

Midlothian ISD Cheer Constitution

2023-2024

Updated: January 18, 2023

Purpose

The Midlothian ISD Cheerleading/Mascot Program provides students the opportunity to develop and promote school spirit as an individual and as a group through the entire school year. The program's focus is on an appreciation of the techniques, skills, and athletic endeavor associated with cheerleading. The program recognizes and appreciates the inherent benefits of group participation and personal development. The program builds leaders while promoting school and community spirit.

For the purpose of this document, "Squad Members" refers to all cheerleaders, mascots and managers.

Article I: Selection Process

A. Eligibility

1. Candidates must be legally enrolled and attending her/his school in accordance with current district policy on the first day of tryout clinic, unless they will be rezoned by the district.
2. There will be 2 available parent informational meetings about tryouts. At least one parent/guardian should attend one of the available meetings along with the candidate.
3. Candidates with outstanding cheer balances are ineligible to try out. Outstanding balances include, but are not limited to: uniform/equipment purchases, mandatory fundraising allotments, returned check fees.
4. Candidates who are removed from any school cheer or drill team for disciplinary reasons or quit the team for any reason may not try out the following school year.

B. Tryouts

1. Two or more independent cheerleading judges will judge candidates individually and/or in small groups.
2. The method used to determine the selection process and score sheet categories will be provided at the parent information meeting.
3. Candidates that are selected for the MISD Cheer Squads will be comprised of students according to the following classifications:
 - a. FSMS, WGMS and DMS: Incoming 7th and 8th graders
 - i. Middle schools have one cheer squad composed of incoming 7th and 8th graders. The number of individuals selected will be based on the natural break of scores and the needs of the program.
 - b. MHS & HHS:
 - i. Incoming 9th graders who make the cheer squad will be placed on a sub-varsity team, if it exists. The number of individuals selected will be based on the natural break of scores and the needs of the program.
 - ii. Incoming 10th and 11th graders will be placed on either the sub-varsity team or varsity team, if a sub-varsity team exists. The number of individuals selected for

the varsity team will be determined by the maximum number of cheerleaders allowed to compete in UIL Spirit State Championships, the natural break of scores, and the needs of the program.

- iii. Concerning tryouts for the 23-24 school year, incoming 12th grade squad members who are in good standing in the cheerleading program and have successfully completed the current cheer season on a Midlothian ISD varsity or sub-varsity team, will be placed on the varsity cheer team he/she is zoned for. The participation of these students in tryouts will be at the coaches' discretion.
 - iv. Starting for the 24-25 tryouts, incoming 12th grade squad members who are in good standing in the cheerleading program and have successfully completed the current cheer season on a varsity team will be placed on the varsity team that he/she is zoned for. Incoming 12th grade squad members who are in good standing in the cheerleading program and have successfully completed the current cheer season on a sub-varsity team can choose to either tryout for the varsity team or can choose to be placed on the sub-varsity team for his/her senior year. The tryout participation of the incoming 12th grade squad members in these two categories will be at the coaches' discretion.
4. Candidate selection posting will be made within 72 hours of the cheerleading tryout unless extenuating circumstances arise. Results will be verified by campus administration. Specific instructions (i.e. posting date, posting time, website, etc.) will be communicated before tryout dismissal.
 5. A squad member's term begins the day the squad is announced and ends once the tryout process is complete the following year.
 6. Selections of captains/officers/leaders are at the sole discretion of the coach.

Article II: Cheer Squad Member Expectations

A. Expectations for Class, Practice, Performances, Competitions and Other Events

1. General Expectations
 - a. Squad members should arrive on time for all classes, practices and events.
 - b. Squad members are required to be fully dressed in the assigned attire (jewelry off, socks and shoes on, hair, make up, etc.) and ready for class five minutes after the tardy bell.
 - c. No gum is allowed during practices or performances.
 - d. Squad members are required to fully participate with 100% effort in all practices/games and performances and in events that promote school spirit including but not limited to dress up days, etc.
 - e. Squad members will be cooperative and respectful to the coach and teammates during class, practices and events.
 - a. Practices outside of the school day are called by the coach when necessary. No practices may be held without a coach or coach's designee in attendance.
 - b. Squad members will cheer/participate at games designated by the coach.
2. Attire / Dress Code
 - a. Squad members will wear the following to class/practices: assigned shirt, cheer-type shorts, cheer shoes and socks.
 - b. Uniforms will be chosen by the coach. Cheerleaders must wear the designated uniform for each event.

- c. ALL jewelry, visible or not, including studs, MUST be removed prior to any cheerleading event or practice. Squad members may not have disruptive body piercing such as tongue, nose, navel, or eyebrow piercing for safety reasons.
- d. Squad members may not have visible tattoos that are distracting, lewd, vulgar or depict profanity or prohibited items (alcohol, drugs, tobacco).
- e. Fingernails must be trimmed according to NFHS safety guidelines. *NFHS Spirit Rule: “Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept at an appropriate length (short, near the end of the fingers) to minimize risk for the participants.”*
- f. Hair will be worn away from the face and eyes, pulled back tightly while cheering as designated by the coach. Bangs must be pulled back and secured. Hair accessories will be approved by the coach.

3. Uniforms

- a. Squad members will wear the designated school uniform as directed by the coach.
- b. Appropriate undergarments will be worn at all times with the uniform. Undergarments should be discreet (not show) and neutral in color.
- c. Squad members will refrain from allowing other students to wear parts of their uniform (including jackets) at all times.
- d. Uniforms must be clean, in presentable condition, and fit appropriately at every performance. In the event that a uniform is unable to be cleaned or no longer fits, it must be replaced prior to performing at the student’s expense.
- e. Before any alterations may be made to any uniform, WRITTEN approval must be obtained from the coach. If the uniform is altered too short, too tight, etc. the uniform must be altered back to its original condition at the cheerleader’s cost. In the event that this is unsuccessful, the cheerleader will be required to purchase the uniform at full price. If a uniform must be ordered to meet modesty requirements, the cheerleader will not perform until the new uniform can be obtained.
- f. Uniforms (including the cheer warm-up) will be worn only when serving as a cheerleader or mascot and representing the school. Parts of the uniform are never to be worn separately, with other clothes, unless discussed and approved by the coach.
- g. At the end of the season, or in the event that a squad member quits or is dismissed from the squad, uniforms and all school-owned equipment must be returned in clean and good condition. Failure to turn in school owned uniforms and equipment will result in being placed on the student obligation list overseen by administration.
- c. If a uniform is lost or stolen, the squad member must pay to replace it.

4. Locker rooms

- a. Locker rooms will be kept clean at all times. It is the squad member’s responsibility to supply his/her own combination lock and secure personal items in lockers. Coaches ARE NOT responsible for unsecured personal items.

5. Class Assignments

- a. Squad members will turn in “assignments” on the due date for class. “Assignments” may include, but are not limited to, fundraising materials, signed documents, cheer lists, posters, etc.
- b. Coaches may administer “tests” as needed. “Tests” may include, but are not limited to, knowledge and execution of cheers, sidelines, or dances, knowledge of constitution rules, etc.

6. Attendance, Absences & Communication

- a. Squad members should communicate with the cheer coach regarding all absences prior to the absence. Squad members must email the coach prior to class in the event that he/she will be absent from class.

- b. At the coach's discretion, squad members must be in attendance to cheer class and practices for the week prior to a pep rally, game, parade, or other specified special performance in order to be eligible to participate in the performance. If a squad member is not in attendance at school on a game day or performance day, his/her participation will be at the discretion of the coach and/or administration. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the absence will be evaluated by administration.
- c. Practice schedules including dates, times, and places will be published when distribution is possible. Notification of extra practices will be handled during practices/class, email, and/or other approved electronic communication. It is the squad member's responsibility to know when practices are being held and to attend those practices.
- d. If a squad member is injured, he/she should attend the activity and support the team members. If a squad member must sit-out three or more consecutive days during the year, a doctor's notes will be required. Absences will only be allowed in extreme conditions (i.e. sick with doctor's note outlining the medical condition that would mandate missing, hospitalization, funeral, etc.)

B. Other Program Expectations

- 1. Camp
 - a. Squad members are required to attend camp in its entirety.
 - b. Parents, family and/or friends may not attend cheer camp sessions.
- 2. Travel guidelines
 - a. Squad members will follow MISD Travel Guidelines.
- 3. UIL Cheer team
 - a. All cheerleaders are subject to UIL cheer competition selection. Varsity squad members are expected to participate in UIL cheer competition unless an extenuating circumstance is approved by the coach. If selected for UIL competition, squad members must participate in all activities related to competition for the season as directed by the coach.
- 4. Equipment
 - a. Squad members are required to bring necessary equipment to games and events, which includes but is not limited to, poms, signs, props, rain coats, etc. as instructed by the coach.
- 5. Letter Jackets
 - a. Squad members may begin the process of obtaining a letter jacket by making the varsity squad. Letter jackets are available for purchase by the squad member during first uniform fittings for the year the student has made varsity. All patches and lettering must be approved by the coach prior to purchase. Jacket orders must be made through the designated company at the time designated by the coach. Letter jackets will be presented to varsity squad members by the cheer coach.
- 6. Fundraising
 - a. Squad members will be required to participate in group fundraising projects and activities.
 - b. All fundraisers will be approved by the coach with district administration approval. Independent fundraising is prohibited.

C. Violations

- 1. Violations of the above listed expectations can result in missing performances and/or other consequences as determined by the coach. The discipline will correspond with the severity of

the offense as deemed by the coach.

Article III: Behavior Standards

A. Any violations of Article III Behavior Standards may be subject to disciplinary action. Coaches and sponsors will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Coaches and sponsors will strive for consistency in consequences for extracurricular code of conduct violations, but will also exercise sound professional discretion.

Violation of any of the below-mentioned rules by a student participating as a squad member will be subject to disciplinary action.

B. Standards

1. Squad members will be held to the highest standards of conduct.
2. Squad members will follow all school rules as outlined in MISD Code of Conduct, the Cheerleading Constitution, and the MISD student handbooks.
3. Squad members must not be present at any time at underage parties where alcohol or drugs are being consumed by her/his peers.
4. Squad members must not smoke, use tobacco or vaping products, drugs, or alcohol at any time.
5. **High School Cheer** - First time Choices placement of three or more days will result in an automatic probation period at the discretion of the coach. Second Choices placement of three or more days will result in dismissal from the team.
6. **Middle School Cheer** - First time ISS placement will result in sitting out one game. Second ISS placement will result in an automatic probation period at the discretion of the coach. Third ISS placement will result in dismissal from the squad. First time Choices placement of three or more days will result in an automatic probation period at the discretion of the coach. Second Choices placement of three or more days will result in dismissal from the team.
7. Squad members placed in Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP), or are expelled, will be removed from the cheerleading squad.
8. At all times, squad members will refrain from posting, submitting, sending, or publishing inappropriate, derogatory, sexually suggestive, sexually explicit, or any form of negative comments, photos, texts, etc. to any social media or any electronic, public, or private entity which includes, but is not limited to: FaceBook, YouTube, Twitter, Instagram, SnapChat, TikTok, Discord, YouNow, Kik, personal email accounts, personal web pages, personal or private chat rooms, personal texting/cell phone accounts, etc. Sending any form of district-deemed inappropriate photos, comments, etc. will not be tolerated regardless of who the intended recipient may be. Violations that result in school consequences will also result in additional consequences in cheerleading. Violations that do not result in school consequences may result in disciplinary action that may include suspension or removal.
9. Squad members are expected to maintain excellent attendance at school, meetings, and practices. All squad members must be able to cheer at football games during the fall and basketball games during the winter. Other school activities will be accommodated with prior approval from sponsors. Squad members may be involved in another school organization, sport, or activity with prior approval from the coach. A schedule for accommodating both teams will be worked out. It is the squad member's responsibility to communicate all conflicts as soon as they arrive with the cheer coach. Coaches will not go through parents to work out

conflicts. Cheer coaches will work with athletic coaches, band directors, etc. and the STUDENT. Non-school related activities will not be accommodated. Family or individual vacations, trips, etc. will not be excused.

10. In the event of gross negligence, or a severe inappropriate action or behavior by the squad member that negatively affects the team, school, or district, a squad member may be removed from the squad. The building principal will be the sole authority in deciding whether a student's action is grossly negligent or severely inappropriate.
11. Squad members will be cooperative and respectful to adults and teammates at all times. Bullying will not be tolerated from any squad member. Behavior that is thought to be bullying (such as verbal harassment, verbal threats, written threats and cyberbullying) should be reported to campus administration so that a bullying investigation can be conducted. In addition, any substantiated acts of hazing may result in removal from the squad. Students or parents are encouraged to communicate any concerns to cheer coaches or administrators. Any student, parent or other individual may also anonymously report issues by using the STOPit App. The link to the STOPit App can be found in various places including posters around the school and on the MISD website.

C. Cheer Discipline Guidelines

1. Actions in response to violations of this constitution can include counseling sessions, missing performances, missing multiple performances, and/or removal from the squad. The discipline will correspond with the severity of the offense as deemed by the coach.
2. If a squad member is required to sit out during a pep-rally for behavior, the squad member will remain seated for the remainder of the pep-rally, equaling two quarters of a game. If less than half of the pep-rally is left, this will equal one quarter of a game.
3. If a squad member is required to sit out during a game for behavior, he/she will remain seated for the remainder of the quarter and it will equal one quarter.
4. If a squad member accumulates four quarters of sitting, there will be a meeting with the coach, squad member and parent. The squad member will be put on a growth plan to discuss behaviors and ways to improve.
5. If a squad member accumulates eight quarters of sitting, there will be a meeting with the coach, administrator, squad member, and parent. The growth plan will be updated, and the squad member will be placed on probation with an understanding that after four more quarters of sitting the squad member will be removed from the team.
6. If a squad member accumulates 12 quarters, the squad member will be removed from the team.
7. Definitions
 - a. Game = four full quarters
 - b. Pep-rally = two quarters
 - c. Event = one quarter
8. Other consequences may be given for infractions not listed above.

Article IV: Academic Standards

A. Squad members will follow the Academic Requirement (No Pass, No Play) outlined by the University Interscholastic League. Detailed information regarding No Pass, No Play can be found in the UIL Side-By-Side Document.

B. Any squad member who fails two consecutive grading periods will be considered for squad removal.

C. Ineligible squad members will not participate in any games, pep rallies, performances, competitions, demonstrations, parades, displays, team activities, trips and/or club activities, but will still participate in all practices.

Article V: Obligations and Commitments

A. Squad members must be free to spend the necessary time, as decided by the coach, both during the summer and entire school year.

B. The squad member's yearly term begins the day that squads are announced (tryouts) and ends once the tryout process is complete the following year.

C. Yearly approximate costs will be published at the parent/candidate meeting.

D. All squad members are financially responsible for the following:

1. Camp payment which must be received before participating in camp.
2. Uniforms/supplies as designated by the coach with administrator approval.
3. Fundraising requirements.

E. All payments are non-refundable. If a squad member is removed from or quits the team, refunds are not guaranteed.

Article VI: Parent Expectations

A. Parents/guardians/parent designees are expected to be respectful and cooperative to other adults, coaches and all squad members. Appropriate language and good sportsmanship are expected. For more information about parent expectation, parents should refer to the MISD Cheerleading and Drill Team Parent Code of Conduct.

B. Parents/guardians/parent designees should understand that the squad member is the first line of communication and should require the squad member to talk to the coach directly to resolve issues.

C. Parents/guardians/parent designees are not permitted to call or text message a coach about disciplinary issues, complaints, or concerns after hours. The appropriate forum for these types of situations is district email or phone and should be addressed with the coach before following the appropriate chain of command within the school district.

Article VII: Amendments

A. Any other decisions made for the well-being and safety of squad members, may be made at any time at the coach's discretion.

B. The district reserves the right to amend the MISD Cheer Constitution at any time with the approval of the coaches, building administration and central office administration.

C. Notification of changes will be handled in writing to all squad members via email. It is the parent/squad member's responsibility to review the amendment(s) to the Cheerleader Constitution. The most up to date cheerleader constitution will be posted online under the Student Life tab on the MISD website. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the campus cheer coach.

Midlothian ISD Cheerleading Program Constitution Consent Form

Cheer Squad Candidate:

I, _____, have read the Midlothian ISD Cheerleader Constitution and hereby agree to follow all rules and guidelines set forth in this document. I understand that if I do not abide by these rules and guidelines in this constitution that it may result in grounds for disciplinary action that may include removal from the cheerleading team.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian of Candidate:

I, _____, have read the Midlothian ISD Cheerleader Constitution and hereby agree to follow all rules and guidelines set forth in this document. I understand that if my student does not abide by these rules and guidelines in this constitution that it may result in grounds for disciplinary action that may include removing my cheer squad member from the cheerleading team.

Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

Cheer Squad Member Oath

2023-2024

Cheer Squad Members Will:

1. Follow all rules and guidelines in the MISD Cheer Constitution, MISD Student Code of Conduct, and respective campus handbook, while at school or while representing the school.
2. Be polite, respectful, and courteous to adults and peers at all times.
3. Complete and turn in his/her class work and homework on time.
4. Bring required materials, supplies, and equipment to all classes including every cheerleading class and activity.
5. Follow the dress code policy established by the Board of Trustees.
6. Avoid gossiping, and will not fight with other students or squad members.
7. Work closely with their coaches, be cooperative, and support decisions concerning all aspects of cheerleading.
8. Be cooperative and be positive leaders of their peers at all times, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, from the time teams are announced until tryouts the following year.

Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date