

DRIPPING SPRINGS MIDDLE SCHOOL CHEERLEADER CONSTITUTION

I. Purpose

The purpose of cheerleading will be to give the students of Dripping Springs Middle School the opportunity to:

- Support athletic events throughout the year.
- Promote and uphold school spirit.
- Show the principles of Tiger Pride.
- Provide service to the school and community.
- Develop positive leadership abilities.
- Develop physical, mental, and moral character.
- Develop better relationships with other schools.
- Learn to work for the good of the TEAM rather than the individual.
- Learn and practice the skills needed to be a successful cheerleader.

II. Membership

- Membership is open to any 7th or 8th Grade student of DSMS who meets eligibility requirements and has parental approval.
- All candidates must go through the tryout process in order to become a DSMS cheerleader or mascot.
- Tryouts will be held during the spring semester to determine members for the following school year.
- Mascot elections will also be held at the same time as cheerleader tryouts.
- The number of squad members will be determined before the tryouts by the sponsors and the administrator or designee over cheerleading.
- Squad members will retain their positions for the entire year unless dismissed for disciplinary, scholastic reasons, or for not fulfilling responsibilities set forth in this document.

III. Eligibility Requirements for Membership

- A parent/candidate meeting will be held to receive an application
- A brief clinic will be held prior to tryouts.
- All candidates must return signed forms, on the designated date (date).

Forms to return include:

- 1 – Signature Sheet
 - 2 – Medical/Release Form
 - 3 – Physical
- Once the forms have been reviewed on designated due date, candidates will be notified of any problems with the forms and be given a 7 days to rectify the situation.

- A current physical (DSISD requires annual physicals) is required prior to the tryout clinic which indicates that the candidate is able to cheer, jump, stunt (which means lifting other members), run and complete all physical conditioning such as push-ups, sit-ups, weight lifting, etc.
- All candidates should attend the clinic to be prepared for tryouts. The clinic is where cheers and dance routines will be taught.
- Any candidate who has been suspended from school or placed in AEP at any time during the current school year is not eligible to try out.
- Any candidate who has received disciplinary action for truancy in the current school year is not eligible to try out.
- A student who is academically ineligible at the time of the clinic or tryouts is eligible to participate in cheerleading tryouts. If a student has been ineligible for any two nine-week grading periods prior to tryouts within the same school year, the student is not eligible to tryout.

IV. Tryout Procedure

- The tryout clinic will be held in a closed session.
- All candidates should wear a comfortable PLAIN white sleeveless shirt, black shorts, and athletic shoes for tryouts.
- Long hair must be pulled back away from your face.
- All tryout performances will be held in a closed session.
- If twelve or less candidates tryout for each (7th & 8th) squad, all eligible candidates will become cheerleaders.
- A cheerleading program will not be provided if there are less than fifteen total candidates.
- One mascot for 8th grade will be selected based on original, creative, and effective use of props and music.
- All applicants will try out in front of a panel of judges. If a candidate has a conflict due to participation in another school activity, he/she can submit a video prior to the tryout date. The video must be an unedited, continuous taping of the required tryout routines and skills.
- Qualified judges from Universal Cheerleading Association or area universities will be used to judge tryouts.
- Judges' evaluations will be based on entrance, jumps, cheer, and dance (girls) or stunting (boys).
- Maximum point presentation on judging is 100 points. The judging sheet is attached.
- The judges' score will be 100% of the tryout score.
- Designated faculty and administrators will calculate the scores.
- In the event of a tie or at the discretion of the judges, candidates may be called back for additional review.
- Decision of the judges will be final.
- Each candidate will be given the opportunity to enter the tryout area with spirting *or* tumbling skills with the approval of the sponsors.

- Each candidate will be required to perform three consecutive jumps displaying a Texas T and a Herkie at least once.
- Everyone will be taught the same basic cheer which will be performed.
- The motions and the words may not be changed.
- Everyone will be taught the same short dance routine which will be performed in front of the judges in groups of three for females. Males will perform the cheer in groups of three and stunts individually.
- No special tryout time will be allowed under any circumstances.

V. Scholarship

- Members must abide by the rules and regulations of the University Interscholastic League Constitution and Contest Rules and the Texas Education Code.

VI. Behavior

- Each member's behavior shall be in accordance with the Dripping Springs ISD Discipline Management Plan's Code of Conduct, the Extracurricular Code of Conduct, and this document.
- A member may be removed due to his/her discipline record, attendance record, or failure to follow the instructions of this document
- Members must always remember that they are representatives of their school and community.

VII. Responsibilities and Duties of Members

- All uniform fees must be paid by the assigned deadlines and before any merchandise is received.
- Members must attend summer practice prior to camp.
- Missing any summer practice prior to camp will result not only in demerits, but also in removal from the camp dance routine.
- Members must attend summer cheerleading camp at their own expense.
- If cheerleading is offered as an elective course option, members must be enrolled in the course to be part of any squad.
- Members must attend and cheer at all sporting events or functions deemed necessary by sponsor(s) or principal.
- Members must accept the decisions of the sponsor concerning any placement of members in performances.
- The sponsor will decide the role of the member if they are injured or have other medical conditions, which may result in the need to sit out.
- Members will be responsible for all facets of school spirit: pep rallies and skits, signs, locker decorations, spirit items.
- Members are expected to attend all practices in order to cheer at functions.

- Members will participate in any team fundraisers.
- The sponsor and administrator or designee must approve all activities.
- Members are responsible for using only approved techniques when cheering, stunting, dancing, etc. Approved techniques will be determined by the Cheerleading Coach/Sponsor. Due to differences in skill/ability levels of the squad members, approved techniques may not be the same for all individual participants.

VIII. Dealing with Problems or Concerns with the Sponsor – Parents should follow the DSISD Board of Trustees' Guidelines regarding coach and parent communication.

- Members should first schedule a time to meet and speak with the sponsor(s) concerning any problems, which must occur before the sponsor(s) will speak with the parent.
- Parents should first meet with the sponsor(s) before going to a higher authority.
- If the sponsor(s) and parents cannot reach an agreement, the parent will contact the appropriate campus administrator.
- If the problem is still not resolved, parents MUST contact and meet with higher district administration before any other actions result.
- This progression of steps is in accordance to DSISD Board Policy.

IX. Selection and Duties of Head Cheerleader(s)

- Head cheerleaders will be chosen solely by the sponsors with input from the team. Head cheerleaders will be chosen on a rotating basis based on the following characteristics:
 1. The head cheerleader will be a person who can unite the team and work well with other members.
 2. The head cheerleader will work well with the sponsors.
 3. The head cheerleader will take problems directly to the sponsor.
 4. Head cheerleader must set an example. Continued abuse of the rules will result in dismissal from their position.
 5. Head cheerleaders will designate cheers and chants to perform at games and pep rallies with approval of the sponsors.

X. Mascot

- The tiger mascot will follow all the rules and regulations set forth in this document.
- The tiger mascot will attend all functions which cheerleaders attend unless otherwise instructed by the sponsor.
- The tiger mascot will wear the complete tiger uniform at all times during cheerleading functions.

- The tiger mascot must realize that the uniform is extremely hot. If heat becomes a factor causing the need to remove any portion of the uniform, the sponsor(s) will decide the role of participation in any activity.
- The tiger mascot will attend summer camp.
- The tiger mascot will attend all practices and workshops unless otherwise directed by the sponsor(s).
- The tiger mascot will participate in all fundraisers.
- The tiger mascot will be responsible for the organization and inclusion of pep rally skits.

XI. Practices

- Practices are scheduled during the summer months to prepare for summer camp, pep rallies, and games.
- Practices will be held on a daily basis during the school year.
- Members are required to attend and to be on time for all practices.
- If any practice is missed five days prior to a pep rally, the member might not perform in the pep rally but must be in attendance.
- Other personal activities or other school programs may at times conflict with the cheerleading practice schedule. Missing practice may result in a loss of points that could impact performance opportunities. Members should try to schedule any activities so as not to interfere with cheerleader practice. Members **MUST** inform the sponsor two weeks prior to any performance if there is likely to be a scheduling conflict.
- Members missing practice for any reason, excused or unexcused, may be placed on reserve.
- Members must dress out as instructed for each practice unless they have a doctor's note. No jewelry will be worn.
- No gum or food will be allowed at practice.

XII. Transportation

- Transportation to and from all designated cheer events is the individual's responsibility.

XIII. Attendance

- Members must attend Dance/Cheerleading practices, athletic events and all related activities required by the sponsor(s). This includes activities such as parades, contests, clinics, community, and school functions. These could be scheduled on short notice and include Saturdays, Sundays, and holidays.
- Members must attend school on the day of the game in order to be able to perform that night unless the absence is due to another extra-curricular activity.

- Absences due to illness with a doctor's note or a catastrophic event such as a death in the family, etc... will be considered excused.
- Failure to attend and/or perform in a required activity will result in a loss of participation points.

XIV. Conduct During Events

- Members must be on time to each event.
- Tardiness to events such as football games will result in the member sitting in a designated area as indicated by the sponsor a minute for every minute late and in the loss of participation points.
- When in uniform at a sponsored event, all members must sit together in a designated area when not performing. They may not sit with boyfriends, parents, etc.
- Members must focus attention on the game AT ALL TIMES!
- Members may not talk to friends, family members, or other people during the game.
- Members must conduct themselves in a manner befitting of a DSMS leader.
- There will be no gum chewing, food, or jewelry worn (unless the team has purchased stud earrings as a group with the approval of the sponsor).
- Members must use the "buddy system" when visiting concession or bathroom facilities at sponsored events.
- Members should be familiar and knowledgeable about football, volleyball, basketball, and the purpose and goal of any event that DSMS cheerleaders are supporting.

XV. Uniforms

- The squad will have a uniform and accessories, which will be purchased at the parents' expense.
- School accessories (if any) and mascot suit must be returned to the sponsor by the designated date.
- Mascot suit will be professionally cleaned upon return to the sponsor.
- Any member not returning school owned items would be required to pay for their replacement.
- The individual will purchase camp clothing and any necessary accessories.
- No other articles of clothing will be worn along with uniforms during cheerleader functions.
- Each member is responsible for the care of his/her own uniform during the school year.
- Uniforms (including length) may not be altered unless the sponsor(s) deems it necessary.
- Uniforms and any cheerleading accessories (including shoes) are to be worn only at games, pep rallies, and other official functions.
- The sponsor(s) will select uniforms and accessories for the team.

XVI. Discipline and Participation Points

A. Permanent Demerits

The demerit system has been developed to assign appropriate consequences to Cheerleaders/Mascot throughout the season when necessary. Although all discipline infractions cannot be listed in the Cheerleader Constitution, the cheerleader sponsor will look for guidance from the appropriate assistant principal to connect a cheerleader/mascot disciplinary infraction with the DSISD Student Code of Conduct and Extracurricular Code of Conduct. Demerits will be categorized as Minor (Level I), Serious (Level II), and Major, (Level III). When a cheerleader/mascot has an infraction that can be applied to more than one category, the demerit with the most points will be applied. **The accumulation of 5 or more demerits in one week will result in benching from an activity as directed by the sponsor(s).**

The following are just *examples* of demerits that will occur in specific circumstances:

Minor Discipline Infractions which will result in one demerit:

- Public Display of Affection Violation
- Attending Lunch / After School Detention

A Serious Disciplinary Infraction will result in three permanent demerits:

- Uncooperative attitude.
- Wearing a uniform outside of a scheduled cheerleading activity without authorization of the sponsor.
- Failing to comply with lawful instructions and directives given by the sponsor and/or head cheerleader(s).
- Use of inappropriate language during practice/games/events.

A Major Disciplinary Infraction will result in five permanent demerits:

- Insubordination towards school employee (including sponsors).
- Disrespect to a staff member and/or lewd conduct toward another students.
- Academic misconduct (cheating, plagiarism, etc.).
- Building, tumbling or other high-risk physical activity without the sponsor present.
- Building or attempting stunts not approved by sponsor.
- Contributing to negative and/or inappropriate behavior at a game or event.

B. Participation Points

Every cheerleader will begin the year with 30 participation points. If a cheerleader must miss a practice or activity or is late or needs to leave early, participation points will be deducted. The purpose of participation points is that a cheerleader involved in activities outside of school (such as a church event, or a family function) will have the opportunity to attend these activities without consequences. An absence from practice is likely within a school year.

The following indicates participation point deductions:

One (1) point deductions

- Arriving late (15 minutes or less) or leaving before dismissed from practice – 1 point deduction for every five minutes up to 15 minutes.
- Wearing jewelry to practice or a game, or inappropriate jewelry in uniform.
- Wearing the wrong uniform (or wrong pieces) on an assigned day during the school day or at a performance (1 point for each infraction).
- Wearing the wrong practice outfit.
- Eating/drinking at practice or game without permission from the sponsor.
- Gum/candy at practice, pep rallies, games or any event attended as a cheerleader.
- Inappropriate appearance at a game or event.
- Failure to turn in items on designated day.
- Failure to do assigned duty.
- Failure to bring supplies to a game/event.

Three (3) point deductions

- Arriving late (15 minutes or less) or leaving before you are dismissed from a game/event.
- Missing practice.

Five (5) point deductions

- Missing a game/event.
- Any permanent demerits accumulated, result in participation points deducted equal to the number of demerits given. For example, insubordination to a sponsor is a 5 demerit offense. In addition, there would be five participation points deducted.

NOTE: A cheerleader is considered absent when they have missed 16+ minutes.

C. Consequences

- If an administrator assigns ISS for a full day offense, the cheerleader/mascot is also immediately suspended from active participation in that week's events.
- If an administrator assigns an out-of-school suspension (OSS), the cheerleader/mascot is also immediately suspended from active participation in events with the squad for two calendar weeks.
- If a cheerleader misses activities and/or practices due to ISS, OSS, or suspension from a violation of the extracurricular code, permanent demerit/participation points are deducted for those absences.
- Five demerits in one week or missing a practice will result in suspension from an activity as directed by the sponsor(s).
- Five merits per demerit will be required to work off demerits (except for permanent demerits). Activities to gain merits will be assigned by the sponsor(s).

D. Dismissal

- When a cheerleader/mascot reaches fifteen demerits or loses their thirty participation points, he/she will be dismissed.
- If a cheerleader/mascot violates the Student Code of Conduct in such a way that would result in a Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP), he/she will be dismissed.
- Repeat violations of the Student Code of Conduct that have not been recorded for demerit purposes at that point, may still result in dismissal. This will be the discretion of the sponsor(s) and an administrator.

