

Fort Bend Independent School District

Cheerleading Handbook

2010-2011

This handbook becomes effective immediately for the tryout process in the Spring of 2010 and remains in effect for successful candidates throughout their tenure as 2010-2011 cheerleaders.

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HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING CONSTITUTION, COMPOSITION AND SELECTION PROCESS

I. CHEERLEADER AND MASCOT CONSTITUTION

A. PURPOSE

The purpose of cheerleading is to promote and uphold school spirit, to support and encourage all school teams, to develop a sense of good sportsmanship among students, to improve the student morale, to build better relationships between competing schools, to be ambassadors to the community and to establish the high personal ideals and good character expected of a high school cheerleader in order to be a role model for peers and younger children in the Fort Bend Independent School District.

B. OBJECTIVES

1. To promote the type of sportsmanship that will help students acquire the basic attributes of good citizenship.
2. To develop a wholesome school spirit.
3. To develop loyalty to your school and team regardless of the outcome.
4. To promote a cooperative spirit among the student body, the faculty, administration, and other spirit organizations.
5. To help the school achieve the objectives of its interscholastic athletic activities.
6. To promote competitions in which the school participates.

II. COMPOSITION OF THE SQUAD

- A. Varsity Cheerleaders will be selected by a method outlined later in this document. There will be no more than twelve (12) persons on the varsity squad. Eligibility shall be open to boys and girls of current freshman, sophomore or junior standing,
- B. Mascot will be selected by method outlined later in this document. There will be no more than one (1) person holding this position. Eligibility shall be limited to girls and boys of current sophomore and junior standing.
- C. Sub-varsity cheerleaders will be selected by methods outlined later in this document. There will be no more than eight (8) persons on the sub-varsity squad. Eligibility shall be limited to girls and boys of current eighth, ninth and tenth grade standing.

- D. The sponsor may appoint Managers. There will be no more than two (2) managers on the varsity squad. Eligibility shall be limited to girls and boys of current sophomore and junior standing, preferably with some knowledge of cheerleading.

III. SELECTION PROCESS

A. QUALIFICATIONS

1. Cheerleaders, mascot, and managers must meet and maintain Texas Education Agency and District academic eligibility standards.
2. Candidates must be on credit schedule to meet graduation requirements (2½ - Freshman, 7½ - Sophomore, 12½ - Junior) and may not have received more than a total of two failing grades on the first and second nine weeks grading reports of the current school year.
3. If a candidate receives more than two “needs improvement” or “unsatisfactory” grades in conduct for the current school year through the second nine weeks, the student is ineligible to try out for cheerleader or mascot.
4. Students must have shown compliance with compulsory attendance laws.
5. Cheerleading clinics and tryouts shall be held during a window of time that would include the last three weeks of the third nine weeks and the first three weeks of the fourth nine weeks of the school year. Sign-ups and meetings may start before then but the actual clinics and tryouts will be held during the designated window described above.
6. Candidates must sign up for tryouts during a time period designated by the sponsor.
7. Candidates must receive and sign for tryout packets at an organizational meeting called by the sponsor or at an individually set meeting.
8. A training clinic will be conducted at a time determined by the sponsor. All candidates should make every effort to participate.
9. Candidates must submit physical examination by a medical doctor completed no more than one year prior to the tryout clinic. The District reserves the right to require a new physical examination when deemed necessary.
10. Further qualifications involving tryout procedures, standards of conduct, participation and uniforms may be required by the sponsor, with the written approval of the principal.
11. An “incomplete” is equivalent to a failing grade.

IV. METHOD OF SELECTION

A. On an announced day, all qualified candidates will appear before a screening committee with the following rules:

1. The screening will take place at a Central Athletic Facility. Schools will perform in the graduation order as set by the district for that year. Each school's screening is closed to the public. Results will be released after the completion of all high school's tryouts on a date determined by the Director of Athletics.
2. The committee will consist of at least three impartial professional judges selected by the Director of Athletics from outside the school district.
3. All candidates will appear before the committee in the designated uniform.
4. Candidates who are current cheerleaders will not demonstrate or be recognized in any fashion as current cheerleaders.
5. Cheerleader candidates will perform a specified sequence consisting of items listed on the tryout scoresheet.
6. Mascot selection will take place during the fourth nine weeks after finalization of cheerleader tryouts. Tryouts will be held at a central athletic facility and will be judged by a panel of no fewer than three members selected by the Director of Athletics. Mascot candidates will perform a maximum of a two-minute routine consisting of skits, mime, pantomime and dance. No routine may be more than one-half dance. All routines must be within school standards.
7. Cheerleader candidates will be allowed to provide video for judges' evaluation if they are unable to perform all required activities due to injury. The candidate must provide a physician's letter explaining the specific injury and restrictions prior to beginning the try out. They must complete all aspects of the program not restricted by the injury and identified in the physician's letter. The video must not show candidates as current cheerleaders in any way. The video must be certified to have been created within the past twelve months.
8. A tryout packet will be provided to all candidates. The packet will include clinic information, sample scoresheet with detailed tryout sequence information and cheerleading handbook. Schools may present other pertinent information in this packet.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

GOAL: All campuses will be equipped in an equitable manner within a three-year period.

I. FUNDING

A plan will be prepared annually within the athletic department budget to fund the activities of cheerleading groups. Individual campus needs will be addressed within this activity.

A. DISTRICT FUNDING WILL INCLUDE:

1. Uniforms (rotating basis – to be determined) This will include basic uniform and accessories
2. Award letters
3. Supplies (paint, paper, tape etc.)
4. Basic first aid supplies and safety equipment
5. Megaphones
6. Poms
7. Transportation
8. Judges' fees
9. Employee travel

B. INDIVIDUAL FUNDING WILL INCLUDE:

1. Camp expenses
2. Clothing accessories, not purchased by district funding (items that are to be kept by the student)
3. Travel bags
4. "Game Day" apparel
5. Gym rentals
6. Choreography

C. COMPETITION

1. Cheerleaders choosing to participate in National Competition will be responsible for all related costs.
2. Costs for individual expenses and national competitions may be offset by fund raising activities.

CHEERLEADER DISCIPLINE POLICY

I. DISTRICT RULES

- A. All cheerleaders are expected to follow all the rules of conduct as outlined in the Fort Bend ISD Student Handbook, Fort Bend ISD Code Of Conduct, and other rules that may be developed by campus sponsor/cheer coach with approval of the principal.
- B. Sponsor/Cheer coaches are responsible for enforcing the cheerleader discipline policy fairly to all cheerleaders.
- C. The discipline Policy does not replace or supersede the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan.
- D. These rules apply to all cheerleaders/mascots at **all** times during their elected term.
- E. The following rules of conduct for participants in FBISD school-sponsored extracurricular activities apply 24 hours a day, seven days per week, and fifty-two weeks per year:

Loss of privilege for one calendar year, then permanent removal for second offense

Selling or delivering marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, abuseable glue, aerosol paint, or any other mood-changing, mind altering, or behavior affecting drug is strictly prohibited and will result in elimination from further participation in all extracurricular activities for:

- **1st Offense**, one calendar year.
- **2nd offense**, for the remainder of the student's school career.

Other Removals

The following other infractions are strictly prohibited:

1. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, abuseable glue, aerosol paint, or any other mood-changing, mind altering, or behavior affecting drug;
2. Possessing, using or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage;
3. Theft or stealing;
4. Engaging in lewd, disruptive, or other offensive conduct that affronts school district standards of propriety.

Upon the administration's determination that a FBISD student participating in a school-sponsored extracurricular activity or organization has violated any one of the four infractions enumerated above, at **Other Removals**, the student shall lose the privilege of further participation in that organization or activity as provided below:

1st Offense: 10 hours of approved community service and 20 school days of suspension from active participation in any/all FBISD extracurricular activities. If the offense occurs when the student is not actively participating, the suspension shall apply beginning with the next period of participation following the offense. If the student is involved in more than one activity, the suspension shall apply to all activities concurrently. The student shall not serve more than one 20-day suspension for the first offense.

2nd Offense: 20 hours of approved community service and 40 school days of suspension from active participation in any/all FBISD extracurricular activity. If the offense occurs when the student is not actively participating, the suspension shall apply beginning with the next period of participation following the offense. If the student is involved in more than one activity, the suspension shall apply to all activities concurrently. The student shall not serve more than one 40-day suspension for the second offense.

3rd Offense: the student shall be suspended from further participation for one calendar year.

4th Offense: the student shall be eliminated from further participation in all activities for the remainder of his/her school career.

A student may be referred to counselors, as appropriate. A student or parent may appeal the student's loss of extracurricular privileges through FBISD Board Policy FNG.

Notice: Participation in fundraising activities for an extracurricular activity does not guarantee selection for the team or extracurricular activity. An assignment to an athletics class does not ensure final selection onto any team.

II. CUMULATIVE 20 POINT DEMERIT SYSTEM

A. DEMERIT RECORD

1. The record will be established for all cheerleaders, both varsity and sub varsity.
2. The record will record infractions for the entire school year, as identified by the sponsor/cheer coach.
3. Demerits cannot be worked off or retracted
4. The record will be maintained solely by the sponsor/cheer coach and must be kept confidential. A cheerleader may view his/her own record.
5. When a demerit is recorded on the record, the sponsor will initial the entry and ask the cheerleader to do likewise.
6. When a cheerleader receives a total of 5 demerits, the sponsor will personally counsel with the cheerleader.

B. 10 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS = NOTICE

1. When a cheerleader reaches a total of 10 demerits, the cheerleader will be placed on notice and the sponsor will notify the cheerleader and his/her parent/guardian.
2. The notice status will be documented in writing by the sponsor and signed by the principal. The notice statement will be mailed to the parent or guardian.

C. 15 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS=SUSPENSION

1. When a cheerleader reaches a total of 15 demerits, he/she will be suspended for a 3-week period. The cheerleader is prohibited from performance activities and wearing uniforms. They will continue to practice.
2. The suspension status will require the sponsor to meet with the cheerleader and his/her parents with a campus administrator present. The suspension will continue until the meeting takes place.

D. 20 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS = DISMISSAL FROM SQUAD

If a cheerleader accumulates 20 demerits, the cheerleader will be dismissed from the cheer squad. A written notice and copy of the demerit record will be prepared by the sponsor/coach and signed by both the sponsor/coach and principal. A copy of the notice will be mailed to the student’s parent or guardian, with a copy sent to the District’s athletic director.

E. ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE

In addition to demerits issued for infractions, the sponsors/coaches may administer additional discipline, such as warnings, additional sign making, or others as deemed necessary.

DEMERITS ISSUED FOR THE FOLLOWING INFRACTIONS

	Demerits	
▪ SMOKING	10/	Offense
▪ ISS (In-School Suspension)	4/	Day
▪ AFTER SCHOOL / SATURDAY DETENTION	2/	Day*
	*Maximum 4/Occur	
▪ DELIBERATE DISOBEDIENCE TO SPONSOR/COACH	10/	Offense
▪ DISRESPECT TO SPONSOR/COACH OR OTHER ADULT	5/	Offense
▪ UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT TO SQUAD MEMBERS / OTHER STUDENTS	2/	Offense
▪ USE OF PROFANITY	5/	Offense
▪ UNEXCUSED ABSENCE	5/	Offense
▪ EXCUSED ABSENCES	2 /	Absence*
	*Demerits issued beginning 6th excused absence	
▪ TARDIES	1 /	Offense*

	*3 tardies = unexcused absence
▪ INAPPROPRIATE DRESS	5/ Offense
▪ UNIFORM INFRACTIONS	1/ Offense
▪ STUNTING WITHOUT SPONSOR/COACH APPROVAL	5/ Offense
▪ INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	5/ Offense
▪ DEADLINES / RESPONSIBILITIES	1/ Offense

In addition to discipline consequences available under the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan, demerits may be issued for the infractions listed above. An assessment of demerits does not supersede or replace the discipline consequences available under the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan

FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

CHEERLEADER DEMERIT RECORD

Cheerleader: _____

Campus: _____

Sponsor: _____

INFRACTION	DATE	DEMERITS ISSUED	COACH'S INITIALS	Cheerleader's Initials
VIOLATION OF SCHOOL CONDUCT CODE				
▪ Smoking (10)	1			
	2			
▪ ISS (4)	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
▪ After School/Saturday Detention (2)	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			
	8			
	9			
	10			

INSUBORDINATION					
▪ Deliberate Disobedience (10)	1				
	2				
▪ Disrespect (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
▪ Unsportsmanlike Conduct (2)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
▪ Use of Profanity (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
ABSENCES					
▪ Unexcused (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
▪ Excused (2)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				

TARDY (1)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
INAPPROPRIATE DRESS (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
UNIFORMS (1)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
STUNTING W/O APPROVAL (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR (5 max.)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

DEADLINES/RESPONSES (1)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
TOTAL DEMERITS:					

NOTATIONS:

Signature: _____ **Date** _____
Sponsor/Coach

Signature: _____ **Date** _____
Campus Administrator

CLARIFICATIONS/DEFINITIONS

- I. **ALL CHEERLEADERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO FOLLOW ALL THE RULES OF CONDUCT AS OUTLINED IN THE FORT BEND ISD STUDENT HANDBOOK.**

- II. **ALL CHEERLEADERS WILL BE EXPECTED TO DISPLAY POSITIVE LEADERSHIP QUALITIES IN ATTITUDE, BEHAVIOR, SPORTSMANSHIP AND SCHOOL SPIRIT.**

- III. **SMOKING**
 - A. The use or possession of any tobacco product constitutes smoking.

- IV. **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**
 - A. An unexcused absence is defined as the failure to attend any scheduled cheerleading activity (sample listing below) as determined by sponsor/cheer coach without prior and proper permission from sponsor/cheer coach. Any outside activity, including a job and/or participating on another cheer squad, is an invalid reason for missing a scheduled cheerleading activity. Vacations should be scheduled around summer practices and camps.
 - After school practices
 - Saturday practices
 - Evening practices
 - Summer practices
 - Cheer camp
 - Games
 - Pep rallies
 - Cheerleading fund raisers
 - Cheerleading community projects
 - Leaving early without approval
 - 10 minutes or more late
 - Any other scheduled activity by sponsor

V. EXCUSED ABSENCE

Each cheerleader will be permitted five (5) excused absences per school year (try out till May of the following year). Any cheerleader who has six (6) or more excused absences will be considered to have excessive absences and will accrue two (2) demerits per absence beginning with the sixth absence. Cheerleading is a team sport, and all cheerleaders are required to be present. An excused absence is defined as follows:

- **School-Related Activity** – A written 48-hour notification to the sponsor/coach signed by the school official.
-
- **Family Death** – Verbal communication to the sponsor/coach by parent/guardian followed by written notification
- **Illness** – Verbal communication to the sponsor/coach from the parent, followed by written notification, even if the child was not in school. If a cheerleader does not feel well enough to participate, the sponsor/coach has the discretion to send the child home under an excused absence.
- **Doctor Appointments** – With written 48-hour notification to sponsor/coach signed by parent/guardian.

(Note: Verbal Communication may consist of personal communications, voice mail, or notice to the sponsor/coach's mailbox by school attendants).

Absences for Religious Holidays will be excluded from any count. Verbal communication to the sponsor/coach by the parent is required.

VI. TARDIES

Any cheerleader 5 minutes late to any cheerleading activity will receive one-(1) demerit per occurrence. After being late 10 minutes, the cheerleader will be assigned an additional demerit. Three late tardies will be considered an unexcused absence.

VII. APPROPRIATE DRESS

All cheerleaders shall abide by the proper dress code when at practices, games, school-related events, or any other cheerleader activity.

The sponsor will determine the specific dress.

All cheerleaders shall observe the following rules:

- No jean shorts or pants worn to practice
- No work-out tops (racer backs, sports bras)
- No T-shirts tied together (either worn loose or tucked into shorts)
- No midriff
- Proper undergarments

- Socks should be worn at all times
- Appropriate athletic shoes should be worn at all times
- No jewelry
- No body piercing (exception of ears)
- No visible body art or tattoos (exception of spirit paint)
- Hair should be pulled away from face; long hair is to be braided or in pony tail
- Uniforms should be kept neat and clean (including shoes)

VIII. UNIFORMS

All cheerleaders are expected to maintain their uniforms with care. When in uniform, cheerleaders should refrain from the following:

- Chewing gum
- Wearing nail polish
- Long fingernails
- Wearing jewelry
- Wrong socks
- Missing hair bow
- Dirty uniforms

IX. STUNTING WITHOUT APPROVAL

For safety purposes, all stunting must be approved in advance by the sponsor/coach. No stunting is permitted without a sponsor/coach in attendance.

X. INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR /DISRESPECT

Cheerleaders are expected to be role models and ambassadors of goodwill for their schools. Therefore, all cheerleaders are expected to exhibit appropriate behavior. The following shall be considered inappropriate behavior and subjected to discipline:

- PDA – Public display of affection
- Report of misconduct by other teachers, administrators, and/or parents
- Distractions during practice/game/pep rallies
- Non-spirited attitude
- Unsportsmanlike conduct
- Deliberate disobedience

XI. DEADLINES/RESPONSIBILITIES

Cheerleaders are expected to fulfill all responsibilities and meet all deadlines as established by cheer coach/sponsor.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

I. BASIC SAFETY GUIDELINES

- A. Cheerleading squads should be placed under the direction of a knowledgeable advisor or coach.
- B. The cheerleading coach or other knowledgeable designated school representative should be in attendance at all practices and functions.
- C. All cheerleaders shall receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading gymnastics, i.e., tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps.
- D. All partner stunts shall be mastered according to the “partner stunt progressions” before attempting a new level of difficulty. (See attachment.)
- E. All practice sessions shall be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders, i.e., (use of tumbling mats, away from excess noise and distractions, etc.)
- F. Training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads attempting gymnastics.
- G. Jewelry, accessories and apparel should be conducive to safe performance.
- H. Warm-up exercises and stretching shall precede all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, and other physical activity.
- I. All cheerleading squads shall develop a conditioning and strength-building program.
- J. The cheering surface, location, lighting and weather conditions shall be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity.
- K. Advisor/coaches recognize the entire squad’s ability level and limit the squad’s activities accordingly.
- L. Cheerleaders never stunt while the football team or other sport team is in play, no matter what part of the field they are on.
- M. An emergency plan must be in place and practiced in case of an emergency.

NO COACH, NO PRACTICE!!!!

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

I. DESIGNATION AS COMPETITION SQUAD

- A. The squad is a competition squad as decided by the coach and principal
- B. All members are expected to prepare for competitions
- C. Competition squad must be selected from current school squads

II. SAFETY

- A. According to UIL regulations - CHEERLEADERS; SPIRIT GROUPS
"All cheer and spirit performances at any UIL activity shall be in accordance with safety standards as prescribed by the National Federation High School Spirit Handbook."
- B. All elected cheerleaders and the mascot will be required to attend a professionally run cheerleading camp.

III. ATTENDING COMPETITIONS

- A. The Cheer Coach will make the decision with principal approval.
- B. The Cheer Coach must accompany the squad to any competition.

IV. OUTSIDE HIRED CHOREOGRAPHERS/COACHES

- A. Outside choreographers or coaches must be familiar with competition and district guidelines

V. COMPETITION GUIDELINES

- A. Competition guidelines must comply with the regulations outlined in the National Federation High School Spirit Handbook (See safety guidelines and reference material included in this handbook.)

SPONSOR DUTIES

I. SPONSORS/COACHES RESPONSIBILITIES AND DUTIES

- A. Make schedules for games, uniforms, practices, etc.
- B. Assign duties in all activities.
- C. Be responsible for informing all cheerleaders of changes in schedule, upcoming events, etc.
- D. Be responsible for giving announcements to administration.
- E. Make the final decision on choice of uniforms for games and pep rallies.
- F. Screen and have veto power on all ideas, cheers, stunts, skits, signs, etc.
- G. Recommend to the administration if a cheerleader is to be suspended or dropped from the squad.
- H. Be responsible for supervision of all items ordered and for collection of money.
- I. Be responsible for a grade, tardy, absence, and conduct check with teachers and discipline action taken by grade level principal.
- J. Assign demerits for infractions.
- K. Be in attendance for the following:
 - 1. one (1) summer camp
 - 2. tryouts
 - 3. games when cheerleaders are officially cheering
 - 4. outside training for squad (gym, clinics, etc.)
*In case of sponsor absence, a designated school official will be in attendance.
- L. See that no routine is used that could result in serious injury.
- M. Ensure that the equipment is maintained for cheerleaders as outlined in the district's equipment policy. The sponsor is responsible for issuing and collecting school purchased equipment and uniforms.

- N. Monitor all activities for compliance with the National Federation Spirit Handbook and the AACCA Safety Certification guidelines.
- O. Organize and practice an emergency plan.