

MISD High School Cheerleader and Mascot Constitution

Purpose

It is the belief of the Mansfield Independent School District that being a cheerleader is an honor and special privilege. The purpose of cheerleading is to: promote and uphold school spirit; to develop a sense of good sportsmanship among students; to improve the student morale; to build better relationships between competing schools; and, to establish the high personal ideals and good character expected of a high school cheerleader in the Mansfield Independent School District. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus and academic achievement than that of their peers.

Objectives

1. To develop and continually improve the appropriate skills required for successful participation in all cheerleading activities.
2. To display the appropriate behavior expected of a student leader representing both the campus and District at all times.
3. To promote the type of sportsmanship that will help students acquire the basic attributes of good citizenship.
4. To develop a wholesome school spirit.
5. To develop school loyalty.
6. To promote a cooperative spirit among the student body, the faculty, administration, and other spirit organizations.
7. To help the school achieve the objectives of its interscholastic athletic activities.
8. To promote competitions in which the school participates.

Article I: Squad Composition

Section 1: Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Freshman

The size of each cheerleading squad is determined through the use of a "break-point" system. Eligibility for both the Varsity and Junior Varsity squads shall be limited to boys and girls of current freshman, sophomore or junior standing. ~~Eligibility for the Junior Varsity squad shall be limited to boys and girls of current freshman standing.~~ Eligibility for the Freshman squad shall be limited to boys and girls of current eighth grade standing.

Section 2: Mascot

Only one (1) person may hold this position. Eligibility for the mascot position shall be limited to boys and girls of current freshman, sophomore or junior standing.

Article II: Selection Process

Section 1: Qualifications

- A. Candidates must be on credit schedule to meet Mansfield ISD (MISD) graduation requirements. Freshmen must have at least 2 ½ credits. Sophomores must have at least 7 ½ credits, and Juniors must have at least 12 ½ credits.
- B. Candidates who have been assigned to the District's Alternative Education program during the current school year shall not be permitted to participate in tryouts.
- C. On the first day of the spring semester ~~At the time of the tryout~~, the candidate must physically reside within the attendance boundaries of ~~be enrolled in~~ the MISD and trying out at the school where the student is approved to attend for the next school year. A candidate may try out at only one MISD School.
- D. All previous cheerleading financial obligations must be cleared before a candidate may tryout for a subsequent school year.
- E. Any current MISD cheerleading squad member who, during the current school year, has been dismissed or who has resigned without the prior approval of the sponsor and the principal will not be allowed to tryout for the following year.
- F. A parent/legal guardian is required to attend an organizational meeting scheduled by the sponsor. In the event an emergency prevents attendance at this meeting, the parent must contact the sponsor within 48 hours following the organizational meeting.
- G. Candidates must sign up and/or return their application at the times designated by the sponsor.
- H. Candidates must attend a training clinic at the times designated by the sponsor.
- I. Using a District approved form, each candidate must present proof of a physical examination by a health care professional prior to the clinic and tryout dates.

Section 2: Method of Selection

A judging panel will score all Squad Member candidates.

- A. The judging panel will consist of at least three impartial, professional judges assigned by NCA, ACA, UCA, or the equivalent. The ~~District sponsor~~ is responsible for ensuring that the judges are from outside the school district. An ethnically diverse panel of judges is preferred.

- B. All candidates will appear before the judging panel in the designated uniform: white shirt, with no visible logos, black shorts, and any type of white athletic shoe. Hair of candidates must be pulled away from the face.
- C. Candidates who are current cheerleaders will not perform differently nor will they be given special recognition.
- D. Candidates, school representatives and judges are the only persons allowed into the clinic sessions and tryouts. Parents, relatives, friends or other visitors are not allowed into the clinics or tryouts.
- E. Cheerleader candidates will perform the following:
 - one compulsory cheer
 - three jumps
 - a tumbling series
 - a compulsory dance
- F. Mascot candidates will perform, in costume, the following:
 - a two-minute routine consisting of mime, pantomime, and dance

All routines must conform to standards of behavior as set forth within the MISD Student Code of Conduct.

Section 3: “Break-Point” System Explanation

- A. The size of each squad will be determined through the use of a “break-point” system.
- B. The squad size will be at least ~~2~~ 8 but not more than ~~30~~ 26.
- C. At the completion of the tryouts, the “natural break” in scoring will be mutually agreed upon by the campus administrator responsible for overseeing the tryout process and squad sponsor. This will be the official “break point” for determining the final squad size.

Article III: Squad Member Requirements

Section 1: Class

- A. All Squad Members must enroll in and attend cheerleading class.
- B. All Squad Members are expected to participate in all class activities. Any student absence will be considered unexcused unless the sponsor has excused the absence through ~~is given~~ reasonable prior notification or an excuse from a health care professional is presented upon the student’s return to class and accepted by the sponsor ~~prior to the activity~~.

- C. All Squad Members must be dressed and ready to begin each day no later than 10 minutes after the tardy bell. Designated officers may have earlier report times as designated by the sponsor.
- D. Failure to comply with any of the above shall ~~may~~ result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent ~~or~~ dismissal from the squad.

Section 2: Practice

- A. All Squad Members are expected to attend all practices, including those scheduled at an off-campus gym or alternate location. Any student absence will be considered unexcused unless the sponsor has excused the absence through ~~is given~~ reasonable prior notification or an excuse from a health care professional is presented upon the student's return to class and accepted by the sponsor ~~prior to the activity~~.
- B. All Squad Members will be required to attend a professionally run cheerleader camp that will be designated by the sponsor. Failure to attend the camp may result in dismissal from the squad.
- C. Failure to comply with any of the above shall ~~may~~ result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent dismissal from the squad.

Section 3: Activities / Performances

- A. All Squad Members are expected to participate in all events. Any student absence will be considered unexcused unless the sponsor has excused the absence through ~~is given~~ reasonable prior notification, or an excuse from a health care professional is presented upon the student's return to class and accepted by the sponsor ~~prior to the activity~~. The varsity squad and mascot will cheer at all varsity games designated by the sponsor. The sub-varsity squads will cheer at all sub-varsity games designated by the sponsor. Exceptions may be made for sub-varsity cheerleaders to cheer at play-off games as determined by the sponsor.
- B. All Squad Members will also be required to attend pep rallies, special performances, fundraisers and competitions as designated by the sponsor. All of these events are mandatory unless otherwise stated by the sponsor.
- C. All Squad Members must be at all events on time.
- D. Due to the year-round nature of the activity, participation in other school teams, squads, or other nonacademic groups is not allowed without the prior approval of the sponsor. Limited exceptions are possible on an individual basis. While participation on competition cheerleading squads is allowed, Squad Members involved in these activities must place high school cheerleading as their top priority. Scheduling conflicts will not be excused. Squad Members will not be allowed to participate with another squad at camp and will be required to abide by all sponsor-designated schedules/rules at competitions.

- E. All Squad Members must ride school transportation to any out-of-district school-sanctioned activity. Rare exceptions may be made at the sponsor's discretion.
- F. Failure to comply with any of the above may result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent dismissal from the squad.

Section 4: Conduct

- A. All Squad Members are expected to follow all school policies as outlined in the current MISD Student Code of Conduct and to exhibit good sportsmanship at all times.
- B. Any Squad Member found in possession, transmittal, sale, attempted sale, using, or under the influence of a controlled substance, dangerous drugs, or alcohol shall result in disciplinary action ranging from probation ~~will be subject to permanent dismissal from the squad.~~
- C. Any Squad Member found smoking, using or possessing tobacco products on any school property, at any school function, or while representing the school shall result in disciplinary action ranging from probation ~~will be subject to permanent dismissal from the squad.~~
- D. Engaging in inappropriate verbal, physical, or sexual conduct shall result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent ~~may result in~~ dismissal from the squad.
- E. Pregnant Squad Members must present written proof from a health care professional as evidence of physical ability to participate in squad activities.
- F. Continued and excessive disciplinary problems of a persistent and/or serious nature may be grounds for permanent dismissal from the squad.
- G. Squad Members are required to exhibit exemplary conduct. Repeated poor citizenship grades, and/or persistent attendance issues by Squad Members shall ~~may~~ result in suspension, probation, or permanent dismissal from the squad.
- H. Any Squad Member who receives three unexcused absences from practices and/or activities will be dismissed ~~removed~~ from the squad for the remainder of the school year.
- I. If a Squad Member is suspended from a game or event, he/she must still be present and in uniform unless excused by the sponsor prior to the event or activity.
- J. Each Squad Member will be expected to cheer with maximum effort unless a note from a health care professional has been submitted to the sponsor prior to the activity or event.
- ~~K. If a Squad Member expects to be absent from a practice or activity, the sponsor must be given prior notification. Failure to do so will result in an unexcused absence.~~
- L. Any Squad Member who misses more than one practice in a week, whether excused or unexcused, may be suspended for one activity or event.
- M. Engaging in conduct, which in the sponsor's discretion, constitutes behavior unbecoming of a Squad Member and/or representative of the Mansfield ISD, shall result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent dismissal from the squad.

Section 5: Finances

- A. Squad Members must meet the financial requirements outlined by the sponsor. Installment due dates will be set by the sponsors. Fees must be paid in a timely manner. All Squad Members are responsible for all uniforms, clothing, supplies and camp costs immediately after an order is placed. No refunds will be made for any reason. Supplies will not be distributed until all moneys are received ~~and the Squad Member will not attend camp without full payment of his/her balance.~~ Failure to comply may result in dismissal ~~removal~~ from the squad.
- B. In limited circumstances, extended payment schedules may be ~~A system of financial assistance is discretely~~ made available to any Squad Member needing such assistance. The expenses related to participation will not preclude any candidate from trying out for cheerleader. Please contact the sponsor prior to tryouts for this information.
- C. All Squad Members must attend fundraising functions and participate in team fundraisers as designated by the sponsor.

Section 6: Jackets

- A. All Squad Members may purchase a letter jacket during the first full year as a Varsity Squad Member. The district will contribute maximum district-approved cost toward the purchase of the letter jacket. Consistent with UIL Rules, the Squad Member will receive the letter only, if the Squad Member has previously received a jacket in any other activity. ~~All violations resulting in removal from the squad may prohibit Squad Members from being able to display or wear their awards.~~

Section 7: Uniforms and Personal Appearance

- A. All uniforms for Squad Members must be laundered and cleaned prior to wearing.
- B. All Squad Members must wear a designated uniform and have designated supplies. ~~Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action.~~
- C. Each Squad Member is responsible for immediately replacing any item at their own expense that is damaged or lost.
- D. If dismissed ~~removed~~ from the squad, school issued uniforms and supplies must be immediately returned to the sponsor. Squad Members will be held financially responsible for these items.
- E. All Squad Members are subject to specific grooming and personal hygiene guidelines set by the sponsor. Visible tattoos must be covered and body-piercings, specifically tongue and facial rings, must not be worn during cheerleading activities. Other guidelines of this nature will be determined and explained by the sponsor.
- F. Failure to comply with any of the above may result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent dismissal from the squad.

Section 8: Replacement

- A. If a Squad Member is permanently dismissed from the squad, the sponsor and the principal will determine whether or not to fill the position. If the position is to be filled, then the candidate with the next highest tryout score will fill the vacant position.

Section 9: Competition

- A. An additional selection process to comprise a competition team may be implemented by the sponsors.
- B. If a competition team is implemented, all Squad Members selected will have the opportunity to tryout for the school competitive team that will be selected at a later date. Information about a competitive team will be distributed at the end of camp.

ARTICLE IV: ELIGIBILITY

Section 1: Grades

- A. Squad Members must meet the minimum academic eligibility requirements of “No Pass/No Play” in order to participate in cheerleading activities.
- B. The most current version of *Side by Side: Eligibility for Extracurricular Activities* shall serve as the primary reference document for all issues related to questions of academic eligibility for all extracurricular activities, including cheerleading.

~~ARTICLE V: COMPLIANCE AND THE CHEERLEADING CODE OF CONDUCT~~

Section 1: Code of Conduct

- A. Failure to comply with any of the policies, practices, and procedures as set forth in this document may result in disciplinary action ranging from probation to permanent dismissal from the squad.
- B. A ~~The~~ Cheerleading Code of Conduct for each campus will be announced and distributed prior to tryouts.

Section 2: Appeals

- A. Students or parents with questions or concerns about any aspect of the Cheerleading program should contact the sponsor as issues arise.
- B. Any issue that can not be resolved between the student and/or parent and the sponsor should be brought to the attention of the appropriate campus administrator.
- C. Problems that can not be resolved at the campus level may be appealed to the District administrator responsible for oversight of the cheerleading program whose decision is final and may not be appealed.