



Dear Victory Academy All-Star Candidate and Parent,

Thank you so much for your interest in Victory Academy Cheerleading! As we prepare for our 11th season, we feel that this will be our best year yet. Our coaching staff is excited for the new season, as we hope to keep building on our success here at the Academy.

Victory Academy has earned the reputation of being one of the top cheerleading programs in Illinois. We have set a standard of excellence that we will continue to maintain and develop. Victory Academy is looking for athletes who are willing to commit a full eleven months to the Lions, to work hard and improve individual skills, and to be a loyal teammate. We know that this type of program is not for everyone, as we train to compete. One of our main goals is to create winning teams. This type of goal requires strict attendance policies, a financial commitment, and structured workouts. Please carefully consider these goals when deciding to try out.

We have prepared the following information to help each family understand our program. Please take time to thoroughly read over the packet in full. We want every parent and team member to be fully aware of our expectations.

The Victory Academy coaching staff's mission is to offer the ultimate competitive cheerleading experience! We will offer the best training and most innovative routines possible. Victory Academy wants our team members to be exceptional cheerleaders, but most of all to be exceptional people. Focusing on teamwork and structured, safe workouts, Lions' team members learn how to encourage one another while building their own self-confidence.

Once again, thank you for considering joining the Victory Academy Lions. We hope that you will find this packet informative and that it will answer any questions that you have concerning our program. Good luck to each and every one of you! We look forward to a great season!

Sincerely,

Jen Nettleton and the Lions' Coaching Staff

Victory Academy Lions Handbook

The Lions Handbook is meant to provide parents and team members with valuable information and expectations involved with our cheerleading program. Please note that all information here is to be strictly adhered to by all parents and team members, and that information is subject to change throughout the year. If at anytime you have any questions, please feel free to talk to a member of the coaching staff.

Team Size/Division

For the 2009-2010 season, we will have anywhere from 4-8 different teams, depending on the number of athletes at evaluations. The teams will be comprised of athletes ages 4-18. We follow United States All Star Federation (USASF) age and level guidelines to form our teams. The divisions include Tiny (5 and under), Mini (8 and under), Youth (11 and under), Junior (14 and under), and Senior (18 and under). There are multiple levels within each age division, which allows us to have more than one team per age range if necessary. Divisions are also divided into small and large teams. Small teams compete with 5-20 members and large teams may compete with 21-36 members. When forming our new teams, we will base them on age, skill level, experience, and stunting positions. There is a chance that your child could be bumped up into an older age group if there is not enough to form a team for their correct age group. The divisions in which we will compete in will be decided in the summer after the coaches have had sufficient time to evaluate each team. *We have the right to place/move team members to the squad where they will be best suited.*

Commitment

You must be prepared to fulfill an 11-month commitment (10-month for Tiny and Mini teams), practicing 1-3 hours a week for Tiny and Mini teams, and 3 -6 hours a week for Youth, Junior, and Senior teams. You must also be prepared to attend 4-6 competitions for the Tiny team, 5-7 for the Mini team, and 7-9 competitions for Youth, Junior, and Senior teams, which take place over the weekends.

Start-up Fees

A start-up fee will be paid by every member before being placed on a team. This money will be put towards your last monthly fee. If a team member leaves the team or is dismissed for any reason during the season, this money will be forfeited. Start-up fees are as follows:

- \$100 - New members and returning full season members
- \$200 - Returning members who did not fulfill a full season

Tuition

Monthly payments are set by Victory Academy, and will occur between the 1st and the 5th of each month, starting in May and ending in March. Victory Academy requires your monthly payment to be made by automatic draft via a credit or debit card. In the event that the credit or debit card charged is refused for any reason, payment is due by no later than the 15th of such month. If payment is not received by the 15th, then a \$5.00 late fee will be assessed. The Credit or Debit Card Authorization Agreement Form needs to be signed and turned in along with the Lions Handbook Form. Families who have 2 or more children in Victory Academy programs receive a 20% discount on the lesser tuition. In addition, a yearly membership fee of \$30 for individuals or \$50 for families with 2 or more children will be due at the beginning of each season.

Monthly prices are based on an "all-inclusive" system. This system includes most of the expenses that a member would normally incur throughout the season. This price includes: tuition, entry fees for local and national competitions, coaches fees for competitions, summer team camp/activities, choreography/music, and spirit fee. This does not include uniforms, make-up, practice clothing, travel expenses, punch cards, or annual membership fees. This

system makes financial planning and budgeting much easier for our families. A breakdown of each fee that is covered will be provided, so you can see exactly where your payments are going. We will provide a breakdown first based on last year's expenses, and then once the competition schedule is finalized, we will provide an updated breakdown.

If a team falls out of the range (too high or too low) they pay for, then we may either give refunds or ask for additional funds to cover the difference in expenses. In the case of a refund, checks would be issued AFTER the conclusion of the last competition.

The tuition continues from May through March. To offset the fact that most of the expenses we incur happen well before March, we collect the \$100 start-up fee mentioned above at the beginning of the season and deduct this amount from the last month of the season.

For questions about tuition or billing, please talk to Vicki, Elizabeth, or Sarah.

Practices

Practice schedules will be posted on a monthly basis. Schedules will be put on our website approximately 2 weeks before the start of the month. They are subject to change; however, proper notification will be given. The days that each team practices will be determined after evaluations, but note that they could be any day of the week, including weekends. Each team will have set practices that will remain the same throughout the year, and we will also have extra practices when we get near competitions. *In addition, if a team member's skills are not progressing as quickly as they need to, they may be asked to take extra classes or private lessons at an additional cost. This may require an additional night of practice each week until the team member is able to perform skills needed for his/her squad.*

A team can only achieve great things if the entire team is there to practice. Because of this, team members are expected to attend all scheduled practices. There are a few excused absences:

1. Family emergencies
 2. School activity that earns a grade
 3. Sick with fever or contagious
 4. School games that the member is playing in or cheering at
- *Other absences may be excused at the coaches' discretion.

Examples of unexcused absences:

1. Birthday parties
2. Homework/ tests (PLEASE plan efficiently)
3. Shopping trips
4. Non-contagious illness/injury

*We expect that cheerleaders will be gone for a summer vacation. Please note that an absence request form must be filled out. One to two weeks of summer vacation is excused.

If an absence is known in advance, an absence request form must be filled out completely. For a last minute absence, a coach or Victory Academy must be contacted before practice, and then you must bring an absence form to the next practice. Do not send information through other team members or email. If you do not have a ride to practice, please call a coach. They will find someone to pick you up. Not having a ride is an unexcused absence.

Submitting an absence request form does not necessarily excuse your absence. After 2 unexcused absences, a team member may be dismissed. After 7 excused absences during the competition season (August-March), a team member may also be dismissed. **NO PRACTICES ARE ALLOWED TO BE MISSED DURING THE WEEK BEFORE A COMPETITION.**

Everyone is to arrive at practice 15 minutes before the actual start time of practice to properly warm-up. At this time, team members must be dressed and ready to go. If you are going to be late, you must call.

Missed practices, arriving late, or leaving early may result in disciplinary action. This could include, but not be limited to, extra conditioning, gym cleaning, or removal from the squad.

If a team member is injured, they must still attend practice. They will not be required to participate, but will watch any changes that affect them. They may also stretch, condition, or perform activities that do not affect the injury.

Proper attire should be worn at all times during practice. Proper attire includes cheer shoes, socks, Lions' t-shirts/tank tops, team color shorts (black, columbia blue, or gray), and sports bras. All girls should have a sports bra or tank top under their t-shirt. We also suggest spandex shorts. Hair must be tied back in a ponytail, and there is to be absolutely no jewelry of any kind (see rules for piercings).

There is to be no gum, candy, food, or drinks besides water in the gym.

Practices are closed to parents, family, friends, or other spectators at all times. Some children are easily distracted by people watching them, which can be a risk to their safety and productivity. However, we do like our parents to be able to see their children's progress, so there is an exception. Parents will be able to observe for the last 20 minutes of practice on the 1st practice of the month. In addition, we will send team progress reports out by email on a regular basis.

Participation In Other Activities

While a member of the team, you may participate in other activities; however, Lions must remain a priority. This means you must be willing to compromise and communicate with Lions' coaches, as well as the other activity's coaches/advisors, about your schedules. We do not feel like children should have to make a choice about all sports or activities at a young age, as they may not know what they are interested in without trying it first. We do feel though that they need to keep the best interest of their team members in mind at all times.

Weather Cancellations

If the weather becomes unsafe to attend practice, the owners will make the decision and make a call to WJBC. You can listen to the radio or check the WJBC website. We also do our best to get it on the Lions website as well. In the event of a competition, we will make the decision and post it on our website. Competition companies *never* cancel for weather, so competition fees are not refunded if we decide to cancel.

Star Status Program

We have a Star Status program for our athletes as a way to motivate them to achieve new skills throughout the year. After evaluations have been completed and our new teams have been set, each athlete will receive their Star Status, level 1-5, based on their current tumbling skills performed at evaluations. The skills for each star status level are in accordance with the tumbling skills allowed in each USASF level. This program will help to provide them with specific goals and skills to work towards, as well as to create healthy competition amongst our athletes. The Star Status boards will be posted inside the gym as a constant reminder to our cheerleaders of the new skills they can gain through hard work and determination.

Punch Cards

Based on the level that your team competes in, you could be required to attend Punch Card sessions. These are extra tumbling sessions that are not included with regular practice tuition, and are held 2-3 times per month. You purchase a card that is punched every time a session is attended. If your Star Status is completed for the level your squad competes at, you will not be required to attend. If you do not meet the Star Status for your team's level, you will need to attend until you meet the requirements.

Double Teaming

At times we may ask if people are interested in competing on 2 teams. In this case, your child will be responsible for attending practices and competitions for both squads. In addition, they will pay any additional fees associated with the second team.

Team Bonding Activities

Team bonding activities are required, just as practices are. We feel that in order to have the most cohesive team, activities outside of practice times are important. These activities will be spread out throughout the year and will help the team members develop strong relationships.

Piercings

New piercings must be done before September 1st. Piercings are illegal at competitions and may be grounds for team disqualification. If piercings are done after September 1st, there is a chance they will have to be removed before they are healed. In addition, if new piercings are obtained over the summer, they must be properly covered with athletic tape for practice. After the 6-week healing period, they must be removed for every practice. Even stud earrings have a chance of being ripped out.

Uniforms

All members must purchase the entire Lions uniform. This includes MotionFLEX bodyliner, skirt, briefs, warm-up, cheer shoes, hair bow, and team makeup. Other items may be added to this list at anytime.

Uniforms must be paid for in full before your child receives their order. You will receive your uniform bill approximately 2-3 weeks after uniform fitting day. All uniforms will then be picked up on a designated date.

We do have a used uniform sale, which offers lower prices, but we cannot guarantee used pieces to everyone. However, we do our best to provide as many used pieces as possible.

Uniforms must be well taken care of. They must be hand washed and should not be dry-cleaned, dried, or ironed. Uniforms should not be worn to anything other than competitions, exhibitions, or other Lions-related functions.

Competitions

Every team member must attend every competition. Missing a competition will result in dismissal from the squad. The team members pay a lot of money and work very hard to prepare for competitions, and missing even one person can have a huge impact on the team.

The Tiny team will attend approximately 4-6 competitions, Minis will attend approximately 5-7 competitions, and Youth, Junior, and Senior teams will attend approximately 7-9 competitions throughout the Midwest, mainly central Illinois. There is a possibility of some teams traveling farther. Competitions run from October to March. Most competitions are on Sundays, with 1 to 4 two-day competitions (depending on the team). There is a chance that 2-day competitions will require travel or report times on weekdays. We do our best to schedule competitions over long holiday weekends, but there is a possibility of missed school due to team travel.

*Those placed on a Tiny or Mini team will not attend every 2-day competition.

For competitions requiring overnight stays, Victory Academy will be making all arrangements for hotels. Parents will be making all individual reservations, but coaches will provide the contact and room block information. Team members are required to stay with the team, and are not allowed to arrive late or leave early. Transportation will be set up on your own. If at anytime you cannot find a ride or need assistance, you may talk to the coaches or travel with them. Those team members who do not have parents on the trip are highly encouraged to travel with the coaches.

Parents are highly encouraged to take the trips with their child. Team members in 8th grade or below must have a parent responsible for them, whether it is their own parents or another arrangement was made.

At competitions, *team members are expected to watch all Victory teams* perform to cheer them on. Teams will always stay for their own awards ceremony. Competitions generally last all day long. If a parent needs to leave early from a competition, they must arrange another ride home for their child. We are a "family" and feel that being there for all the teams and for awards teaches good sportsmanship and shows respect for the competition host. This concept is very important to us.

People with injuries that are unable to compete should still try to attend all competitions while they are injured. If the competition is an hour or less away, they are required to attend.

While at competitions, team members should look professional and be in uniform. If they are waiting to compete, or have finished competing, they may wear our warm-up with a Lions' t-shirt. All team members must be in full uniform for awards. Items that are not allowed include, but are not limited to: pajama pants, jeans, t-shirts that are not Lions, etc.

Parents or team members should not talk to the judges or those running the competitions. Coaches will take care of any problems that may arise.

Fundraising

All team members may participate in team fundraisers to help defray costs associated with competitions. If one does not participate in a fundraiser, they will not receive the funds from it. In addition, if a team member leaves the team before the end of the season, all team fundraising money will be forfeited. All funds will be kept in an account until payments are due. At this time, parents will receive a credit on their invoice showing how much was earned by their child. In the event that all funds are not used, the money will be applied towards other fees if possible or refunded.

We hope to hold approximately 2 individual fundraisers and 1 team fundraiser over the course of the year.

Summer Camps

Various camps will take place over the summer for all teams. Each team will have at least one day of camp, with some teams up to four days. Youth teams that are Level 2 or under, Tiny, and Mini teams will have one day camps to help speed up the learning of their competition routine. Youth teams that are level 3 and above, all Junior, and all Senior teams will have multiple days, as we are bringing in outside camp directors/choreographers. These will take place in June or July. It is mandatory for all members to attend their camp dates. We will be having these camps at Victory Academy. The camps that have outside staff will require an extra cost, which is highlighted on the expense sheet.

Parent Committees

We often form several parent committees for which we need volunteers. Possible groups are fundraising, spirit, and social events. These groups usually meet once or twice a month during practice times. We cannot run these groups without your help, so please consider helping out.

Parental Expectations

Supportive parents are an important part of a successful team. We expect that all of our parents are always supportive and positive towards their own child as well as coaches, other parents, and every other member of the team. You are your child's most important role model, and your attitude towards the program greatly affects your child's attitude. The following are obligations and expectations for all our parents.

1. RESPECT COMMITMENT! Once your child has committed to the team, it is your responsibility to keep them on the team for the entire season.
2. Parents are to encourage and support your child, other team families, and the program to the best of your ability. Negative remarks should not be made, especially in the presence of your child.
3. Any negative behavior towards a Victory Academy member or staff, as well as other gyms' members and staff, may result in the removal of your child from the team or parents being banned from attending future competitions.
4. Make sure your child is on time and attends **all** practices and events.
5. You must fulfill all financial obligations associated with the program.
6. Parents are expected to volunteer with fundraisers and other events as needed.
7. Parents should inform coaches of any absence or if a child will be late. Never send information through anyone else.
8. Talk to coaches with all questions rather than other parents or members. Coaches will always have the correct answers.
9. Any questions or concerns with the program should be handled respectfully.

We love our supportive parents and the kids do too! When you cheer the team on and encourage them, it can make so much difference in their performance. Set a good example at all times, and teach your kids about good sportsmanship and teamwork.

Team Member Expectations

We are looking for hard-working, devoted cheerleaders with positive attitudes. We want our team to be the best it can be, which takes a lot of dedication and teamwork. Team members are expected to give 110% in everything they do. They should motivate each other and be constantly working to improve their skills. The following are expectations we have for all team members:

1. RESPECT COMMITMENT! Once you commit to the team, you are to fulfill the entire season.
2. Members will set and maintain the highest examples of behavior. They should be respectful to all team members, staff, and parents at all times. This also includes members of other teams when we travel to competitions. The way they conduct themselves while representing Victory Academy reflects on the entire squad.
3. Members will be on time to all activities.
4. Members will do everything in their power to achieve personal and squad goals and work as a team.
5. Each member should be aware that they do not have the right to be on Victory Academy Lions. It is a privilege.
6. Each member must be willing to cooperate with and be helpful to the coach or any person in charge.
7. Each member must be willing to work hard, take directions, and strive for excellence.

Other Rules and Regulations

1. Team members and parents are responsible for all information that is passed out or discussed at a missed practice. Information comes out in at least 1 of 4 ways: paper notes to take home, postings on the web site, postings on the team bulletin board, and email. Email is our most common way of sending information, so you must have an email address that you check regularly.
2. Each member and parent will follow all rules and guidelines set by Victory Academy staff.
3. Team members will not smoke, drink alcoholic beverages, or use illegal drugs.
4. Abusive behavior, lying, profanity, or any other form of negative behavior will result in removal from the team.
5. Safety of self or others should never be jeopardized. Each member is responsible for using proper, safe techniques at all times.
6. Team members are not allowed to use cell phones during practices, fundraisers, or exhibitions. We prefer they are left at home. If not, they must be turned off and put away.

Lions Program Expenses

Annual Membership Fee:	\$30.00 (Individual Member) \$50.00 (Families of 2 or more)	
Punch Cards: (for tumbling nights, open gyms, etc.)	\$40 for 8 sessions, \$50 for 12, and \$60 for 17 (only for those who do not have required Star Status for their squad)	
Uniform, Warm-Up, and Accessories:	Tiny and Mini Teams	Youth, Junior, Senior Teams
	MotionFLEX Bodyliner - \$127.00 Skirt - \$60.00 Briefs - \$8.95 Shoes - \$40.00 Hair Bow - \$15.00 Warm-Up - \$59.00 Make-Up - \$5-\$25 Tax and Shipping Costs – vary depending on what is ordered	MotionFLEX Bodyliner - \$140.00 Skirt - \$74.95 Briefs - \$8.95 Shoes - \$59.99 Hair Bow - \$18.00 Warm-Up - \$59.00 Make-Up - \$5-\$25 Tax and Shipping Costs – vary depending on what is ordered
Team Practice Clothing:	\$50.00 – Each team member is required to have at least 4 practice shirts. Returning members will only have to buy the new designs.	
Hotel Stays for 2-day competitions:	\$80.00-\$180.00 per night depending on location 1-2 nights possible for each 2-day competition (approx. 1-4 per season)	
Monthly ALL-INCLUSIVE Tuition: (Includes tuition, competition entry fees, coaches fees, competition routine music fee, summer camp/choreography fee, and spirit fee all divided into equal monthly payments)	\$178.00 Junior and Senior Teams (at 4 hours per week)	
	\$147.00 Youth Team (at 3.5 hours per week)	
	\$137.00 Mini Team (at 2.5 hours per week)	
	\$105.00 Tiny Team (at 1.25 hours per week) Additional family members receive 20% discount on the lesser tuition	

***Note: We will be having a previously worn uniform sale; prices will be determined by the coaches depending on the condition of the uniform.**

***We also sponsor fundraisers to defray the costs.**

Tentative Camp, Competition, Exhibition Schedule 2010-2011

Currently we have all competitions listed that are closest to Bloomington. We will narrow them down once dates and prices are confirmed. See the Competition Section above for the number of competitions that your age group will attend.

All teams will perform at exhibitions.

Camp dates will be narrowed down once evaluations are complete.

Date	Teams	Event	Venue	City
June 16-19, 2010		Junior/Senior Camp	Victory	
June 12-13 or June 19, 2010		Tiny/Mini/Youth Camp	Victory	
September 6, 2010	ALL	Labor Day Parade		Bloomington, IL
September 19, 2010		Tentative VA Dress Rehearsal	Victory	
September 26, 2010		CSG Dress Rehearsal		Springfield, IL
Oct. 3 or Oct. 10, 2010		Tentative VA Dress Rehearsal	Victory	
October 3, 2010		CSG Preseason Challenge		Bartlett, IL
October 16, 2010		Jamfest Wild Jam	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria, IL
October 30, 2010		CSG Chitown Challenge		Chicago, IL
November 7, 2010		Cheersport		Indianapolis, IN
November 14, 2010		CSG Cheer for the Cure		Chicago, IL
November 20, 2010		Jamfest Turbo Jam		Indianapolis, IN
November 20-21, 2010		American Classic		St. Charles, IL
November 20-21, 2010		Jam LIVE!		Chicago, IL
December 4-5, 2010		CSG Holiday Classic		Chicago, IL
December 5, 2010		Great Lakes Reindeer Challenge	Chaifetz Arena	St. Louis, MO
December 11-12, 2010		WSF Indy Nationals	Indiana Convention Center	Indianapolis, IN
January 9, 2011		CSG Midwest Challenge		Chicago, IL
January 9, 2011		Xtreme Spirit Nationals	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria, IL
January 23, 2011		UCA Midwest Championships	Peoria Civic Center	Peoria, IL
February, 2011		Great Lakes Speedway Championships		Indianapolis, IN
February 5-6, 2011		Jamfest Nationals		Schaumburg, IL
February 13, 2011		CSG Prairie State Challenge		Bloomington, IL
February 19-20, 2011		CSG Nationals		Wisconsin Dells, WI
February 26-27, 2011		CSG Super Nationals		Chicago, IL

March 5-6, 2011		CSG Nationals		Indianapolis, IN
March 6, 2011		Great Lakes Chicagoland Championship		Chicago, IL
March 12-13, 2011		Jam LIVE Indy		Indianapolis, IN
April 2011	Tentative	US Finals or Intl All Levels Championships		

Many competitions are still tentative at this point, but please leave all of the dates on your calendar until the schedule is completely finalized.

Please initial, sign, and return this page at Registration:

Cheerleader/Parent Code of Conduct and Handbook Agreement Form

I will come to practice with a positive attitude, and I will give my best effort towards the agenda set by the coaching staff.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I will not disrespect any team member, coach, or competitor for **any reason at any time**. I understand that my actions 24 hours a day are a representation of my team and Victory Academy.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I understand that this is an 11-month commitment and that my team is depending on me to fulfill my responsibilities as a team member. I am also aware that if I fail to honor my commitment, no refund for any reason will be given.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I will learn and obey all rules and regulations of the gym and the cheer program, and I understand that by breaking any of the codes of conduct, I may be suspended or dismissed from the Lions cheer program.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I will wear the scheduled practice wear to each practice. If I lose any of my practice wear, I understand that I must replace it immediately.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I understand that time is essential to the program. I will do all that is necessary to get to practice on time and be there for the full practice.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I will attend parents' meetings and retrieve information in which the Victory Academy staff had prepared for educating me on upcoming schedules, etc.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I understand that there is a monthly financial commitment. I agree to provide Victory Academy with the Credit or Debit Card Authorization Agreement Form, so that tuition can be paid between the 1st and 5th of each month.

____Athlete Initials ____Parent Initials

I have carefully read and I fully understand and accept all information covered in the Lions Handbook. I agree to follow all the guidelines set forth here for the good of my team and the Victory Academy program.

Team Member Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date