The Cheerleaders of Thurgood Marshall High School are the athletic spirit leaders of the school. The Cheerleading organization includes Varsity and Junior Varsity cheer squads and one mascot. Two coaches, consult(s), and a parent organization support this student organization. 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 provided online. In addition to being held responsible for the policies and procedures identified in this handbook, the members of the TMHS Cheerleading organization are also responsible for abiding by the Fort Bend Student Code of Conduct and the FBSID Cheerleading Handbook. It is an honor and privilege, not a right, to be a TMHS 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 High 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 so everyone will be safe**
   For example, we require that your hair is fully pinned back and tightly secured at ALL times. This is not an appearance/vanity issue; it is unsafe to stunt, tumble, or do other cheer activities if your hair is obstructing your vision. It is also important that everyone is quiet and attentive while coaches/captains are talking.

2. **We have discipline to maximize the use of team time and create a team atmosphere.**
   To be on time, you are required to be in your stretch lines 5 minutes after the tardy bell rings. We want to start practices on time so we can be productive, get the job finished, and go home.

3. **We have discipline to foster respect and build character.**
   Many decisions made by the coaches are in response to desires voiced by cheerleaders, parents, and/or administration. The rest of our decisions are made from our years of experience. Marshall 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. We respect and trust you enough to let you have a say in this program; you should respect us enough to follow our leadership even if you don’t agree.
1A. ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

As a TMHS 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, the varsity 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 an Marshall 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. *Be sure to stay

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 privately with the coaches to be heard. I will not voice disagreements/opinions/concerns before or during practice or another event. I understand that the coaches will listen to me, but if they disagree 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 TMHS Cheer Program. I will not intentionally exclude, be mean to, or gossip about any cheer team member. 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: hair in my face or not secured properly, being late to practice or events, not being quiet during practice, 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: workout clothes, running shoes, cheer shoes, no jewelry, short fingernails, and hair completely up.
2. First week of school as specified.
3. Games/Pep-Rallies/Events: assigned cheer uniform, bow, white socks, cheer shoes, bloomers, no visible undergarments (including sports bras), no jewelry, short fingernails with no polish, and hair completely up and pinned back. May include body liners, pullovers, tights, gloves, and other accessories.
4. Freshman & JV football game days: attire as specified.
5. Varsity Football Game Days: attire as specified.
6. Any time we will be cheering or working out, hair must be completely up, tightly secured, and pinned back AT ALL TIMES. This includes bangs and fly-a-ways.
7. Your attire must be properly fitted and clean. Due to safety issues, no baggy/bulky clothing may be worn to stunt in.
8. All cheerleaders must participate and dress in theme for each day during Homecoming week and any other spirit days.
9. At no time may a cheerleader wear a cheer uniform without direct permission from the coach.

1C. PRACTICES
1. During school class practices, cheerleaders are required to be in running/stretching formation 5 minutes after the tardy bell rings. If not, a demerit and a tardy will be issued.
2. After tryouts, all cheerleaders will practice after school during the months of March, April and May.
3. Summer practices will continue after school ends.
4. The coaches will determine practice times. Mornings, evenings and/or weekends may be included in possible practice times.
5. During Homecoming week and in competition season, extra practices may be required and are mandatory.
6. **Any cheerleader who must miss a practice is required to have a parent call/text the captain and coach, 48 hours PRIOR to missing (or it’s an unexcused absence- no matter what the reason for missing).** This includes any summer, weekend, after school, or during class period practices. Making contact does not dismiss any consequences for missing a mandatory practice/event.
7. If a cheerleader must leave school early due to sickness, therefore missing cheer class, practice and/or an event, the cheerleader/parent must contact a coach immediately.
8. Competition cheer practice or performance is not an excused absence.
9. 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.
10. 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.
11. 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.

12. Only team members, managers, and coaches/consultants can be present for practice.

13. If the athlete is too ill to practice, she will sit out at practice. (If she has already had 5 excused absences she will earn 2 demerits for not participating in practice.)

14. No food, snacks, use of cell phones, or personal belongings are allowed in the gym.

15. A cheerleader will only be allowed to sit out of practice with a doctor’s note in-hand at the appropriate practice. A cheerleader will not be allowed to sit out with a parent’s note or with a promised doctor’s note. If a cheerleader decides not to participate, with or without a doctor’s note, his or her participation in the game(s)/performances for that week will be at the discretion of the coach.
1D. GAMES, EVENTS, & PERFORMANCES

1. For football games Varsity is expected to be on the field one hour before game start time listed on the calendar.
2. For football games JV is expected to be on the field 30 minutes before kickoff.
3. 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 accordingly, will not be allowed to cheer and will be given an unexcused absence for the game she is unable to participate in.
4. Underwear 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.
5. Hair is required to be pulled into a ponytail at any game where stunting will occur. The bow is a required part of the uniform and will be worn at all games and performances, no exceptions.
6. 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. There will be an exception for stud earrings.
7. Tattoos will be concealed by either padding or bandaging. Tattoos will not show during performances.
8. At games, cheerleaders must pay attention to the game and spirit constantly. Absolutely NO turning your head or body to talk- 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.
9. During play, cheerleaders must stay in their given formation at all times.
10. 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 halftime. Cheerleaders are responsible for their personal belongings.
11. No cell phones are allowed out at games or events. Keep them in your bag. All calls need to be directed to the coach during these times.
12. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during practice, game, or a performance. The only exception is water.
13. Cheerleaders will act professional at games and other public cheer events. Please understand this is not “fun” time- this is team and performance time. This does not mean you cannot have fun, but you understand that it’s 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:** no stretching or warming up directly in front of the fans/stands; NEVER stunt or tumble without a coach present; be in cheer formation when there is 2 minutes left on the clock; be ready to stand respectfully for the National Anthem.
   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:** you may have free time at halftime after watching our band and drill team perform, 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; be back on the sidelines with 2 minutes left on the clock and in formation with 2 minutes left on the clock.

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.

14. While in uniform, cheerleaders will remain with the squad during performances. Prior to taking breaks it will be the cheerleaders’ duty to meet with the coach as a squad for a report of expectations and responsibilities.

15. If knowledge or execution of a routine is severely lacking, the coach reserves the right to remove any member from the routine or event.

16. Mascots must be in full uniform and in character during all events. They may take breaks if needed, but must complete all events in costume until dismissed by the 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.
3. Cheerleaders must wear ONLY those uniform pieces designated by the coach to events requiring uniforms.
4. 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.
5. Uniforms will not be purchased, 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.
6. 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-shirt, mascot costumes, uniforms, megaphones, poms, etc.
7. Uniforms are only to be worn when approved by the coach.

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. The cheerleader might also not be allowed to graduate or get report cards with outstanding fines.
4. In the event that the cheerleader is terminated due to lack of payment, the parent is financially responsible for monies owed.

1G. COMMUNITY SERVICE
All members of the TMHS 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 Missouri City community and the Thurgood Marshall High 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: Football Scrimmage, Freshman Orientation, parades, photo shoots, PR appearances at media stations,
send-offs for playoff teams, and other spirit activities as assigned by the coach.

11. SCHEDULING

1. Cheer program members will be provided with access to an online calendar by the coach to include all mandatory practices, athletic events, academic functions, community events, spirit activities, fundraisers, and other functions. The schedule will be continuously updated throughout the year.

2. Cheerleaders MUST participate in any and all scheduled events.

3. Cheer program members and their parents will be responsible for all website materials including schedule changes, extra practices, and rule changes.

4. Cheer program members will be responsible for all information given in person, through email, and via the website.

5. Every effort will be made to give two weeks notice to any additions to the schedule as determined by the coach.

6. Every effort will be made to not make any changes in the 48 hours leading up to an event/performance
1J. DUTIES

1. Varsity Cheerleaders
   a. Will cheer at all Varsity football games, home and away.
   b. Will cheer home district boys and girls Varsity basketball and volleyball games.
   c. Will cheer ALL playoff games.

2. Junior Varsity Cheerleaders
   a. Will cheer home district sub-varsity football games.
   b. Will cheer home district sub-varsity boys and girls basketball and volleyball games.

3. All Cheerleaders
   a. Will attend any designated track meets, soccer, baseball, or softball games chosen by the coach.
   b. Will cheer all designated playoff games
   c. Will attend other games and events requested by the coach
   d. Are required to attend all summer practices
   e. Are required to attend summer camp
   f. Are required to attend any other clinics
   g. Are required to attend all practices during & outside of the school day, until release time

4. Mascot
   a. Is required to attend summer camp
   b. Will perform at all Varsity football games, home and away
   c. Will perform at all designated playoff games
   d. Will perform at other games requested by the coach
   e. Will attend other events (spirit, fundraising, community service) requested by the coach

1K. TRAVEL
Must travel to and from all activities in transportation provided by the school or coach, unless the coach grants permission in extreme circumstances with request in writing/email from the parent 48 hours in advance of performance. Parents or approved guardian must pick up their cheerleader at the event, making sure the coach sees the contact.

1L. ATTENDANCE & ENROLLMENT
1. Cheerleaders will be on time to every practice, game, pep-rally, fundraiser, and event. The time posted is the start time. Your coach will specify when to arrive.
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 cheerleading class, practice, or any other cheer event require parental & cheerleader contact to the coaches and captain via email/text/phone call **48 hours PRIOR** to the class period, practice, or event. No prior contact automatically deems the absence unexcused.

6. Outside appointments are expected to be scheduled around practice times whenever possible. Notification to the coach 48 hours in advance of appointments and an online form 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 Coach Johnson or Coach Thomas’s room or text to inform one of them of the illness and absence.

9. EXCUSED ABSENCES include illness confirmed by a parent/doctor, death in immediate family, or another approved TMHS 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 48 hours before the start of a(n) practice/event. Tutoring needs to be arranged before school so as to not interfere with practices.

10. If tutorials are not available before school, Coach Johnson and Coach Thomas needs to be notified 24 hours before the required tutorial. The teacher must confirm with Coach Johnson and Coach Thomas 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 an TMHS event, they may not attend another TMHS event without prior approval from the coach.

12. If a cheerleader is participating in any other TMHS activity that may interfere with any cheer activity, written notice must be given to the coach after tryouts or ASAP. This includes, but is not limited to band, choir, clubs, & other sports.

13. Any conflicting practices or events from other activities must be communicated to Coach Johnson and Coach Thomas 48 hours in advance by the sponsor.

14. All cheerleaders must be enrolled in the cheerleading class throughout the school year in order to participate as a member of the cheerleading program. **NO CHEERLEADER WILL BE ALLOWED TO DROP THE 7TH PERIOD CHEER CLASS DURING THE SPRING SEMESTER.**

15. If a cheerleader un-enrolls in the cheerleading class, therefore becoming inactive, they may not participate in any event where they represent TMHS Cheer. This includes, but is not limited to, games, events, and banquets.

**1M. CAMP EXPECTATIONS:**

1. Camp is mandatory and every cheerleader and the mascot is expected to attend camp.

2. Camp is physically demanding. Drink plenty of water and sleep at night. Dehydration and grumpiness are not beneficial to the team during camp. Make every effort to avoid both.

3. Because sleep is important, cell phones MAY be collected every night at 10:30 pm. Be prepared to surrender them to the coach and be given them back the next morning. Cell phones will be kept overnight by the coach in the coach’s room to keep them safe overnight.
SECTION 2: DISCIPLINE DEMERIT SYSTEM

This code sets high standards for its cheerleaders.

- Any coach at any cheerleading practice or event may give demerits to any cheerleader.
- Record of demerits will be kept by the coaches/manager only and you may ask at any time what your status is.
- Should you break a rule punishable by a demerit, approach the coach/manager and sign for your demerit immediately.
- 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.
- All demerits are at the discretion of the coach.

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, 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, wrong color socks, etc.

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

4 Demerits:
- ISS assignment
- Inappropriate dress
- Stunting without coach approval
- Inappropriate behavior

5 Demerits:
- Disrespect to sponsor/coach or other adult
- Use of profanity
- Unexcused absence
- Deliberate disobedience to coach

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

10 Demerits:
- Smoking
- Deliberate disobedience to coach
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

#### 3A. GRADING:

Grades will be given based on the following but not limited to: dressing out for practice, participating in practice, teamwork, games, tests, being on time to practices and performances and etc.

### SECTION 4: SELECTION PROCESS

#### 4A. CAPTAIN(S):

Captains will be selected by the director/coach and will be determined by: skills demonstrated while a member, an interview with the director/coach and interview panel, and an application by those interested in securing the position(s). The coach makes all decisions 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. Captains are expected to demonstrate the attitude & behavior they desire all team members to model.
2. Will be responsible for all duties and assignments as delegated by the director/coach.
3. Will expect all squad members to adhere to the decisions of the coaches, captains, and officers in cooperation with the director/coach.
4. Varsity captains will have weekly meetings with the director/coach.
ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I have read the 2017-2018 TMHS Cheer Handbook via the link provided. As a Marshall High School Cheerleader I understand and will abide by all stated policies and rules. I pledge to contact my coach directly should there be a misunderstanding.

______________________________
Printed Cheerleader Name

______________________________  _________________
Cheerleader Signature  Date

I have read the 2017-2018 TMHS Cheer Handbook via the link provided. As a Marshall High School Cheer Parent I understand and will help my cheerleader abide by all stated policies and rules. I pledge to contact my cheerleader’s coach directly should there be a misunderstanding.

______________________________
Printed Parent(s) Name

______________________________  _________________
Parent(s) Signature  Date

I promise to abide by and uphold the 2017-2018 TMHS Cheer Handbook. I pledge to always use my best discretion when determining what is fair for all participants in the Thurgood Marshall High School Cheer Program.

M. Gillespie-Johnson/C. Thomas - Varsity/JV
Cheer Coaches February 6, 2017