches may keep the team together and cheer on other teams in their division, or coaches may ask athletes after their performance to stay with their parents until the awards. We will advise of the situation over BAND if athletes are returned to their guardians, give a time and place for your athlete to meet up with the team to attend the awards together.

Awards can be on the stage where the teams performed or in a separate location. Your athlete will sit with the team on the stage during the awards session. Awards are announced in a variety of ways, but usually all teams are announced from the last place to the first-place team. Athletes are expected to show good sportsmanship and congratulate other teams. Please note that it is always important to hold your excitement until our gym name has been called. This can be especially hard when you have heard the 2nd place team and know your team will be called next as the winner. Team sportsmanship is integral to the sport. The team may receive banners, medals, trophies, shirts, jackets or other memorabilia based on their placement and level.



COMPETITIONS



Destination Competitions

Many competitions are held in vacation type spots. Because of the cost of travel already required to attend the event, many families choose to extend the days into a family vacation. However, please remember that the cheer event must come first in your plans during those 1-3 days of competition. If your family chooses to extend your stay, please do so after the competition rather than before. This will benefit both the team and your family due to the competition travel expectations stated throughout this handbook.

Competition Attendance

Any competitions that the club attends are mandatory and non-negotiable for each competitive athlete. If there is a special circumstance preventing your child from attending, please speak with the coach as soon as possible. Coaches make the final decisions on which meets the athlete attends, and athletes are required to attend all meets the coach has planned for them. Missing competitions for an invalid reason is grounds for dismissal from the team.

Not attending a competition after registration is only acceptable due to injury or extenuating circumstances, and is at the discretion of the coach. Pulling from a competition after registration for an invalid reason, or not showing up for a competition without warning, is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.



COMPETITIONS



Competition Bids

In addition to the scheduled competitions, there is a possibility that your athlete's team may receive a bid to additional various competitions. One of these competitions could be The Summit All Star Cheerleading Championships in Orlando, Florida. This is an exciting honor and means that your athlete will have the chance to compete against the best teams in the world. This competition is usually held the first or second weekend in May. If your team receives a bid, they are required to practice for the weeks leading up to the competition. Practice times may change, and extra practices may be added to help prepare for the event. This will add additional fees to the program. Entry fees for bid competitions are not included in program registration fees.

Please note that Gymniks reserves the right to cancel, postpone, modify, or withdraw from an international trip at its sole discretion if it determines that conditions may pose a risk to participants' safety, security, or well-being. Decisions are final and made in the best interest of the gym, program, athletes and coaches. The society is not responsible for financial losses resulting from trip cancellations, including airfare, accommodations, event fees or personal expenses, unless otherwise stated in writing. All athletes are strongly encouraged to purchase refundable travel expenses and insurance.

The society will make every effort to notify athletes as soon as possible if an international trip is cancelled or modified. International travel carries inherent risks beyond the control of Grand Prairie Gymnastics.

Scoring

At select competitions, sometimes scores from day one are posted online. **At no point are parents to be sharing scores with any Gymniks athletes.** Sharing scores with athletes can be very detrimental to their day two performance. Stress, anxiety and pressure are almost always a result from athletes knowing standings and scores. Parents may think your athlete can handle this stress, however the next athlete that they will tell may not. Coaches make the decision on when to share scores, judges comments etc. with our Gymniks teams.



Travel Expectations and Policies for Athletes

The focus of our trips to competitions is the performance of our athletes, therefore family activities should not interfere with the athlete's preparation of routines for competition. It is the parent's responsibility to provide an environment conducive to optimal performance. As per club policy, the coaches will not be asked to chaperone, transport, supervise, or room athletes, except under special circumstances and with approval prior to the event by the Executive Director.

- Athletes are not to go swimming or sit in hot tubs the day of their competition. It makes their muscles very tired and is a safety concern for all team members.
- Athletes should avoid too much activity prior to competition and get lots of rest during competition weekends.
- Athletes are expected to dress and conduct themselves appropriately. Ensure your competition attire is clean for competition.
- During competition, athletes are to wear proper competitive attire for the entirety of the event. If your athlete is cold, they may wear their team jacket.
- Athletes are expected to act with respect, sportsmanship and dignity during ceremonies and awards.
- Athletes are not permitted to leave the competition floor without their coach's permission. They are to remain with their team for the duration of the event and awards, as they will be represented together.
- Athletes not competing should be supporting their team mates by watching and cheering.
- Each athlete must be chaperoned at every competition.
- If you have questions or comments about the scoring or other concerns regarding the competition, please see your child's coach after the event. Approaching a competition representative is prohibited.
- If your child gets hurt at a competition, please stay in the stands. There are always medical personnel available at competitions, and all coaches on the floor are certified in first aid and CPR. The coach will signal for you if you are needed.



DISCIPLINE AND ACHIEVEMENTS



Athlete and Parent Disciplinary Procedures

Please note: the following steps are intended to deal with disciplinary issues only, at the coaches' discretion.

1. Coach addresses the issue immediately with the individual athlete/or parent.
2. Athlete may be sent home if the situation or behavior recurs. No mandatory meeting will be held at this time, unless requested by the coach or parent. All meeting requests must be made through administration (ex. Program Coordinator or Executive Director).
3. If the situation or behavior occurs again, a mandatory meeting will be arranged with the parent or guardian by the Coach or Program Coordinator, and must include the parent/guardian, coach(es), and athlete.
4. If the situation or behavior is still not resolved, the athlete will be suspended or terminated, and another mandatory meeting with the parent or guardian, coaches, and the athlete will be scheduled.
5. The athlete will be removed from the program

Academic Achievement

The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society strives to develop well rounded individuals through our programs. We believe that the athlete's education is an essential component of the individual's development and future. Therefore, we will strongly encourage each athlete to put pride into their academic responsibilities and apply themselves. Because of the hours spent at training, young athletes will have to develop good time management skills at a young age. This skill becomes essential once reaching junior high and high school. Should an athlete's academic achievement falter, we encourage parents and guardians to bring this to the Program Coordinators attention, where we can assist in putting a plan to encourage academic success.



CODE OF CONDUCT



Coaches Code of Conduct

As a coach of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics and Gymniks All Stars I agree to:

- Provide a positive and nurturing environment for all participants.
- Ensure a safe environment by selecting activities, establishing controls, and completing lesson plans that are suitable for the age, experience, ability, and fitness level of the involved athletes.
- Prepare athletes systematically and progressively, using appropriate time frames and monitoring physical and psychological adjustments while refraining from using training methods or techniques that may harm athletes.
- Act in the best interest of the athlete's development as well as the best interest of the team.
- Know one's limitations in terms of knowledge and skills when making decisions, giving instructions or taking action.
- Ensure all coaching credentials are current and up to date. This includes but is not limited to, ICU, NCCP courses, and first aid.
- Submit a clean criminal record check upon employment.
- Be prepared to act quickly and appropriately in case of emergency.
- In the event an injury occurs, I will provide first aid, as well as document the injury in an incident report, and disclose the incident to the parent of the athlete.
- Recognize the power inherent in the position of coach and respect and promote the rights of all participants in sport. This is accomplished by establishing and following procedures for confidentiality (right to privacy), informed participation, and fair and reasonable treatment.
- Respect the principles, rules, policies, and procedures in force.
- Attend staff development meetings, clinics, and other professional activities to improve coaching performance.



Athlete Code of Conduct

As a member of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics Gymniks team, I agree to:

- Be in the gym—ready to go—on time for training.
- Treat all coaches, parents, and other athletes with courtesy and respect.
- Be responsible and prepared for training, wearing proper attire including practice gear, cheer shoes, hair tied up off the face, and no jewelry.
- Communicate with coaches any (training or coaching) problems, injuries, or illness at training, meets, or other events.
- Attend (on time) all scheduled competitions and events.
- Not use foul or abusive language at any time.
- Work with coaches and other athletes in maintaining a safe, clean, and positive training environment.
- Demonstrate proper sportsmanship (includes positive and appropriate attitude and behaviour).
- Refrain from publicly demeaning or speaking negatively of others or the Gymniks club.
- Assist in maintaining a clean gym, putting my garbage in trash bins, keeping the locker neat and clean, and respecting other people's belongings.
- Not use cell phones or other electronics during training or competition unless in emergency situations or at the coaches request. This includes taking video of my skills during practice, especially for use on social media.

When I am attending a cheerleading event or otherwise representing Gymniks I agree to:

- Arrive on time and be prepared.
- Project a positive image of the club by maintaining the highest standards of personal conduct.
- Refrain from expressing displeasure with judges or other officials by any means other than the accepted protest procedure.
- Refrain from making comments to a judge, meet official, or any other participant, with regard to a coach or athlete's abilities, routines, or execution during a competition.
- Refrain from disrupting, distracting, or in any way interfering with the performance of an athlete during competition or training.
- Follow dress codes specified by the coach when traveling to or from or participating in any activity sponsored or sanctioned by the club.
- Be supportive of teammates and all other athletes. Encourage team spirit at all times.
- Abide by policies regarding alcohol or drugs (zero tolerance) set by the Alberta Gymnastics Federation.
- Abide by the rules and policies set by the coaches at all Club-sanctioned events.

Parent/Guardian Code of Conduct

As a member of the Grande Prairie Gymnastics Gymniks team, I also agree to:

- Assist my child in arriving on time for training and arrange for them to be picked up from training on time.
- Inform the coaches when and why my child will be missing or late for any training sessions or events, and of any problems, injuries, or illness.
- Inform coaches of any conflicts (vacation or otherwise) regarding upcoming competitions or events. Pay all fees on or before the date specified by the club.
- Treat all coaches, athletes, and parents with courtesy and respect.
- View training from the viewing area only, do not talk to athlete during training and do not disturb the training session.
- Only approach a coach before or after training (not during), with concerns, questions, or comments, especially at competitions.
- Follow the “chain of communication” regarding any concerns, questions, or complaints.
- I will be positive and supportive of my child’s training and I appreciate that any technical and/or constructive (along with positive) feedback should come only from the coach.
- Refrain from discussing individual issues with other parents, especially in settings with athletes, coaches or other parents around. Each athlete is an individual with unique needs, and the information at hand may be incomplete or inaccurate.
- Absolutely refrain from “rumor-mongering” or discussing any coaches/parents/athletes that are not in attendance.
- Complete all my fundraising duties as required.
- Commit fully to the annual training program and agree to make my monthly payments on time and in full, even if my child leaves the program voluntarily partway through the year. 10-month program athletes are still expected and encouraged to train as much as they can throughout the summer months.
- I will not encourage the practice of gymnastics skills outside of the gym, with the exception of conditioning and stretching requested specifically by the coach.
- I agree to check my email regularly and respond in a timely fashion (if necessary) to any important communication from the gym.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Your role is every bit as important as that of the gym, coaches, and the athlete. An athlete's parents are an instrumental contributor to their success and happiness. It is important to know the commitment level required for parents. Most parents minimally drive their athlete to the gym twice a week however this number can be as much as 6-7 times a week. This is outside of the weekends spent at the actual cheer competitions.

Once you and your athlete have made the commitment to All Star Cheer there are a few extra things that you should keep in mind. Because of the competitive nature of the sport, cheerleading can sometimes encourage gossip and mean-spirited words. Many times, this is coming more from the parents than the athletes. It is imperative to remember that as a parent, it is your responsibility to remain supportive of your athlete, your athlete's teammates, and your gym. This means not talking about other children or parents, especially at competitions or in gym waiting areas, and quickly dealing with your own child if he or she is encouraging gossip.

As a member of a competitive program within The Grande Prairie Gymnastic Society, it is mandatory that at least one parent or guardian complete the Respect in Sport certificate every 3 years. Further information on how to complete this certification will be emailed once the season starts.

As a cheer parent, you will support your child with every up and down they experience in cheer; and there will be many of them. There may be skills your child masters in days, and then there will be that one skill that takes two or more years to perfect. They may have what we call "mental blocks" where they just cannot perform a skill that they may have been doing for some time. Most times, mental blocks happen after some type of injury or fall, but typically, there is no physical reason preventing it. By being supportive and positive, you will provide the atmosphere your child needs to develop and excel.

Fees must be paid on time and in full, and a commitment to transport your athlete to and from workouts, competitions, and team functions must be made. In addition, and equally important, parents must help instill the work ethic, values, and nutritional knowledge into their child that is necessary to be successful.

ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES



Roles and Responsibilities of Parents/Guardians

Attendance is essential if you wish your child to reach their maximum potential. Please review the attendance section of the Handbook. If you have any questions, please contact the Program Coordinator.

Please do not make contact with your athlete or any other athlete during practice, including if they are on a break. It is important for the athlete to stay focused on what they are doing during practice. If you need to get a message to your athlete during practice, please talk to the office staff, and the message will be relayed. Parents are NOT permitted on the gym floor and must refrain from coaching or commenting from the sidelines during any training session or competition. If your child is not paying attention or messing around, we realize it is tempting, but this is the job of the coaches.

Injured athletes are expected to participate in workouts and gym activities to the highest extent possible. Your coaches are able to modify training for your athlete. Speak with them before allowing your athlete to take time off due to an injury.

Please understand that we have a large gym and face-to-face progress reports are not practical. In the absence of us contacting you, you can assume that everything is okay and your athlete is progressing satisfactorily. If something comes up about which we need to speak to you, be assured that we will do so promptly. If you have a concern, you are also welcome to schedule a meeting with the Program Coordinator or the Executive Director (as explained below).

We feel that communication with the parents of our athletes should be open and flowing. We will contact you via email and through TeamSnap with important information. Please ensure to update us should your email address change. If you have any questions regarding the gym or your athlete, please email the gym at info@gpgymnastics.com or the program at cheer@gpgymnastics.com or phone 780-539-1414. Under no circumstances should a coach get a call or text on their personal telephone or personal email. Personal phone calls or texts will not be responded to.



COMMUNICATION



Chain of Communication

The Gymniks Society is requesting that parent concerns and complaints be addressed and channeled respecting the following chain of communication:

For concerns about your athlete's coach, please contact:

Cheer Program Coordinator: (Lindsay Morrison): cheer@gpgymnastics.com

Gym Executive Director (Cassie Bigelow): edirector@gpgymnastics.com

For concerns about your athlete:

1. Concerned Parent
2. Coach of Athlete
3. Program Coordinator
4. Gym Executive Director
5. Board of Directors/Parent Liaison

Question Directory

For questions about fees and payments, please contact us at our Front Desk:

Email: info@gpgymnastics.com

Phone: 780-539-1414



We believe educating our cheer parents helps everyone understand our sport a little more, so we can help our sport and our athletes grow. Cheerleading is an ever constant changing sport, and can be very difficult for parents to keep up to date on all the changes. We understand that this can make things very confusing when looking at outcomes/rankings at competitions we attend. For example, tumbling previously was a much bigger part of our score sheet, however at this time the majority of our points do come from our stunting sections (100 points out of a possible 130). Tumbling is now only 15 points out of 130. This is why some of our coaching decisions for the routines have also been evolving over the last couple of seasons to fit the new scoring system. Another thing that has changed is the way competition scores are weighted. In the past, events were typically weighted 30% day one, and 70% day two. This is now usually a 50/50 split at most events. Below is some helpful information for Parents to understand scoring and deductions.

Scoring 101

Cheer Canada has moved to a comparative scoring system for all All Star teams. After trialling the system with International divisions, all teams moved to a Canadian version of the International All Star Federation (IASF) scoring system. All Star, Prep, and Novice will each have unique scoring systems. For All Star and Prep teams, comparative scoring is still done much the same way as it was with the previous rubric system, with judges scoring specific elements of the routine. The same factors are still used to define good execution and difficult skills at each level. Score sheets and judging panels are still divided into Building, Tumbling, Overall and Safety categories. One major difference for the comparative scoring system is that scores are not immediately released to coaches, as judges may need to adjust scores up or down as more teams compete in each division, to ensure the correct ranking is achieved. With comparative scoring, the rankings become more important than the numerical score, which can change significantly from day to day and event to event, as teams are compared against others in their division and level at any given event. Unlike the rubric system, where a score out of 10 could only be a given score between 9.0-10, the comparative system allows judges to use the full range from 0-10. Teams should expect scores to be lower and scores to be more spread out under this system. There are no required elements or skills, no defined ratios or numbers of skills. This scoring system allows a coach more flexibility to create a routine that highlights their team's strengths. Deductions for execution errors, such as falls and safety/rule infractions, carry a greater weight under this comparative system, in part due to the larger range of points available. For example, under the previous rubric system, a single athlete falling during a tumbling element would incur a .25 deduction. Under this system, it carries a 1.0 point deduction. A major building fall, where a top person lands on the floor, carried a 1.25 deduction in the rubric system. With comparative scoring, it will result in a 4.0 point deduction.

All Star Score Sheets Overview

For All Star teams, this scoring system places a heavy emphasis on stunt and pyramid elements. For teams in tumbling divisions who are allowed to throw basket tosses, 100 of the possible 155 points on the score sheet are applied to building categories. Stunt and pyramid difficulty and execution are all equally weighted at 20 points. Toss execution (5 points), difficulty (5 points), and building creativity (10 points) round out this score sheet. Tosses are excluded for all level 1 and Mini level 2 divisions, making their building score sheet out of 90. The tumbling score sheet carries 20 points: 5 points each for jumps (difficulty and execution are combined); 5 for standing tumbling difficulty; and 5 for running tumbling difficulty. Tumbling execution is combined and scored out of a total of 5. In Levels 1-4, individual tumbling passes are not considered in difficulty, only execution. In these levels, athletes must tumble in groups of 2 or more to receive credit for difficulty. In Level 5-7, individual passes will count towards the difficulty score. Non-tumbling divisions will be scored only for jumps (5 points) on this score sheet. The overall score sheet carries 30 points, which include 5 points for dance (difficulty and execution are combined) and 5 points for routine creativity, which considers unique, visual and intricate ideas in the routine. Formations/transitions, which consider spacing, patterns of movement, timing, and visual elements throughout the routine, are worth 10 points, and overall routine impression and showmanship are worth 10 points. Global Division teams will have an additional 10 points allocated to their cheer section, with 2 points for each of the following categories: effective material; use of props; crowd leading/energy; skill incorporation; and execution. This is unchanged from last season.



All Star Prep Score Sheets Overview

All Star Prep is designed to be an introductory, lower-cost option for athletes to be involved in competitive cheerleading. Cheer Canada has designed a different score sheet for these teams to reflect the desired outcomes for these athletes. Cheer Canada wants to ensure that, with the limited practice time Prep athletes have, they can focus on skill development. The emphasis is on execution rather than difficulty, and scores for creative elements, while still included, are minimized. As with All Star, the building score sheet is still heavily weighted, with a total of 65 of the 105 available points on this sheet. For Prep teams, stunt and pyramid difficulty are each worth 10 points, but execution for each category is out of 20 points. The goal of this scoring system is to emphasize developing proper technique for our Prep athletes. Building creativity is worth 5 points on this sheet. The tumbling score sheet is worth 15 points for Prep teams, with jumps, tumbling difficulty and tumbling execution each worth 5 points. Execution and difficulty are combined for jumps, and running and standing tumbling are combined for both tumbling scores. The overall score sheet for Prep has 25 points. The only difference from All Star is that routine creativity has been removed from the Prep score sheet. Novice Score Sheet Overview: This season, Novice teams will not be scored numerically, nor will they be ranked against other teams. A new comparative scoresheet has been developed for Cheer Canada Novice divisions to allow judges to provide feedback on the following areas: Stunt execution and pyramid execution (excluded in the tiny novice), jump execution, dance execution and routine impression/showmanship. In no category is routine difficulty considered. Teams will be awarded a rank of Outstanding, Excellent or Superior.

Links to Additional Resources

Alberta Cheer Association: <https://www.albertacheerleading.ca/>

Cheer Union: <http://cheerunion.org/>

Cheer Canada: <http://www.cheerleadingcanadainc.com/>

All Star Score Sheets <https://cheercanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Allstar-Score-Sheets.pdf>

Deduction System <https://cheercanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/Deduction-Info.pdf>

Skill List by Level <https://cheercanada.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/Allstar-Prep-Skills-List-2022.23.pdf>

GENERAL INFORMATION



Material Agreement

As a member of Gymniks All Stars Cheerleading Program, any material (cheers, chants, pyramids, partner stunts, transitions, dances, music, routines, etc) may not be used or taught for any purpose, to anyone outside the Gymniks All Stars Cheerleading Program. All material is owned by Gymniks All Stars/ Grande Prairie Gymnastics and may not be reproduced or taught without prior written consent from Gymniks All Stars/Grande Prairie Gymnastics.

Uniform Agreement

Any and all parts of Gymniks All Stars program uniform may only be worn during specific and official Gymniks All Stars Cheerleading Program activities. This uniform may not be worn for any other activity or event without consent from Gymniks All Stars Cheerleading.

Valuables in the Gym

It is not possible to monitor valuables brought into the Gymniks All Stars facility. Please leave valuables at home. Gymniks All Stars/Grande Prairie Gymnastics will not be responsible for any lost or stolen items.

