



# Livonia Blue Jays Football and Cheer

*Expectations Guidebook*

## PHILOSOPHY

“Winning isn’t everything but striving to win is.”  
- Vince Lombardi

The goal is **to improve, to get better every day!**  
We use football and cheer as mechanism to achieve this goal and develop student athletes to be the best person they can be both on and off the field.

Our focus is on the PROCESS and the continuous improvement and execution of the process.

**Expectations for all (directors, coaches, student athletes, parents, coordinators...)**



### **Blue Jays' Mission**

To provide a positive and enjoyable experience for all participants and help to build positive self-esteem for all student athletes. We teach team participation and responsibility, and for athletes to respect and honor opponents and all other participants, including coaches, officials, parents & family members. We strive to teach the values of sportsmanship, fair play, athlete safety, and show all participants how to win, how to lose, and how to do both with dignity.

### **Introduction**

Football and cheer are demanding sports that are founded on discipline, team work, and a commitment to work hard. Vince Lombardi said, "the harder you work, the harder it is to surrender." Football and cheer can provide a tremendous sense of accomplishment and pride. Both football and cheer can foster confidence, courage, and cultivate lifelong friendships...to create a community that is built on teamwork, respect, and hard work.

### **Code of Conduct**

All individuals associated with the Blue Jay's program must adhere to the code of conduct as described in the by-laws.

### **Blue Jay Pride**

Our **competitive advantage** is our Blue Jay community...we are different than other teams and it is our community that sets us apart. Just as iron sharpens iron, so we must sharpen each other. It is a privilege for young student athletes to be a member of the Blue Jay organization. The time, effort, and energy we all spend in making this program a success is based on a strong conviction that football/cheer and an education will provide the opportunity to build character, leaders, and sportsmanship. As a Blue Jay, we expect everyone to take pride in everything that you do as part of the program.

### **Season Objectives**

The objective of an athletic competition is typically to achieve victory. For the Blue Jay youth football and cheer teams, however, winning is not a goal. Rather, winning is an expected byproduct. If we appropriately focus upon the five objectives below, the results will follow.

#### **Our Team Objectives are to:**

1. Have Fun and build a stronger community!
2. Develop each student athlete as a person first, and an athlete second
3. Learn the importance of teamwork and sportsmanship
4. Give positive reinforcement based on effort rather than results
5. Learn the fundamentals of football/cheer and to execute all activities in a safe and effective manner

### **Accountability**

Any violation of the expectations covered in this handbook &/or the code of conduct is an indication that this program may not be for you. Violations will be addressed on a case-by-case basis according to the process outlined in the LJAL bylaws. As a member of this program, we hold ourselves to a very high standard and violations can result in a period of ineligibility or dismissal from the program. We ask and expect everyone to escalate issues according to the 24-hour as outlined by LJAL (details included below). However, if the issue is of an athlete safety nature, then please contact a director ASAP.



# DIRECTORS

## **Expectations: directors**

**Safety:** The safety of our athletes is our number one concern. The directors will ensure that all personnel have received the proper safety training and that information pertaining to athlete safety is made available to everyone. Directors will select a qualified person to be the player safety coach.

**Be a positive role model:** Carry yourself in a professional manner at all times, on the field and in the community. To create leaders on/off the field, we need to model what that looks like. Integrity is paramount to our program and we expect nothing but highest level from our directors.

**Code of conduct:** The directors are responsible for the enforcement of the code of conduct for everyone (student athletes, directors, coaches, parents, coordinators...) associated with the program.

**Personnel:** Directors will select the head coaches for the upcoming season (head coaches select their assistants) and are responsible for verifying the background checks of all personnel. Also, the directors will select, recruit, train, and mentor coordinators for the various volunteer roles that are needed each year. The directors are responsible for the evaluation of all positions associated with the program.

**Commitment:** Directors will attend all Board meetings to build the schedule for the upcoming season, manage the teams within the league, and manage the overall operations for the program.

**Communicate:** A football program consists of many parts, so it is important that everyone works hard to stay on the same page. All directors should take a proactive approach to delivering and receiving information.

**Finances:** The directors will be responsible for managing the budget and building a fiscal plan that provides the program with the best use of funds. The directors will elect a treasurer to oversee the bank account, manage the P/L, and ensure the program maintains positive cash reserves.

**Long-term plan:** The directors will build and update the long-term plan for the program. This will include long-term goals, financial aspirations, as well as succession planning.

**Equipment:** The directors manage the equipment inventory and make sure that all components are in a safe and working order. The directors will have a plan to target items that need to be replaced.

**Other operational items:** The directors will coordinate the end-of season banquet, coordinate picture day, help with family day, and manage the posting/distribution of Hudl.

**24-hour rule:** The Livonia Junior Athletic League has a standing rule in all sports; that all coaches, parents, athletes, and others associated with the league observe the 24-hour rule. This rule is simple, please wait 24-hours after an issue(s) arises before contacting coaches, directors, and/or other league officials. In the heat of the moment things can be raw and words and/or actions can so quickly get out



of control. We feel that verbal communication is preferred as opposed to email/text. However, if the issue is of a player safety nature, then please contact a director ASAP.

# COACHES

## **Expectations: coaches**

**Safety:** The safety of our athletes is our number one concern. The directors will ensure that all personnel have received the proper safety training and that information pertaining to athlete safety is made available to everyone. Directors will select a qualified person to be the player safety coach.

**Be a positive role model:** Carry yourself in a professional manner at all times, on the field and in the community. To create leaders on/off the field, we need to model what that looks like.

**Coach every athlete:** They won't care how much you know until they know how much you care. The goal is to coach athlete to help them to reach their greatest potential; this can be accomplished by (1) taking the complex and making it simple, (2) teach them the skills athletes need to be successful & safe and (3) inspiring kids to perform above their ability for the good of the team.

**Communicate:** A football program consists of many parts, so it is important that everyone works hard to stay on the same page. All coaches should take a proactive approach to delivering and receiving information. All coaches should make sure to work together to stay informed of what is going on with athletes, scheme, and the program in general.

**Commitment:** We ask our athletes to invest a lot of time into our program and therefore the same commitment is needed from each coach. The expectation is that the head coach (and assistant coaches) attends all practices and games and arrives early (tone starts at the top). If the head coach cannot be there, he/she will notify the directors and let them know which assistant coach will cover that day.

**Select assistant coaches:** Head coaches will select a small group of assistant coaches (before the season) to teach the fundamentals of cheer/football, run practices, and manage positions/personnel during the season. Head coaches will meet with their assistant coaches prior to the start of the season (as well as during the season) to align/discuss goals, philosophy, expectations, scheme, drills, communication...

**Rules:** Know the rules of the game/competition as well as the rules of the SYMFA league. Teach the rules to the athletes and adhere to them.

**24-hour rule:** The Livonia Junior Athletic League has a standing rule in all sports; that all coaches, parents, athletes and others associated with the league observe the 24-hour rule. This rule is simple, please wait 24-hours after an issue(s) arises before contacting coaches, directors, and/or other league officials. In the heat of the moment things can be raw and words and/or actions can so quickly get out of control. We feel that verbal communication is preferred as opposed to email/text. However, if the issue is of a player safety nature, then please contact a director ASAP.

## **Practice philosophy and guidelines for coaches**



Utilization of practice time is of the utmost importance. Coaches must have organized practice plans that can be broken down into segments (i.e. positions, roles, scenarios...). Enthusiasm and high energy is a vital role in a productive practice. Practices will be sharp and enthusiastic with lots of hustle by both athletes and coaches. This is only possible if we have a unified coaching staff.

# STUDENT ATHLETES

## Expectations: student athletes

**Academics:** To give their very best effort toward their education. Respect your teachers and your classmates. All student athletes are to conduct themselves with class and dignity, both on and off the field. Your behavior is a direct reflection of our school(s) and the program. Any actions that will embarrass you, your team, school, or parents is an action that should not be taken.

**Attendance:** Show up to every practice and game at “championship time.” This means that the athlete will be present **15 minutes** prior to the posted start time. Upon arrival, it is expected that all athletes are fully dressed, already used the bathroom, and ready to start practice on the whistle. Athletes are expected to attend all practices and games as scheduled. It is very important that if an athlete is going to miss a practice that coaches be notified as soon as possible. For athletes planning on missing a game it is even more important that coaches know as soon as possible. League rules allow for reduction of game time for missed practices.

**Preparation:** Student athletes will come prepared for practice and games with all proper attire and equipment. Athletes (not parents or family) are responsible for their equipment and will carry it on/off the field. Equipment for football/cheer is expensive, and each athlete must properly care for their equipment as well as the team’s equipment so it can properly function on the sports field.

**Effort, attitude, & accountability:** Bring your best effort day-in and day-out...but you must do it in a way that reflects your 100% commitment to the program; this is accomplished by showing up with a positive attitude and a focus on working hard every day. You and only you are responsible for your actions; take personal responsibility for your actions. Respect and listen to your coaches.

**Be a great teammate:** To be a great teammate means that athletes treat each other with respect. This is a team sport and the only way the team wins is if everyone improves; help each other out and positively support one another to get better every day. Be a great teammate by teaching others proper and safe techniques. The program has a **zero tolerance for bullying**, so refrain from all bullying and actively stick up for a teammate if they see it happening (escalate bullying to appropriate channels).

**Sportsmanship:** Show respect for your opponents, referees, and fans at all times – before, during, and after the game. Athletes will not criticize game officials; the coaches will communicate with referees.

**24-hour rule:** The Livonia Junior Athletic League has a standing rule in all sports; that all coaches, parents, athletes and others associated with the league observe the 24-hour rule. This rule is simple, please wait 24-hours after an issue(s) arises before contacting coaches, directors, and/or other league



officials. In the heat of the moment things can be raw and words and/or actions can so quickly get out of control. We feel that verbal communication is preferred as opposed to email/text. However, if the issue is of a player safety nature, then please contact a director ASAP.

# PARENTS

## Expectations: parents

**Safety:** The safety of our athletes is our number one concern. All of our Directors, Coordinators and Coaches undergo concussion safety training. However, we also rely on parents and our athletes to be familiar with concussion signs and symptoms. Information sheets were provided electronically at registration and we would encourage you to seek out additional information regarding concussions. There are links on our website where you can obtain additional information. In the alternative, feel free to reach out to our player safety coach.

**Sportsmanship:** Encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all athletes, coaches, and officials at every game and practice. We are all part of this community and as such, we need to represent the Livonia Blue Jays accordingly. This applies to families in the stands and on social media. In addition, we expect that all of our athletes will conduct themselves appropriately both on and off the field! A failure to do, will result in disciplinary action.

**Attendance:** Student athletes to show up to every practice and game at “championship time,” this means that the athlete will be present **15 minutes** prior to the posted start time. It is equally important that you timely pick up your child following practice. If it appears that there is the potential for severe weather, please stay close to the practice field in case we may have to cancel practice.

**24-hour rule:** The Livonia Junior Athletic League has a standing rule in all sports; that all coaches, parents, athlete and others associated with the league observe the 24-hour rule. This rule is simple, please wait 24-hours after an issue(s) arises before contacting coaches, directors, and/or other league officials. In the heat of the moment things can be raw and words and/or actions can so quickly get out of control. We feel that verbal communication is preferred as opposed to email/text. However, if the issue is of a player safety nature, then please contact a director ASAP.

**Volunteer hours:** The Livonia Blue Jays is a volunteer run organization. Without our volunteers at all levels, we cannot exist. It is for this reason, as part of the Parent Contract, we require each of our families to volunteer a minimum of two (2) times on game days. Failure to fulfill these minimum requirements will result in 1) a loss of veteran status for the next registration and 2) you and your child will not be permitted to attend the banquet.

**Fundraiser:** The Livonia Blue Jays (as part of the LJAL) only have one mandatory fundraiser that we require families to participate in. We require each family (regardless of how many football players or cheerleaders you have) pre-pay and sell \$100 worth of raffle tickets. Of course, we encourage you to sell as much as you can as the proceeds from the fundraiser are used to provide uniforms and equipment for your kids and cover the other expenses we incur over the course of a season.

**Non-mandatory fundraisers:** There are several other non-mandatory fundraisers that happen during the year: (1) spirit wear (2) concessions at home games (3) dine-to-donate (4) Kona Ice truck... Families will have the opportunity to purchase **spirit wear** during certain during the year; there is a small markup on our spirit wear and which helps with our fundraising.



# COORDINATORS

## **Expectations: coordinators**

*Player Safety Coach:* TBD

*Volunteer:* TBD

*Team moms:* TBD

*Fundraiser:* TBD

# MEDIA USE & CONSENT

As a condition of and in consideration of participation in the upcoming season, I hereby grant my Unit (Livonia Blue Jays) the absolute right and permission to use my child's likeness in a photograph, video, broadcast, publish or copyright and use pictures or videos of my child in which he or she may be included in whole or in part, composite or retouched in character or form, without payment or any other consideration. I hereby irrevocably authorize my Unit and its designees to edit, alter, copy, exhibit, publish or distribute photographs and videos of me or my child for informational, educational, promotional, or publicity purposes concerning my Unit, to include publication and distribution on websites and social media pages, i.e. Facebook, Twitter, Google+, Instagram, YouTube, etc.

In addition, I waive the right to inspect or approve the finished product, including written or electronic copy, wherein my child's likeness appears. Additionally, I waive any right to royalties or other compensation arising or related to the use of the photographs or videos. I understand and agree that these photographs and videos will become the property of my Unit and will not be returned. I also understand the photographs and videos may be used, published or distributed by third parties without any further consent or authorization from me. I hereby hold harmless and agree to release and forever discharge my Unit, its affiliated leagues, its Directors, its Coordinators, its volunteers, its coaches and/or its agents, from any and all claims, demands, and causes of action which I and/or my child, or any other person acting on behalf of myself and/or my child, may have.