

CHEERLEADING CONSTITUTION

Our Lady of Mercy High School 2020-2021

I. Purpose

The purpose of the cheerleading squads of Our Lady of Mercy High School shall be to provide a position of leadership for those who are able to maintain a high standard of discipline and sportsmanship. Their duties shall be to promote good school spirit, good sportsmanship, and organize cheering through setting examples.

II. Scholarship

A. Cheerleaders must pass all subjects to maintain eligibility.

B. A cheerleader should maintain a “C” average for each grading period. Failure to do so may result in her/his permanent suspension from the squad. There will be a probating period. The “C” average will be based on the following point system:

A – 4 points

B – 3 points

C – 2 points

D – 1 point

F – 0 points

The cheerleader’s average should be 2 or above.

C. Any cheerleader who is suspended for grades more than once is permanently suspended from the squad.

III Conduct

A. Person behavior, both in and out of school, should be Satisfactory per regulations in the OLM Student Handbook. Violations of this expected behavior may result in temporary suspension from the squad.

B. No violations of school policy will be tolerated.

C. School suspensions – ISS or OSS – are grounds for permanent suspension.

IV Absences and Punctuality

A. A cheerleader must maintain a good school attendance record and must strive to be punctual at all times.

B. School Absences

1. Football season – 5 excused absences allowed

2. Basketball season—5 excused absences allowed

3. The coach will rule upon other absences

C. School Tardies – No more than 4 excused tardies allowed each semester.

D. Excessive absences and tardies may result in one’s dismissal from the squad.

E. A cheerleader must be present the entire school day of a game, or she/he will not cheer at that game.

F. A cheerleader must be present and on time at school following a weeknight game unless excused by illness. Failure to do so will result in suspension from a game or an event.

G. If for any reason a cheerleader checks out of school, she is to notify the coach. If she checks into school tardy, she/he should notify her/his coach.

H. The coach decides acceptance of excuses.

V. Practices (Parents **must** make arrangements for their cheerleader to be picked up **no more than 10 minutes after practice is over.**)

A. Schedules

1. Summer— Possible Practice Sessions must be attended when held.

B. School Year

1. Time—Cheerleaders will practice Monday through Friday during football season from 3:30 to 5:00 (this time may vary according to the duties of the day—the practice time may end before or after 5:00)
2. Attendance –(**means dressed out and practicing**)
 - a. Attendance is required at all practices (unless excused by the coach). A cheerleader should not send word that she cannot be there. It is her responsibility to notify the coach. If she does not, it is termed an unexcused absence.
 - b. A cheerleader must attend the last practice before a game or she will not cheer at that game.
 - c. If a cheerleader for any reason misses 2 practice sessions during the week, she will not cheer that week.
3. Attire—Required attire for practice will be shorts or loose slacks in cold weather and rubber sole shoes. If a cheerleader complains that she/he cannot participate (cheers and stunts) in the clothing she has on, she/he will be counted absent. Cheerleaders will not wear jewelry of any sort during practice.
4. Review—The coach on attendance at practice reserves the right to review the squad. She may refuse permission to cheer to anyone unable to perform the cheers to her satisfaction.
5. DO NOTS!!!!!!
 - a. Cheerleaders will not use practice time to make up tests. The coach in this case must preapprove absence.
 - b. Cheerleaders will not allow visitors or observers in the practice area.
6. Painting signs is a practice must:
 - a. Each member is responsible for their signs and must make up, if absent, by the required time.
 - b. **Painting posters may cause practice time to exceed 5:00.**
 - c. All signs will be done neatly and put up with tape (tape must be rubbed down securely).
 - d. When putting up posters, all school equipment (ladders, etc.) must be put back where it was found. Each member should look for paint on the floor, and, if present, must clean this area. All materials used (paper, scissors, tape must be returned to its proper spot.
 - e. Each member must paint the designated number of posters each of which must have a picture.

VI. Games

A. Attendance

1. Varsity—will cheer at all varsity football and basketball games and rallies.
2. Jr. Varsity—will cheer at all Jr. Varsity football and basketball games and possibly at all Varsity home football games and pep rallies.

B. Absences

1. Missing a game for any reason requires a written excuse signed by the parents. Excused absences (2 football season and 4 basketball season) will be granted for illness and/or emergencies of a serious nature.
2. The following 2 games or events will be forfeited for an unexcused absence.
3. Cheerleaders and parents should note carefully that a cheerleader is expected to put her cheerleading duties second only to academics. (This includes all outside activities—boyfriends and girlfriends included) The signatures of the cheerleader and their parents indicate that this will be done. Excuses must be presented to and approved by the coach.

C. Arrival

Cheerleaders will arrive at least 30 minutes before each game and will report to the designated area:

1. Football Games: Home and Away in the coach's room to wait to board the bus.
2. Basketball Games: Home: In the coach's room.
Away: In the coach's room to wait to board the bus.

D. Responsibilities

1. In addition to promoting good spirit, sportsmanship, and organized cheering, cheerleaders will act as hostess/host to any visiting squads—cheerleaders will have the objective of promoting good relations between the two schools at all times.
2. The cheerleaders are to remain together throughout the game and may not leave the playing area except in cases of emergency while the game is in progress.
3. Each member is required to stand in her/his place while the game is in progress. This is to avoid gathering in circles.

4. Cheerleaders will not huddle in circles on the gym court after cheers to discuss the cheer. They will cheer, leave the court with pep and smiles, and not talk to each other while moving to chanting position.
- E. Breaks
The coach and the captain will work out breaks.

VII. Personal Behavior

- A. All cheerleaders are expected to maintain character above reproach, personal appearance and habits of which there can be not criticism. They must be a credit to the school at all times.
- B. In the purpose (Article I), it was stated that cheering was for those who were able to maintain high standards; it was defined as being a position of leadership. If a cheerleader cannot assume her responsibility to her school as one of its leaders, then she is no asset to the squad.
- C. A cheerleader must constantly strive to exert desirable influences on others. She must remember that as a cheerleader, her attitudes and actions are in the eyes of outsiders, the attitude of the school.
- D. If cheerleaders are members of other organizations, THEY ARE EXPECTED TO PUT CHEERLEADING FIRST. Other activities are not to interfere with practice, games, or pep rallies.
- E. CHEERLEADING DESIRE IS MOST IMPORTANT. It must come from the heart.
- F. Always have a genuine, natural smile. A crowd can always tell if your smile and attitude is sincere!!!! Remember to act natural in front of crowds at all times. They will not respond to your cheers if you do not act natural and sincere.
- G. Her belief should be that "Our Lady of Mercy is the very best." Her goal should be to illustrate this to others. She must be careful to note, at the same time, the difference in having "pride" in her school's achievements and "arrogance" about them. All cheerleaders will observe the following:
 1. She will abide by policies and regulations established by the school and administration. This includes the dress code.
 2. She/he will maintain a desirable attitude in her/his classes. If not, she/he is subject to suspension.
 3. She/he will remain loyal to her/his school and squad.
 4. She/he will display good sportsmanship at all times, this includes no screaming at the referees and opposing teams.
 5. She/he will display good manners:
 - a. She/he will not comb her/his hair and/or apply make-up publicly (bus included).
 - b. She/he will not exhibit public displays of affection. Any public display of affection involving a cheerleader will be termed her/his fault and will carry a benching penalty. This involves both school and games.
 6. She/he will be courteous to visitors (teams, cheerleaders, and spectators).
 7. She/he will use no profanity or off color remarks.
 8. She/he will not smoke or drink anywhere or anytime.
 9. She/he will strive for neatness in appearance.
 10. She/he will be moderate in dress, make-up, and hairstyle. There will be no wigs or hairpieces worn during cheering. Weaves will be at the discretion of the coach
 11. She/he will observe good health habits.
 12. She/he will be courteous and friendly to members of their own squad. There will be no conversation about disagreements, votes, etc., within the squad. She/he will not make or repeat slanderous remarks about their squad. Any cheerleader doing so is subject to suspension from the squad.
 13. She/he will stand at attention during the national anthem and pledge to the flag and remain at attention until the flag has left the field or court.

VIII. Uniform

- A. Each cheerleader will furnish her/his camp gear (if applicable). This will cost approximately \$200, this price includes shirts and shorts for camp and a wind suit which will be worn during football and basketball season.
- B. The coach must approve all materials.
- C. School uniforms will be furnished by the school and are the property of Our Lady of Mercy High School and should not be abused or worn when not involved in a game.
- D. Uniforms must be neat at all times. This includes proper dry cleaning if necessary.
- E. All equipment will be returned to school by the due date (announced in the spring). At that time, uniforms will be taken to the dry cleaners by the coach. A dry cleaning fee (per piece) will be paid by each cheerleader as part of their cheerleading fees.

Anytime a cheerleader is in uniform the following will apply:

1. NO DEFECT SUCH AS
 - a. unclean uniform
 - b. unbrushed uniform
 - c. unpressed uniform
 - d. broken zipper
 - e. loose or missing buttons
 - f. dirty socks and/or shoes
2. No jewelry of any sort will be worn.
3. All make-up should be applied neatly, no false eyelashes. Fingernails must be kept to ¼ inch in length. No polish or acrylic nails allowed.
4. Hair longer than shoulder length (shoulder length defined by the coach) must be worn up in an attractive style while cheering. The hair must be worn away from the face while cheering. There will be no scarves, ribbons, or bands in hair unless the entire squad chooses to wear them.
5. Cheerleaders must wear bikini style pants; black or white according to the uniform. Girls must wear black or white bras under their uniforms. Bras or bra straps must not be visible.

IX. Equipment

The megaphones and shakers are the property of the school and must be kept in acceptable condition at all times. If severely damaged, the cost for replacing these items is approximately \$50 - \$75.

X. Advisor's Records

It is each member's responsibility to see that the coach has the following on file. Until this record is completed, the member will not cheer.

- A. Correct schedule of all classes (this is to be updated each semester).
- B. Indication that the member carries school insurance or is covered by a policy of the parents.
- C. Record of the parent's address
- D. Name and number of family doctor
- E. Home phone number
- F. Emergency phone number
- G. Current physical that will not expire during the cheering seasons

XI Monies

Cheerleaders are responsible for participating in all moneymaking projects. There will be a penalty for cheerleaders who consistently fail to assist with projects and pull their own weight.

XII Road Trips

Cheerleaders will ride the bus in designated seats with the coach to and from all games. The bus will pick up the cheerleaders at the school and will return them to the school. The coach will wait only 10 minutes on return to school. It is the responsibility of the parents to make arrangements for their cheerleader to be picked up at the proper time after practices and games. The coaches' time and the safety of the cheerleaders are very valuable and cannot be overlooked or abused by parents' tardiness.

Cheerleaders will sit with the squad members and not with the band members or ball team players.

Special permission may be given by the coach for a cheerleader to ride home with their PARENTS ONLY from any game. Parents must speak with the coaches personally face to face in order to insure the safety of the cheerleaders. These must be very special circumstances and permission will be limited and granted only after discussion with the parents.

XIII. Home Discipline

It is imperative that each cheerleader be present at every practice and at all events. Hence, parents of each cheerleader must agree to find methods of punishing their student other than preventing her participating fully

in the squad's activities. Any parent who cannot comply with this request should not allow their daughter to try out.

XIV. Projects

There might be moneymaking projects during the year. Each cheerleader will be expected to do her share. Cheerleaders who fail to carry their share of responsibility will be letting the squad down, and they will be subject to a penalty. This applies to summer projects and all other projects throughout the year.

XV. Officers

A. **The coach will select the captain.** Any member who holds another major office (decided by the coach) cannot hold a cheerleading office.

1. Captain

The squad will respect the decision of the captain or face the possibility of suspension or permanent removal from the squad if this cannot be resolved!!!!!!!!!!!!

The captain's duties will include the following:

- a. She/he is to first get the approval of the coach before any action may be taken and is to work closely with the coach!!!!!!!!
- b. She/he will organize practice.
- c. She/he will begin practice at the time designated by the coach.
- d. She/he will select cheers and chants to be done at practices and games. She/he will give the starting and stopping signals. Others may also start and stop chants as long as the captain and squad are in agreement with this idea. The captain's decision is final, under no circumstances should there be arguing over her decision!!!!!!
- e. She/he will notify cheerleaders when necessary.
- f. She/he will post a prearranged schedule of feature posters for all games (subject to change).
- g. She/he will supervise gym set-up for rallies.
- h. She/he will be quick to call for a group meeting in case of disagreement among the squad. The coach will have the final say.
- i. She/he will be responsible for disciplining her/himself and the squad at all times and all events. Failure to report infractions or questionable actions will result in her/his being benched.
- j. She/he will remember that she/he is also a member of the squad and will observe the same rules she expects her/his squad to observe.

2. Co-captains

The co-captains will serve as aides to the captain as she/he or the coach designates. They will act as captain in the absence of the captain.

- a. One co-captain will handle all correspondence—welcome to visiting squads. She/he will keep a record of each member's attendance for practice and games. She/he will work out yell routines with visiting squads prior to the game. She/he will handle refreshments to visiting squads.
- b. One co-captain will be responsible for maintaining supplies (report in advance to coach when paint, paper, tape, etc., is needed), keeping work area (cheerleading room) orderly, and keeping all paints covered and brushes and sinks clean after days of painting.

The two co-captains will exchange duties between seasons.

XVI. Suspension

A. Definition

Suspension is a period of time during which a cheerleader will not participate in cheering activities other than practice. She is suspended from any activities or events that fall within that period of time. The suspension may vary depending on the nature of the offense.

B. Types

1. Temporary Suspension

This may involve a game(s) or a grading period. Offenses involving temporary suspension are stipulated throughout this constitution. Suspension resulting from any infractions of these rules requires that the cheerleader sit with the coach at the events during the temporary suspension (she may be in uniform)

2. Permanent Suspension

- a. This involves the time of the date of suspension until the next tryouts. Any award the cheerleader would have received is automatically cancelled.
- b. A cheerleader is subject to permanent suspension for the following:
 1. Immorality
 2. Insubordination
 3. Failure to attend games (unless excused)
 4. ISS and OSS

XVII. Awards

A letter will be given for one year's Varsity cheerleading completed—for seniors, this includes working with tryouts.

All eligible Jr. Varsity cheerleaders will cheer during the homecoming games with the Varsity squad.

Suspension of an award is at the discretion of the cheerleading coach.

XVIII. Cheerleading Coach

The cheerleaders will be under the direction of a faculty advisor/coach appointed by the principal and will obey her directions at all times. Any questions relative to cheerleading are to be discussed with the coach for a decision first. Procedures are not decided by majority vote.

Duties

1. She has the power to decide on practices not covered in this constitution.
2. She will approve excuses, practices, purchases, program agenda, sale of ribbons/shirts, and other matters pertaining to and involving cheerleaders.
3. She will attend games.
4. She will supervise practices when necessary or possible.
5. She will remove from the squad anyone failing to uphold the standards outlined in this constitution.

Both cheerleaders and parents are expected to READ this Constitution and BE AWARE of the information contained in this document.

Your signatures below attest to this policy.

Parent Signature & Date: _____

Cheerleader Signature & Date: _____