

MIDDLETOWN
YOUTH FOOTBALL
& CHEERLEADING
POLICIES AND
INFORMATION

Welcome to Middletown Youth Football and Cheerleading!

Our association belongs to the Rhode Island Southeast Massachusetts Pop Warner Conference, Inc. (RISMA) and the national Pop Warner Little Scholars, Inc. Some facts about Pop Warner:

- ◆ Pop Warner is the only national youth football and cheerleading program in the USA!
- ◆ More than a quarter-million kids, 33,000 coaches, and 500,000 parents and friends. We estimate more than 3 million volunteers and supporters nationwide!
- ◆ Pop Warner kids range in age from 5-15, with the majority in the 8-13 range. Yes, girls can play football and boys can be cheerleaders.
- ◆ The only national youth sports organization, which also emphasizes education. Participating kids must have demonstrated satisfactory classroom progress or school endorsement before they can compete! We annually recognize Academic All-American scholar/athletes. Scholarships are provided for higher education! We emphasize to our players and cheerleaders that it's their score in the classroom, not on the field, that's most important.
- ◆ The oldest established coaching education and instruction program among any national youth sports organization. Keeping our program safe and fun for our kids is among our highest priorities!
- ◆ Pop Warner Little Scholars has working relationships with the National Football League; Walt Disney World All-Star Sports Resort; NBC Sports; and a growing number of corporate contributors, sponsors and licenses.
- ◆ High school football and cheer coaches rely on Pop Warner kids who have had training in the fundamentals in their sport and who have discipline and teamwork/leadership skills.

How we keep it safe, fun & fair:

- Kids compete with kids of similar age.
- Did you know Pop Warner football and cheerleading is safer than soccer? According to the U.S. Consumer Safety Commission Pop Warner have fewer serious injuries than youth soccer!!
- Pop Warner has strict rules and guidelines for protecting the safety of our kids. Our rules require that every participating child play in every game. Each year changes are made to the rules to ensure the safety of each child.
- Pop Warner provides clinics for football and cheerleading coaches every year.

Visit our web site: www.islanderspopwarner.com

SPORT CODE OF CONDUCT

The essential elements of character building and ethics in sports are embodied in the concept of sportsmanship and six core principles: trustworthiness, respect, responsibility, fairness, caring, and good citizenship. The highest potential of sports is achieved when competition reflects these “six pillars of character”

I therefore agree:

1. I will not force my child to participate in sports.
2. I will remember that children participate to have fun and that the game is for youth, not adults.
3. I will inform the coach of any physical disability or ailment that may affect the safety of my child or the safety of others.
4. I will try to learn the rules of the game and will learn the policies of the association.
5. I (and my guests) will be a positive role model for my child and encourage sportsmanship by showing respect and courtesy, and by demonstrating positive support for all players.
6. I (and my guests) will not engage in any kind of unsportsmanlike conduct with any official, coach, player, or parent such as booing or taunting or using profane language or gestures.
7. I will not encourage any behaviors or practices that would endanger the health and well being of the athletes.
8. I will teach my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
9. I will demand that my child treat other players, coaches, officials and spectators with respect regardless of race, creed, and color, sex or ability.
10. I will teach my child that doing one's best is more important than winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game or his/her performance.
11. I will praise my child for competing fairly and trying hard, and make my child feel like a winner every time.
12. I will never ridicule or yell at my child or other participants for making a mistake or losing a competition.
13. I will emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit my child over winning.
14. I will promote the emotional and physical well being of the athletes ahead of any personal desire I may have for my child to win.
15. I will respect the officials and their authority during games and will never question, discuss, or confront coaches on the game field, and will take the time to speak with coaches at an agreed upon time and place.
16. I will demand a sports environment for my child that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol and I will refrain from their use at all sports and sponsored events.
17. I will refrain from coaching my child or other players during games and practices unless I am one of the official coaches of the team.

I also agree that if I fail to abide by the aforementioned rules and guidelines, I will be subject to action that could include, but is not limited to the following:

Verbal warning by official, head coach, and/or board members of the organization.

Written warning

Parental game and/or practice suspension with written documentation of incident(s).

Coaches may suspend a player or cheerleader from any activities due to medical, disciplinary reasons or poor attendances at practices. Coaches will advise parent/guardian(s) of any suspensions. Our organization does have a discipline policy in our by-laws.

1. REGISTRATION REQUIREMENTS:

Only new players and cheerleaders must have an original birth certificate. Birth certificates must contain the county/state seal of birth state. Hospital and other birth mementos cannot be accepted. Original birth certificates must be held until the end of August and will be returned after state certification. Previously registered players and cheerleaders do not need to present a birth certificate. Copies of birth certificates will be maintained as long as a child is in our program. All players and cheerleaders also need a complete copy of the end of the year report card, a signed registration form, signed parent permission waiver and a physical.

The official forms given to you or printed from the online registration are the only acceptable official forms. They must be fully complete, front and back with parent information and doctor's signature. A separate type of physical form may be accepted if a child has already received a physical before registration. Physicals must be dated no earlier than January 1st of the current year.

Pop Warner focuses on scholastics, so a complete copy of the end of the year report card is used to attest scholastic fitness and to submit for scholastic awards. Talk to a coach or board member if there is a concern on your child's grades. A minimum overall GPA of 70 is required for participation. If a child does not have this minimum talk to a coach or board member - there is a separate form to be completed by the school. GPAs 96 and above are eligible for local, New England and national All-American Scholar awards.

We prefer to have all documentation by paperwork day, but all required paperwork must be received no later than the first day of practice. Talk to a coach or board member if there is a problem in obtaining required documents and if there is a financial concern.

2. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE: Middletown Youth Football will provide financial assistance in order that every child will be able to experience the benefits our organization provides. The financial aid form must be completed. Verification may be required - SNAP letter or other documentation may be required to be shown. Speak to an Executive Board member. We also have a payment plan available only with online registration. Families receiving financial assistance must provide volunteer time at home games and fundraising events. If volunteer time cannot be given, financial assistance will not be approved. If financial assistance is given and parent/guardian does not perform any time volunteering, then their child will be dropped from our program. Our Board of Directors may approve exceptions to this policy.

3. REFUND POLICY:

Requests submitted prior to start of practice in August:	Full Refund
After practice begins, but prior to equipment handout:	50% Refund
After equipment handout:	No Refund

All refund requests must be made in writing and hand delivered or emailed to our president. If registrations are paid online and/or use a debit or credit card, all refunds will be given less the processing cost of online registration/debit/credit card fees.

4. PRACTICE:

August 1st is the start of our season. During August practice will be Monday thru Friday, 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. for most football teams. Cheer practices usually match football practice. All teams practice at Gaudet Field. Cheer may use school gyms starting around September. Tiny-Mite (6U) and Mitey-Mite (8U) teams practices may be less. During August, the maximum practice is 10 hours per week. After Labor Day 6 hours are the maximum hours of practice per week. Coaches or team parents will call to cancel practice. Do not assume practice is canceled if you do not hear from anyone. Practices may still be held even if it is raining. Talk to the coach if your child has other regular commitments.

5. GAMES: According to Pop Warner rules, each player is guaranteed a mandatory minimum number of plays during each game (every snap or kick of the ball counts as a play). A definite game schedule will be provided as soon as possible. Dates are subject to change depending on each town's schedules. There will be a game every weekend. Regular season runs until the end of October unless teams are in play-offs or championships. Attendance at games is mandatory!

6. ATTENDANCE:

Football and cheerleading are team sports! Absences are difficult for coaches to plan for their team. Be at the field on time! Special commitments must be brought to the attention of a coach. Unexcused absences may result in removal from the team/squad. Parents, not friends, are required to call a coach for absences. Shopping, beach, etc. are not excused absences.

7. DRESS:

Children must wear comfortable, but not baggy clothing for practice. Uniforms will only be worn for games and other official Pop Warner events. We are not school affiliated, **so uniforms are not to be worn to school!** Proper footwear is required for safety. Uniforms issued are **loaned** and must be kept in good condition. Parents will pay for a ruined uniform piece. Cheerleaders must wear a shirt, or jacket over their uniforms before and after games. All uniforms will be returned at the end of the season. For safety reasons jewelry for players and cheerleaders is not allowed. Hair beads and headwear with knots is not allowed. A medical bracelet will be allowed if the coach is notified. Excessive makeup and nail polish will not be allowed.

8. CONDUCT:

No offensive language or fighting from adults or children will be tolerated. Disagreements will be brought to the attention of the head coach. Good sportsmanship and being a team player is expected. Poor conduct, lack of respect towards coaches, trainers, team members and other MYF members and poor sportsmanship will result in suspensions and/or removal from a team.

9. TRANSPORTATION:

Children are responsible for arranging their own transportation to and from games and practices. Inform a coach of any transportation problems. Parents are encouraged to car pool. Coaches are not responsible for transportation unless prearranged well in advance. **PARENTS MUST PICK UP THEIR CHILDREN PROMPTLY AT THE END OF PRACTICES OR GAMES!** Transportation may be provided for play-off and championship games.

10. FUNDRAISERS:

Middletown Youth Football is a non-profit organization and relies heavily on fundraisers to provide safe and adequate equipment and to run this association to benefit your child. All players and cheerleaders must participate in all fundraisers. If player or cheerleader does not participate in fundraisers, parents must opt for the buyout feature in registration to replace the funds lost due to non-participation in mandatory fundraisers.

11. VOLUNTEERS:

Parents are expected to support their children and their team. A small amount of time helping in the concession stand, gate or field during a home game, helping with phone calls, assisting with equipment and many other ways you can support our organization and your child. Even an hour helps! For those families receiving financial assistance volunteer time is mandatory but we expect all our parents to volunteer some time during the season.

12. CHEER COMPETITION:

All spirit squads must compete in a competition. Tiny-Mite may perform an exhibition. RISMA competition will be held in October. First and second place squads may compete at the New England regional level in November at the discretion of our board.

13. MASCOTS:

Nationally, Pop Warner does not recognize mascots. Five and six year old cheerleaders will be placed on Tiny-Mite.

14. ALL UNIFORMS:

Uniforms are specially ordered for each team and are very expensive. Football equipment issued ensures the safety of your child. We are not school affiliated, so uniforms are not to be worn to school for "spirit day", Halloween or any other non Pop Warner event and will not be loaned or worn by family/friends. Pop Warner is not a school-affiliated sport. Correct footwear is also required. Sandals, "skippies", heavy type sneakers and shoes are not allowed. ***Players and cheerleaders will be suspended if abusing uniforms or wearing to non Pop Warner events.***

15. PARENTS WILL BE RESPONSIBLE FOR PAYMENT OF ANY PIECE THAT IS RUINED, LOST, PERMANENTLY STAINED OR ALTERED. We do realize accidents do happen, but uniforms must be maintained in good condition. Uniforms must be returned clean at the end of the season. Uniform/equipment care information is provided below and must be followed. Parent/Guardian(s) agree to return all gear issued to a player within 10 days of the player's last date of participation. Failure to return the player's gear will result in a \$350.00 charge. Failure to return a cheerleader's uniform will result in a \$175 charge. By signing the registration, parent/guardian(s) further agrees to pay all legal costs and fees incurred by Middletown Youth Football & Cheerleading in attempting to retrieve the player's gear.

16. FOOTBALL UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS:

Your child will be issued a helmet, mouthpiece, chinstrap, various pads, belt, practice and game jerseys and practice and game pants. Tiny Mite football will be loaned pants that are "integrated" - pads are included in the pants. You will be required to purchase sneakers with cleats. Metal spikes are not allowed. An athletic supporter/cup is recommended but not required for practice and games for all football players. There is also special protective equipment available for female football players. Talk to a coach. You may purchase a player's girdle and socks from MYF. Uniforms must not be altered. Our helmets are cleaned and certified for safety by a separate company to ensure proper safety. Do not make any adjustments to helmets (including face masks, shoulder pads, etc.) Stickers are not allowed on helmets. Changing any part of the helmet voids the safety certification. Talk to a coach if there is a problem with fit.

17. CHEER UNIFORM REQUIREMENTS:

Depending on the team, your child will be issued a skirt and top. You will be required to purchase sneakers, competition bow and possibly a midriff bodysuit. Warm-up suits will be loaned and must be returned. Tiny Mite and Mitey Mite may be required to purchase uniform shorts. Speak to a coach if there is a financial problem. No alterations are allowed on cheer uniforms! Talk to a coach if there is a problem with fit. Cheer uniforms can not be dry cleaned or put in a dryer. Parents will be pay for any uniform piece that is damaged. Approximate cost is \$200.

18. FOOTBALL EQUIPMENT AND UNIFORM CARE: See a coach if there are any problems or concerns with equipment issued. Remember - parents will pay for any uniform/equipment piece that is ruined. A jersey costs approximately \$140 each. Jerseys and pants are supposed to fit very snug. Pads should not roll or move.

Helmets, Chinstraps and Mouthpieces

- a. Do not replace the facemask with one of your own.
- b. Do not apply any stickers, labels, decorations, etc. to the outside of the helmet.
- c. Bandanas/hair beads, etc. may not be worn under helmets. Skullcaps may be worn.
- d. Chinstraps are washable. Good quality chinstraps are provided and must be returned if you supply your own chinstrap.
- e. Mouthpieces must attach to the facemask and should not be cut. MYF will supply a mouthpiece and reasonable replacements while supplies last. You may have to purchase a mouthpiece if your child loses/ruins excessive amounts. Clear mouthpieces are not allowed. You may choose to supply your own as long as you check with our equipment manager. Mouthpieces do not have to be returned.
- f. Helmets must not be altered. You will void the safety certification. Do not add anything to the helmet. For fit or other questions, check with your coach.

Shoulder Pads, Girdle Pads, Thigh Pads and Knee Pads

- a. These may be washed, but do not place them in a dryer.

Girdles/Socks

a. These should be washed often. Girdles and socks are available for purchase through MYF. Girdles are mandatory, socks are optional. You may purchase your own girdle, but we offer UnderArmour at a cheaper price than most stores. Tiny Mite players have all the pads in their uniform pants and do not need to purchase a girdle or have separate pads.

Practice Pants and Game Pants

- a. Wash often in cold or warm water. **Do not use chlorine bleach.**
- b. These may be dried in a dryer at a low setting.
- c. Belts will be supplied for the pants and may also be washed.
- d. Do not cut or alter pants. See a coach if there is a problem with fit.

Game Jerseys and Practice Jerseys

- a. Wash often in cold or warm water. **Do not use chlorine bleach and do not dry clean.**
- b. Game Jerseys should be air dried, but may be dried in a dryer. **Use a delicate or permanent press setting, not a hot setting.**
- c. Game Jerseys should never be worn anywhere except for a game. Siblings, parents, friends or other may not wear a player's practice or game jersey.
- d. Do not cut, or alter the jersey. If there is a problem with the fit, see the coach or the equipment manager.

19. CHEER UNIFORMS AND CARE. See a coach or the Cheer Coordinator if there are any problems or concerns with uniforms issued. Remember - parents will pay for any uniform piece that is ruined.

Skirt and Top

- a. Wash only in cold water. Do not ever use chlorine bleach.
- b. Hang up to dry. Do not put in the dryer.
- c. Do not iron.
- d. Do not have dry-cleaned. Dry cleaning will ruin the fabric.

Do not cut, sew or alter the skirt and top in any way!

Other: Tiny Mite and Mitey Mite cheer teams may wear a uniform short which you must purchase. All other teams skirts have briefs attached to the skirt. Low white socks and white sneakers are required. Sneakers are offered for sale thru our organization, usually at a lower price than in stores. Our sneakers are cheer sneakers designed for the safety of cheerleaders. See a coach or the cheer coordinator for specific requirements. Also, a competition bow will be required to be purchased.

20. PARENT CONCERNS/QUESTIONS: Concerns should be discussed first with the head coach of your child's team. We ask that you follow our chain of command. Cheer questions should be addressed to coaches then our Cheer Coordinator. Football questions should be addressed to coaches then our Football Coordinator. For further questions, clarifications and issues not resolved speak to our President. We want to know your opinions & concerns in order to provide a better program and environment for your child.

You can also send an email to middletownislanders1@gmail.com. Our monthly board meetings are also open to parents.

21. WEB SITE: Our web site will contain information about schedules, games, events, notices, etc. Make sure you check frequently for updates. Pictures of teams, names or action photos will be posted on the web site. Names will never be associated with a child's photo. If you object to having your child's name or photo on our web site, notify us as soon as possible. If you do not notify us we assume you have no objection.

22. EVENT DATES: A full calendar will be available on our website and emails will be sent. A firm schedule will be given at the beginning of the season. Game schedules are subject to change during the season due to field availability and other unforeseen occurrences.

Practice starts August 1st for all teams at Gaudet field, 259 Turner Road, Middletown

Paperwork turn in day mid June and mid July

Football equipment hand out will be mid July

Opening Day – fun day with bouncies, food, water slide, rock wall, etc. – weekend before season start

Games – 1st official game is the weekend after Labor Day.

Other events planned are dances for the kids, and our grand annual award banquet.

VISIT OUR WEB SITE
www.islanderspopwarner.com

Also visit our conference website www.risma.us