

SHS STEP TEAM MEMBERS HANDBOOK

PURPOSE

Being a Step Team member is an honor and special privilege. Spirit groups exist to promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, and wholesome and enthusiastic school spirit, and are first and foremost representatives of their school. Step Team members should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position and in accordance with the rules as stated in the SHS Student Code of conduct. **The step team is not race or gender oriented**, and will not show discrimination or favor towards any ethnicity through its name, appearance, or chants.

OBJECTIVE

Steppers are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and remembering step routines. They are also expected to be able to publicly demonstrate a skill level suitable for the team position and the timing necessary for group performance. They are to enthusiastically support all athletic teams through advertisement, personal attitude, and attendance at events chosen by the sponsor(s) and approved by the principal.

RESPONSIBILITY AS A TEAM MEMBER

Members of these groups have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. Because of these responsibilities, members of the Step Team squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior and academic achievement than that of their peers.

1. Always exhibit respect toward others and maintain the high standards and unity of the team.
2. Represent SHS and all of its organizations in a positive manner.
3. Realize that each member of the step team holds a position of high regard and respect among his/her peers, faculty, administration, and community. He/she must be willing to accept this position and conduct him/herself accordingly.
4. Always be prepared for each activity with appropriate materials and proper attire.
5. Attend and participate fully in all performances, fundraisers, and other activities associated with the step team. Fund-raisers require full participation. Jobs are not considered an excused absence.
6. Pay all fees and fines as deemed necessary, by the specified dates.

7. Refrain from violation of the rules as stated in the SHS Student Code of Conduct.
8. Seek changes in policies and regulations in an orderly and responsible manner through the appropriate channels.
9. Refrain from soliciting negative behavior and discontent with other members and sponsor.
10. Be in good health with no limitations concerning movement or participation in any activities.

COMPETITION TEAM MEMBER

Members of the competition team are selected through special tryouts. The selection criteria will be based on the judges' scores from general tryouts, report cards, and/or a brief routine showcasing their talent, attitude, and commitment. The purpose of this group is to represent Sachse at competition throughout the district and surrounding areas. The competition team may also be designated to perform at other special invitational events, as assigned by the sponsor(s).

STEP TEAM OFFICERS

Step team officers are selected by the sponsor(s) following officer tryouts. Each year the team officers will consist of the following: Captain/Stepmaster, Assistant Stepmaster and Team Manager.

The duties and responsibilities of step team officers are as follows:

Qualifications:

- He/She must not be or have previously been on academic or disciplinary probation any time during his/her tenure as a step team member.
- He/She should exhibit traits of leadership, creativity, maturity, and cooperation.
- He/She must be an enthusiastic member of the team, always display leadership qualities, and set a good example for fellow members, faculty, students, and visiting teams.
- He/She will be appointed by the sponsor(s).

Captain/Stepmaster & Assistant Stepmaster:

Duties:

- He/She shall be the liaison among the team, officers, and the sponsor(s) in order to keep the team on one accord.
- He/She shall be responsible for working with the sponsor(s) and other officers to develop and teach routines for all performances.

- He/She will be required to attend extra meetings/practices as deemed necessary by the sponsor(s).
- Should dissention arise, the sponsor(s) will make the final decisions in regard to routines.
- He/She shall support the sponsor(s) on all decisions and discuss any dissention privately.
- He/She shall keep all members of the team well informed, at all times, of activities and practices.
- He/She shall meet with the sponsor(s) on a weekly basis to plan events and evaluate the team.

Team Manager:

Duties:

- He/She shall be responsible for passing out activity calendars, memos, and other information deemed necessary for the group by the sponsor and/or stepmaster.
- He/She shall be responsible for the upkeep of the team's music, tapes, etc.
- He/She shall be responsible for providing instructions for lighting, music, and other pertinent information to proper individuals during performances.

A step team officer can be dismissed from his/her position by the sponsor(s) or school administrator if given cause to do so.

GENERAL CONDUCT RULES

Members are expected to behave in a manner that is becoming to the individual, as well as to the organization they represent. They should be aware that, in or out of uniform, they are representatives of the Step Team and Sachse High School, and should act accordingly.

Members are expected to uphold a high standard of behavior that is necessary for the integrity and reputation of the step team, especially when in uniform.

Proper manners should be used at all times to address adults. Mutual respect and politeness toward members within the squad are basic elements that contribute to the total success of the squad.

Do not ever approach the team's sponsors during his or her work day to discuss step team business. They are here at Sachse to perform a job, their sponsorship duties are voluntary.

Any member sent to IBS for any reason will be subject to review by the sponsor(s) and principal. That review may result in the Step Team member's dismissal from performances.

Students assigned to IBS may not perform, wear the uniform, or practice with the squad while in IBS.

Absolutely no disrespect to Step Team sponsor(s), members or other SHS organizations will be tolerated. Just as you expect others to support and respect you and your efforts, the same behavior is expected of you.

The only time you will perform is under the supervision of the sponsor(s). You are not to 'perform' individually, partially or otherwise without permission. The classroom, hallway, cafeteria, games, etc. are not invitations to 'show your stuff'. If you are found to be in violation of this rule, you will not be allowed to perform with the team.

Attendance at all activities and practices is essential.

~~X~~ If you are more than 20 minutes late, don't bother to come; you will have already ~~X~~ been marked absent.

Insubordination will not be tolerated by anyone, no exceptions.

Any member failing to abide by published school rules relating to conduct, use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other inappropriate or illegal activity will be dismissed from the team immediately.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- Show respect to sponsor(s), officers, or anyone with more authority than you.
- Listen when others are talking or giving critiques and corrections.
- **NEVER** talk back or respond inappropriately.
- Stand or sit in step team position when not performing.
- Be on time for all practices and performances.
- No cell phones or food during practices.
- Chewing gum is not allowed during practice or performances.
- Turn in props, money, etc. on time.
- Only speak positively about our organization and your fellow Showstoppers.
- **Avoid ever receiving a demerit for anything.**

RULE INFRACTIONS

The following are considered rule infractions. Point deductions for each infraction are indicated. Each member will start with 0 point deductions. Removal occurs once point deductions reach 22. Each team member will have an infraction sheet. If at any time a point deduction is necessary, the member will meet with the sponsor(s) and sign a form stating the infraction and point deductions. Rule infractions and point deductions are outlined on the following page.

DEMERIT SYSTEM

Rule Infraction*	Point Deduction
1. Not returning an item on the due date/missing deadlines	1 per day for each day late
2. Late to meeting/practice/performance	1-4 (1 demerit for every 5 minutes late)
3. 5 excused absences	1
4. Leaving a mess in the practice area	1
5. Failing to bring all required items to performance	1 per item
6. Incorrect practice attire	2
7. Wearing unapproved jewelry to a performance	2
8. Incorrect/incomplete uniform	3
9. Cell phone use during practice	3
10. Lending uniform or other members only gear to non-step team member	3
11. Discussing team business outside of practice or a group meeting	3
12. Inappropriate behavior	5
13. Non-compliance with step team standards of conduct	5
14. Unexcused tardy or absence to practice or function	5
15. Leaving practice or performance early w/o permission from sponsor	5
16. Missing a performance due to late transportation	5
17. Wearing uniform at unapproved times	5
18. Soliciting negative behavior and discontent with other members	5
19. Showing disrespect towards other SHS organizations	5
20. Insubordination/ Failing to respect all teachers and staff	10
21. Talking back/arguing with sponsor(s)	10
22. Not following the appropriate channels to seek changes in policies and regulations	10
23. Violating school rules, dress code, policies	10 and refer to GISD policies
24. Office Referral	10 and sponsor review
25. Reassignment Room	10-15, sponsor review and refer to GISD policies
26. "N" in conduct	15, sponsor review and refer to GISD policies
27. "U" in conduct	20, sponsor review and refer to GISD policies

*If areas needing improvement arise throughout the year, other rules may be added as needed.

MERITS

The sponsor(s) may choose to offer merits for services deemed appropriate. The rewards for such earned merits are also at the sponsor's discretion.

*** A sample infraction sheet has been attached (see page 12)***

BENCHING, PROBATION AND REMOVAL

Benching

Members will be automatically benched each time 5 demerits are accrued. (See chart below.) Member attends functions in uniform and sits with the team, but will not take part in any team performances. Member must continue to attend and participate in practices as scheduled.

Probation -- Academic

A step team member may be placed on academic probation for academic/citizenship reasons as stated in the TEA/GISD policies. Step team members must pass all classes. Members failing to pass a class during any six-week grading period will be excluded from all extra-curricular activities for the following 3-6 weeks.

The team member must continue to attend and participate in practice, and attend functions in uniform, but will not be allowed to perform. At the end of the 3-6 weeks, the student must be passing all of their classes to regain eligibility. Members who are * placed on academic probation twice in one year will automatically be removed from * the team.

Probation -- Disciplinary

A step team member will be placed on disciplinary probation once 18 demerits are accrued, or at the discretion of the sponsor(s) and/or principal. While on probation, members will not be allowed to participate in auditions or performances. The member will not be allowed to travel with the team for any reason. He or she will not be allowed to wear the uniform, but must attend and participate in scheduled practices.

5 demerits	Benched <i>until next comp</i>
10 demerits	Benched
15 demerits	Benched
18 demerits	3-week Probation
21 demerits	6-week Probation

*** 22 Demerits results in removal from the team.**

Removal

A step team member may be removed from the team at the discretion of the sponsor(s) and/or principal for violation of the rules and policies of the Step Team Member Handbook. **Once point deductions reach 22, the member will be removed from the team.** If the student progresses to 22 points without having served other disciplinary actions, or during a disciplinary term, removal is still the result, and will be immediate. A step team member may also be removed from the team after two probation periods in one year.

A step team member who is placed in AEC will be removed from the team, effective the day of the placement. The member will not be eligible to return to the team once he or she returns to school. The member may be eligible to try-out at the next scheduled try-out date, at the discretion of the team sponsor(s).

A step team member who is expelled from school will be removed from the team immediately. The member will not be eligible to try-out at the next scheduled try-out date.

Members who have been removed or voluntarily quit will not be reinstated. They retain no rights to team awards, recognitions, etc., which are received after dismissal, although they may have been earned throughout the season. They lose all privileges associated with the step team membership, including step team-only events, use of facilities and uniforms.

ATTENDANCE

* Attendance at all Step Team activities and practices is essential. An unexcused absence is recorded if more than 20 minutes late. An unexcused absence from practice receives a 5-point deduction and will result in team member being benched from the next performance. Absences due to work are not considered excused. In addition, five excused absences will result in one demerit. X

1. ALL PRACTICES ARE MANDATORY!! A **written note to the sponsor(s), signed by parents is required before all absences.** The written note must include the date and explain the reason for the absence, tardies or early dismissals from practice. Notes are required on the same day, prior to practice. In cases of emergency, call or bring in a note.

NO NOTE=UNEXCUSED ABSENCE!

2. Early dismissals are allowed (excused) only for doctor appointments, court, etc.--not to go to work or because of rides. Notes are required in advance.
3. Tutoring is available after school until 3:15. Members must bring a note signed and dated by the teacher when he/she has attended tutorials. Members attending tutorials are allowed 15 minutes to get dressed, if necessary, and get to the practice site.
4. If a member is absent from school, he/she may not practice or participate on that day. All members must attend school for half of the school day in order to be eligible for practice or a performance.
5. Missing a practice during the week of a performance will result in ineligibility to perform at that performance pending the member's audition, judged by the sponsor(s).
6. A member will be allowed to join, participate, etc. in other school related activities without having to make a choice between the two, but, if too many practices are missed he or she will not be allowed to perform in any upcoming events if they are not familiar with the material. (This will be at the discretion of the sponsor(s), and a tryout for the performance may be required.)

Cell Phone Usage- Steppers are not allowed to be on their cell phones during practice. The phone should be on silent or off during class. This means you are not allowed to “go check” your phone while in class. **If it’s an emergency, please inform the sponsor(s) beforehand.** This will cause the step team member to accrue a demerit. Members can use their phones during allocated times.

Cell Phones will not be allowed during step shows. If there is an emergency, your parents have remind101 to contact the sponsors, if it’s an emergency.

Traveling- Parents, please understand that the step team travels. The sponsors are liable for your child, which means your child is not allowed to leave with anyone, except you or the guardian during the trip.

Personal Etiquette/Grooming-

1. Please do not wear any du-rags, headscarves while traveling with the team. Your hair should be managed, meaning it should be styled and/or have a cut that’s appropriate to the school district’s grooming guidelines.
2. When we go to a restaurant, please refrain from ordering over the allotted amount designated for each student. In other words, don’t be greedy.
3. Do not chew gum, or wear big hooped earring during practice.

Members are expected to uphold a high standard of behavior that is necessary for the integrity and reputation of the step team.

Any member failing to abide by published school rules relating to conduct, use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, any form of bullying, whether in person or through social media, or other inappropriate or illegal activity will be dismissed from the team immediately.

***Please understand that there are parts of the handbook took effect when the step team program was solely an afterschool program. The sponsor has marked those items with an asterisk (*). Please understand the sponsor has the right to re-implement those rules and regulations at any point and time during the academic school year without any notice. ***

Each demerit will result in a 5-point grade deduction from the steppers overall grade for the grading period. For example, if the student has 5 demerits, the grade will be a 75 for the grading period, and the student will not be able to perform at the next competition.

Injured members are to attend practice and perform duties to support the team. Long-term illnesses will be handled on an individual basis.

PRACTICES

* Step Team members should be flexible concerning practices. There will be two practices a week, with extra practices scheduled before a performance or competition. * Whenever possible, members should not schedule doctor's appointments, jobs, etc. during the practice times scheduled. A practice/performance calendar will be available for each month's schedule. Each member is responsible for the information on the calendar, and for being at practice on the days and times scheduled.

Members must wear proper practice attire each day (i.e. athletic clothes such as shorts, t-shirts, tennis shoes). No specific colors are required.

PERFORMANCES

Performances will vary, but will include step shows, basketball games, pep rallies, invitational competitions, talent shows, special events, volunteer activities and tryouts. Members must be aware that everyone will not perform at every event in which we participate. Tryouts will be held when necessary and the sponsor(s) will choose steppers.

1. The sponsor(s) may cut a member from a performance for the following reasons:

- Poor attitude during a practice week.
- Any absence during the week before a performance.
- The sponsor(s) see(s) that a member does not know the routine and/or does not meet the standard of performance. This may result in a weekly tryout with one-day notice for the tryout.

2. The sponsor(s) will hold formal auditions for competition routines or any other special event if he/she feels it is necessary. These qualifications are for competitions/special events only.

- Team members will be notified in advance of the audition.
- Judging will be at the discretion of the sponsor(s).
- Choreographers will not evaluate.

UNIFORM STANDARDS

1. All members will be required to pay an activity fee of \$75, which will be used to purchase uniforms or part of uniforms. This fee is due by _____ * Fees must be paid in full prior to a uniform being issued.

2. Members will be required to wear white tennis shoes as part of the step team uniform. They must be clean and in good condition.

3. All members are responsible for the care and maintenance of his or her uniform. Any uniforms/accessories purchased with monies raised through team fundraisers will be the property of SHS Step Team. Members are only required to return the portion of their uniform that is purchased with the step team funds at the end of the year.
4. Step team members will wear performance uniforms as designated and approved by the sponsor(s).
5. Uniforms must be neat and clean at all times.
6. All school uniform pieces must be clean and in good shape throughout the school year. The member must pay for any serious damage to uniform pieces, as determined by the sponsor(s).
7. If you are not in the approved uniform, you will not be allowed to perform with the team.
8. You are only allowed to wear your uniform at approved step team functions and at no time, should a non-step team member wear any part of your uniform.
9. If you lose your uniform you will be assessed the cost of the uniform plus any additional screen-printing or embroidery set-up fees to have a new one made. If your uniform is turned into the sponsor you will be assessed a \$5.00 per item fee to have it returned. It is the responsibility of each team member to keep up with his or her uniform.
10. No jewelry will be worn with the uniform during an appearance or performance.
11. Do not chew gum while in uniform.

TRANSPORATION

Each step team member is responsible for his or her own transportation to and from all competitions, performances, practices, etc. inside our school district. Members are required to ride the school bus or other school provided transportation to activities outside the school district, unless otherwise specified. When a bus is provided as transportation for any event, members must ride the bus to and from the event. **No member on a school trip will be allowed to return home in a car without written permission from the parent and approval from the team sponsor(s).**

Your transportation should be at the pick up site at least 15 minutes prior to the end of the scheduled time for practices, performances, etc. Each member should depart the premises no later than 15 minutes after a practice, performance, etc. has ended

Each team member must have the proper field trip forms on file **two days** prior to the scheduled event. The form contains a parent permission slip on the front and a health information form on the back.

COMMUNICATION

Step Team Members must assume primary responsibility for keeping up with times, dates, practices, and performance uniforms. Calendars are issued at the beginning of each month outlining practice dates, times, and locations, as well as other upcoming events. The sponsor(s) will use several ways to keep the members updated on upcoming events and requirements:

Handouts
Officers/Manager

Calendars
School Announcements

It is your responsibility to read your calendar, check for announcements and communicate with the sponsor(s) if any questions arise. If questions/issues arise, it is the member's responsibility to communicate directly with the sponsor(s). Never rely on other members to relay a message.

FUNDRAISING

Fundraisers are for the purpose of building the team's activity account and to help pay for uniforms, props, videos, contest fees, sound equipment, scholarships, and travel. Each member is expected to participate in all fundraisers to benefit the organization.

RECOGNITION

Each year will conclude with an activity or banquet for the step team members if all fundraising efforts are successful. All members are encouraged to remain in good standing in order to be eligible to attend.

1. A member must be in good standing to receive an award. He/She must uphold the rules and regulations that govern the team and attend a minimum of eighty percent of all performances and activities for that year. These activities include, but are not limited to, performances, volunteer events, competitions, practices, meetings and fund raisers.
2. The sponsor(s) will decide whether or not a member receives an award.
3. Academic ineligibility voids any awards.
4. Members who have been removed or voluntarily quit retain no rights to team awards, recognitions, etc., which are received after dismissal, although they may have been earned throughout the season. They lose all privileges associated with the step team membership, including step team-only events, use of facilities and uniforms.

Phone _____ Alt. Phone _____

[illegible]

STEP TEAM HANDBOOK
ACCEPTANCE POLICY

NAME: _____ I.D. # _____ GRADE: _____

I, _____, have received the Step Team Member Handbook. I am aware of the time involved in being a SHS Step Team member. I am prepared to give 100% and have a positive attitude throughout the year. I understand that my obligations as a member begin with tryouts and continue throughout the entire school year. I have read and understand the Step Team Member Handbook stating the policies and procedures as well as consequences of rule violations. **I agree to follow and abide by all of the rules and regulations set forth in the Constitution and the Step Team Member Handbook.**

Step Team Candidate's Signature: _____ Date: _____

PARENTS:

I have read the step team handbook and understand the expectations required of my son/daughter as a member of the step team. I have read the discipline policy/demerit system, and understand that final decisions regarding all disciplinary actions will be at the discretion of the sponsor(s) and/or principal(s). I am also aware that there is a \$75 activity fee to help pay for uniforms. The first \$40 is due by _____ and the remaining \$35 must be paid by _____.

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Phone _____ Parent email address _____

