

MISSOURI CITY MIDDLE CHEERLEADER - MASCOT HANDBOOK



2020-2021 Missouri City Middle School Cheerleader Handbook

The Cheerleaders of Missouri City Middle School are the athletic spirit leaders of the school. The Cheerleading organization includes twelve cheerleaders composed of seventh and eighth graders. The Cheerleading Handbook has been designed to clearly outline the policies and procedures that will guide the organization during the year. Please note that although the most common kinds of situations have been identified in this handbook, the list is not comprehensive. It is the responsibility for every member of the cheerleading program to be familiar with this handbook. A copy will be given to each parent upon request. In addition to being held responsible for the policies and procedures identified in this handbook, the members of the MCMS Cheerleading organization are also responsible for abiding by the Missouri City Middle School Student Handbook, Fort Bend Independent School District's Cheerleading handbook, and the Fort Bend Student Code of Conduct. It is an honor and privilege, not a right, to be an MCMS cheerleader; therefore, **excellence is expected and required**. It is important for each applicant to fully understand that cheerleading is a time consuming activity and must be a priority. It is a year-long season; therefore, a year-long commitment is absolutely necessary.

Why we do what we do:

We believe cheerleading should teach teamwork, discipline, setting and reaching goals, hard work, sacrifice, and determination. We believe those who have character, work hard, and have a good attitude are the most successful in whatever they do. We believe learning these qualities in Middle School prepare you to succeed later in life. These rules are made so we can have fun, be safe, work hard, and develop character qualities that make us successful.

1. We have discipline to maximize the use of team time and create a team atmosphere.

To be **on time**, you are required to be dressed, stretched, and ready to practice a maximum of 10 minutes after being released from your dismissal area or from your 7th period class. The coaches have to wait for our students to leave our classrooms and handle cheer business before we are ready. If WE can do it, YOU can do it. We want to start practices on time so we can be productive, get the job finished, and go home. We respect YOUR time please respect OURS.

2. We have discipline to foster respect and build character.

Many decisions made by the coach is in response to desires voiced by cheerleaders, parents, and/or administration. The rest of the decisions are made from years of experience. Missouri City cheerleaders should be: a talented, skilled squad; respected by the student body, fans, and community; seen as serious athletes; focused on the team; and focused on building discipline. Rules such as game etiquette, timeliness, cleanliness, and most importantly **attitude**, have been designed to create a well-respected team. If your needs are not being met, I have created an open door policy for you to come **maturely** and **respectfully** to discuss it with your coach. As a coach I am willing to compromise on some issues because I believe this is your (the cheerleaders') program as much as mine. I want to hear your input, and I promise to listen. Sometimes I will compromise on a situation, and other times an executive decision will need to be made that is in the best interest for the program. I respect and trust you enough to let you have a major say in this program; you should respect me enough to follow my leadership even if you don't agree.

"Good character is more to be praised than outstanding talent. Most talents are to some extent a gift. Good character, by contrast, is not given to us. We have to build it piece by piece—by thought, choice, courage and determination."

— John Luther

SECTION 1: EXPECTATIONS

1A: ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

As an MCMS Cheerleader, I will abide by these statements for the betterment of my team:

1. I will step into all cheerleading activities with a positive, encouraging attitude and a smile on my face. Even if I've had a horrible day, I will try my hardest to set that aside and step up for my team.
2. I will set a positive example for and be respectful to all peers, students, and parents, as well as competitors and all other affiliates. I will not be rude or disrespectful to any of these entities. I will not use foul language, show poor sportsmanship, participate in "Public Displays of Affection", or be unprofessional at any time in public.
3. I will be dedicated, accept responsibility, and maintain good public relations with every faculty member and staff, the student body, and community to ensure success and respect of the squad.
4. I will respect my squad's captains, and my coaches. I will not argue with them, gossip about them, or disobey them. I will listen and pay attention when one of them is speaking.
5. I will be loyal to my team and support them at all times, on and off the field. I will be unselfish and always put my team first.
6. I understand that each individual has a role in the team. Each of us has different strengths and weaknesses. I will respect and appreciate the contribution that each individual makes towards the success of the team.
7. As a Missouri City Cheerleader I understand that it is my duty to represent my team to the best of my abilities during all performances, in the classroom, and community.
8. I will be honest with the coaches about issues that really bother me. I will only discuss these matters with them in a calm, respectful, mature, and private way. I will wait until after practice (or set up a meeting) and when we are in private with the coach to be heard. I will not throw out disagreements/opinions/concerns before or during practice or another event. I understand that the coach will listen to me, but if she disagrees with my issue, I will respect their decision as the leaders of this program.
9. I will get along with everyone that has any part in the MCMS Cheer Program. I will not intentionally exclude, be mean to, or gossip about any cheer team member. Even if we don't always agree, I will treat my team as a family for the betterment of myself, my team, and my school. I will follow the guidelines in #5 and seek help if needed.
10. I will be on time and ready to all practices and other cheer events. I will hustle everywhere I go (to practice, onto the field, to the formation) and not be lazy.
11. I will put 110% effort in every motion, jump, dance, routine, workout, conditioning drill, and cheer event. I will not give up. I will be a team player. I will encourage all other team members to do the same. I will not whine or complain about workouts or coach/captain directions.
12. I understand that there is a chain of command. I must function within the chain of command. If the coach, captain or co-captain gives instructions or assigns duties, then follow instructions without complaining. Back-talk will not be tolerated to another cheerleader or coach/teacher/administrator/parent volunteer.
13. I understand that there will be no warnings for: being late to practice or events and paying attention to the coaches/captains. I understand demerits and/or conditioning will be issued for all these (and other stated) rules.
14. I understand demerit(s):
 - a) will be signed for by myself on the demerit page and I will be informed of every demerit I'm issued
 - b) never disappear or "go away"

1B: ATTIRE

Cheerleaders will wear appropriate attire for every event:

1. Practice (after school): workout clothes(deemed by the coach) – everyone should be in the same practice attire- a t-shirt or workout shirt, sports bra and/or supportive bra, appropriate shorts, bloomers if briefs are not in shorts, socks, and tennis shoes or cheer shoes—no jewelry
2. Games/Pep-Rallies/Events: assigned cheer uniform, bow w/hair styled the same in a ponytail, white socks, cheer shoes, bloomers, no visible undergarments (including sports bras), no jewelry(no studs), fingernails **with no polish**. May include body liners, pullovers, and other accessories approved by the coaches.
3. Undergarments: Females are required to wear a bra at all times during any activity including but not limited to games, practice, pep rallies, conditioning. The bra, including sports bras, should not be visible. In addition, underwear should be worn at all times. This is for the health, safety, and cleanliness of all cheerleaders. Black sports bras should be purchased to go under uniform.
4. Game days: team top/jersey and jeans.

1C: PRACTICES

1. Cheerleaders are required to be dressed and ready to go (with mats out, if needed) NO MORE THAN 10 minutes after the dismissal of buses at the end of the day. If not, a demerit will be issued.
2. Summer practices will continue after school ends.
3. The coach will determine practice times. Mornings, evenings and/or weekends may be included in possible practice times.
4. Any cheerleader who must miss a practice is required to let the coach know ASAP. If the coach doesn't know why you are absent, it is an unexcused absence.
5. No excessive side talking, laughing, or goofing off during practice or performance; we will be stunting and doing potentially dangerous activities. Safety is a priority so it is imperative that everyone be serious and pay attention so no one is hurt. (Consequences will be more conditioning, if the problem persists, then the coach has the right to sit the said cheerleader down or out of the practice or performance/game with demerits for disrespect to coach or other adult and/or inappropriate behavior.
6. Any cheerleader who does not follow instructions given by captains or coaches will be warned once, after that they will be asked to leave practice and will receive 5 demerits for an unexcused absence.
7. Cheerleading shoes, with socks, will be worn at all times. Any cheerleader without shoes will not be allowed to practice and will be given uniform demerits.
8. ***Only team members, managers, and coaches/consultants can be present for practice.**
9. ***No food should be delivered to the school for said cheerleader. Food/snacks should be brought by the cheerleader to school with them.**

1D: GAMES, EVENTS, & PERFORMANCES

1. For football games cheerleaders are expected to get dressed and eat their snacks at least 20 min. before kickoff. No eating on the field will be allowed. Cheerleaders are expected to be on the field 15-20 minutes prior to game time. So if the game starts at 5, the cheerleader is to be dressed and on the field by 4:45.
2. During all games and performances, all cheerleaders will be dressed the same. Any cheerleader missing part of a uniform or wearing an incorrect piece of a uniform will receive demerits, and if the behavior continues, then the cheerleader will not be allowed to cheer but will be required to stay at the game and sit with the coach.

3. Underwear (bras, sport bras, and/or underpants) should **not** be visible. Uniforms will require different upper-body underwear, and visible underwear will not be tolerated at any game. Any cheerleader with visible underwear will not be allowed to cheer and will be given an unexcused absence for the game she is unable to participate in.
4. The hair bow is a required part of the uniform and will be worn at all games and performances, no exceptions. (Cheerleader will not be able to perform at game or event and will receive an unexcused absence for the game she is unable to participate in)
5. Jewelry and/or body piercings are not allowed during practice, work-out, performances, and games. Covering piercings with a band-aid will not be permitted. Clear plastic spacers may be worn during games and practices. *No consideration will be taken for timing of piercings. (demerits will be given)
6. At games, cheerleaders must pay attention to the game and spirit constantly. Turning your head or body to talk is not permitted- if a coach can see you talking, the fans can see you talking. No reviewing of motions, big conversational gestures, or goofing off is allowed.
7. Cheerleaders may take their cheer bag to all games and events. Cheerleaders will position their cheer bag out of site from the public and only access them during breaks.
8. No cell phones are allowed out at games, practices or events. Keep them in your bag. They may be used only during breaks.
9. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during practice, game, or a performance. The only exception is water.
10. Cheerleaders will act professional at games and other public cheer events. It is not appropriate to goof off, act silly, or be irresponsible during a game/performance. Cheerleaders will follow the game etiquette rules:
 - a) BEFORE THE GAME: stretching and warming up should be done as a team in a circle; NEVER stunt or tumble without a coach present
 - b) DURING THE GAME: stay in formation with hands behind your back; no talking; constantly spirit, jump, stunt, and tumble; captains will call ALL of the cheers, chants, and other activities- do not argue with them.
 - c) HALFTIME: We will perform a cheer for the crowd, afterwards you may have free time at half time, but remember you are in uniform; go to the restroom, sit/rest, and drink water; half time is your only break during the game, so take care of all business then; you must stay with your squad.
 - d) AFTER THE GAME: Clean up... even if it's not your trash, we leave things cleaner than how we found them: Tell the teams good job, take care of equipment, and **leave only after dismissed by a coach.**

1E: EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

1. Cheerleaders will be responsible for securing, storing, and maintaining all equipment before, during and after all performances and practices.
2. The only uniforms, jackets, outfits, and warm-ups approved at events are those garments required and purchased by or provided to every squad member as an official part of the uniform. Cheerleaders must wear ONLY those uniform pieces designated by the coach to events requiring uniforms.
3. **No part of any cheerleading uniform may be given to or worn by another student or person who is not a member of the squad AT ANY TIME without the coaches' permission. (IF this happens a demerit will be given to the cheerleader).**
4. Uniforms will not be bought, made, or remodeled in any way without the permission of the coach. The cheerleader is responsible for the upkeep of the uniform and all materials handed out to the cheerleader. The cheerleader will replace the part or whole depending upon the damage or loss.

5. Equipment assigned to cheer program members is their full responsibility. If lost, stolen, or damaged in anyway, the cheerleader must pay the cost of the repair or replacement. This includes, but is not limited to: t-shirts, costumes, uniforms, megaphones, poms, etc.

1F: FINANCES

1. The costs of designated uniforms and accessories are the responsibility of individual cheerleaders. Uniforms include those articles of clothing worn at games, pep rallies, camp, game days, and any other event where the squad is representing the school.
2. Any uniform or part of the uniform paid for by the individual cheerleader will remain the property of the cheerleader. Any item purchased by the school will remain the property of the school. Except for normal wear and tear, damaged or lost property will be fined and reimbursed by the students.
3. Any member of the cheerleading program who does not pay a financial cheerleading obligation on time will be subject to demerits. This includes, but is not limited to: fundraisers, equipment, and other fees.
4. In the event that the cheerleader is terminated due to lack of payment, the parent is financially responsible for monies owed.
5. Monies that are due after said cheerleader tryouts are due by the due date, if monies are not paid on time, said cheerleader will be dropped and an alternate cheerleader will be called.

1G: COMMUNITY SERVICE

All members of the MCMS cheer program will be required to attend community service projects chosen by the coaches. The goal of doing community service is to build connections between the surrounding communities and the Missouri City Middle School community.

1H: SPIRIT ACTIVITIES

1. Cheer program members will participate in making and hanging posters, banners, and signs as scheduled by the coach. The school will provide supplies.
2. Cheer program members will participate in MANDATORY activities such as: 6th grade Orientation, Career day, 5th grade visitation, and other spirit activities as assigned by the coach.

1I: SCHEDULING

1. Cheerleaders will be provided a performance schedule by the coach to include all mandatory athletic events, academic functions, community events, spirit activities, fundraisers, and other functions. The schedule will be continuously updated throughout the year. Cheerleaders MUST participate in each scheduled event. A schedule will be given on a monthly basis.
2. Cheerleaders will be responsible for informing parents of schedule changes, extra practices, and rule changes.
3. Cheerleaders will be responsible for all information given in person and through email.

1J: DUTIES**All Cheerleaders**

- a) Will cheer at all football games at home.
- b) Will cheer at some home district boys and girls basketball and volleyball games, deemed by the coach.

All Cheerleaders continued.....

- a) Will attend other games and events requested by the coach
- b) Are **required** to attend all summer practices
- c) Are **required** to attend summer camp
- d) Are **required** to attend any other clinics
- e) Are **required** to attend all practices, **until release time**

1K: ATTENDANCE & ENROLLMENT

1. Cheerleaders will be on time to every practice, game, pep-rally, fundraiser, and event. The time posted is the time you are to be READY, not walking in the door, starting to stretch, fixing your hair, or hanging out.
2. All practices and events are mandatory and attendance is required.
3. If you are absent from cheer for ANY reason, the coach reserves the right to take you out of a routine.
4. All must participate in any skills classes supported by the program during the course of the year.
5. Absences that result in missing practice or any other cheer event require a parental contact to the coaches through email, written note or phone call to the cheer coach PRIOR to the practice, or event. No prior contact automatically deems the absence unexcused.
6. Outside appointments are expected to be scheduled around practice times whenever possible, and notification to the coach 48 hours in advance of appointments is required when conflicting with practices and/or events.
7. In the event that a cheerleader gets ill overnight, the coach shall be notified by 7:30 am the morning school will be missed.
8. Should a cheerleader leave school early due to an illness, the cheerleader must stop by the coaches room or have the nurse or attendance clerk to inform her of the illness and absence.
9. EXCUSED ABSENCES include illness confirmed by a parent/doctor, death in immediate family, or another approved MCMS event. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES include, but are not limited to jobs, tutoring, extracurricular/club meetings, social events, vacations, trips, and/or not informing a coach about an absence before the start of a (n) practice/event. Tutoring needs to be arranged before school so as to not interfere with practices. The coach will try to arrange practices around tutorials, but this will not be the case all of the time.
10. If tutorials are not available before school, the coach needs to be notified 24 hours before the required tutorial. The teacher must confirm with the coach that before-school tutorials are not available. The cheerleader will return to practice after tutorials with a teacher pass. The note will detail time of arrival and dismissal from tutorials with signature of the teacher giving tutorials.
11. If a cheerleader has an excused absence from a MCMS event, they may not attend another MCMS event without prior approval from the coach.
12. If a cheerleader is participating in any other MCMS activity that may interfere with any cheer activity, written notice must be given to the coach after tryouts or ASAP (at least 48 hours prior to practice or event). This includes, but is not limited to band, choir, clubs, & other sports.

1L: Camp Expectations:

1. **Camp is mandatory and every cheerleader is expected to attend camp.** Camp is TBA.
2. Camp is physically demanding. Drink plenty of water and sleep at night. De-hydration and grumpiness are not beneficial to the team during camp. Make every effort to avoid both.
3. Because sleep is important, you should get at least 9-10 hours of sleep.

SECTION 2: DISCIPLINE DEMERIT SYSTEM

This code sets high standards for its cheerleaders.

- The coach at any cheerleading practice or event may give demerits to any cheerleader.
- Record of demerits will be kept by the coach only and you may ask at any appropriate time what your status is.
- Should you break a rule punishable by a demerit, approach the coach/manager and sign for your demerit immediately/after practice or event (whenever your coach deems appropriate). Arguing about a demerit or refusing to sign for a demerit is punishable with another demerit.
- Any consequences related to an office referral will earn demerits in addition to administrative discipline. Cheerleaders are considered leaders in the school and should stay out of trouble.
- Highly unusual circumstances should be addressed with your coach immediately.

Other conditioning will be used in response to minor offenses. Conditioning presents no physical danger to the student. Conditioning is non-confrontational. The coach is not placing herself in a position of provoking a hostile response. This type of conditioning serves no other purpose than discipline. Sitting out can be used in conjunction with demerits, dependent upon severity of the offense. This includes disobedience, disrespect, school write-ups, poor performance, poor attitude and financial issues, etc.

Sample list of infractions for which demerits may be issued, but not limited to:**1 Demerit:**

- Being tardy to practice. Not being READY on time (stretched, dressed, etc) means you are tardy.
- Failure to turn in money or designated items or assignments on time.
- For captains/officers only – Failure to perform any captain/officer duty by due date.
- Missing or wearing incorrect uniform or accessories during practice/performance including, but not limited to, ribbons not in your hair, hair not pulled back away from face, having jewelry on, missing liners, etc.

2 Demerits:

- After school/Saturday detention
- Excused absence (allowed 5/school year)
- Unsportsmanlike conduct to squad members/other students

4 Demerits:

- ISS assignment.

5 Demerits:

- Disrespect to sponsor/coach or other adult
- Use of profanity
- Unexcused absence
- Inappropriate dress

- Stunting without coach approval
- Inappropriate behavior

10 Demerits:

- Smoking
- Deliberate disobedience to coach

When a cheerleader receives a total of 5 demerits, the coach will personally counsel with the cheerleader.

When a cheerleader reaches a total of 10 demerits, the cheerleader will be placed on notice and the coach will notify the cheerleader and his/her parent/guardian.

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. The coach will have a meeting with the cheerleader and his/her parents and a campus administrator.

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 coach and signed by both the 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.

SECTION 3: GRADES/UII

Grading:

- Grades will be monitored every progress report by UII standards. If a cheerleader's grade is below a 70 in any class and it is during the eligibility time, the cheerleader will be removed from the games and or event and will not be able to perform. The Cheerleader still must attend practices, but must go to tutorials to improve grades. Cheerleader will return to active cheer when UII eligibility is revisited, not necessarily when there grade has improved.

A leader takes people where they want to go. A great leader takes people where they don't necessarily want to go, but ought to be.

-Rosalynn Carter

SECTION 4: SELECTION PROCESS

Captain(s): Selected from the top three scores from tryouts.

Captains will be selected over the summer after or during camp by a selection process and will be determined by: skills demonstrated while a member, an interview with the director/coach, a performance of original cheer, dance and chant, and an application. The coach makes the final decision on matters regarding captain(s). The coach reserves the right to appoint the captain(s) and/or remove/replace the captain(s) if needed.

1. They must have served on the MCMS cheer program for at least one year, except Co-captain, may be a new member to the squad.
2. Captains are expected to demonstrate the attitude & behavior they desire all team members to model
3. Will be responsible for all duties and assignments as delegated by the coach.
4. Will expect all squad members to adhere to the decisions of the coaches, captains, and officers in cooperation with the coach.
5. Captains will have weekly/monthly meetings with the coach.

Criteria to try-out for Captain and Co-Captain Candidates are as follows:

- Grades (No grades below a 75 on report cards)
- Conduct (No N's or U's in conduct)
- Prepare 1 Cheer, and 1 Dance
- Skills (ability to learn camp material at fast pace) demonstrated through Camps and practices
- Attitude and behavior toward team members, camps, and coaches
- Dependability (demerits from previous year, will be reviewed)
- Leadership skills and ability to lead the team to greatness
- Attendance and Tardiness (if previously on squad and school)
- Team Spirit and dedication to squad