

Sheffield Cheerleading Program Handbook

Philosophy

Cheerleaders and mascot are student leaders who exemplify and promote school spirit, pride, and sportsmanship. Cheerleaders are able to enhance the school climate by exhibiting leadership skills, such as respect for individual differences, building consensus, academic excellence, and modeling appropriate behaviors at all times, both on and away from campus.

As leaders, cheerleaders and mascot are expected to set good examples and demonstrate high moral standards for other students. Respect for the school, other members of the squad, and the sponsor and his/her authority will be maintained at all times.

Cheerleading Constitution

All potential incidents cannot be predicted, therefore ANY and ALL acts deemed detrimental to the team can result in demerits or dismissal from the squad.

I. Standards of Behavior for Cheerleaders

Cheerleaders by title are role-models and must remember that people are watching everything you do and say. Because of this, the Sheffield High School Cheerleaders are expected to set high standards for their school and to set a good example for their fellow students.

- All cheerleaders must maintain an attitude of enthusiasm and cooperation with all members of the squad and the coaches at all functions. Working together may mean making personal sacrifices at times for the good of the whole squad and doing so enthusiastically.
- As a representative of Sheffield High School, cheerleaders are expected to uphold all handbook policies and state laws while **in or out** of uniform. Any violation of these rules or conduct deemed improper and unsuitable for a cheerleader –**no matter where the incident takes place**- will result in consequences administered at the discretion of the coach and/or athletic director and school administrators.
- Grades will be checked at the end of each 9 week period. If any grades fall below a “C” in a core subject, the cheerleader will be placed on probation until improvement in grade is made.
- There will be some days when certain aspects of practice and/or game situations will become stressful. Talking negatively or sulking never solves these problems. Always consult your sponsor if you have any problems or concerns before leaving practice or event.

II. Responsibilities of Cheerleader

Jr. High & Varsity Cheerleaders are required to do the following:

- Attend and participate in ALL camps, fundraisers, special appearances, kickoffs, and other banquets associated with cheerleading.
- Cheer at football jamboree, all team specific (Jr. High or Varsity) football games and play-off games
- Cheer at all team specific (Jr. High or Varsity) basketball games, tournaments, and playoffs for both girls' and boys' teams.
- Spirit Promotion:
 - Plan pep rallies and other weekly activities for the jr. high or high school (decorating lockers, painting signs, etc.) This may also require you to make extra spirit sticks, bring candy or special props for pep rallies.
 - Participate in all spirit days.
- Dismissal/Clean Up Procedures:
 - Clean up the gym and/or stadium's cheering area immediately following each pep rally and after football games/basketball games. It is clean when you arrive and will be clean at departure.
 - All signs must be taken down and general trash picked up (home and away games). After all trash and signs are taken down, immediately report to the coach for dismissal. If you are seen socializing during this time, you will be given demerits.

III. Parental Responsibility

- All parents of Sheffield cheerleaders will ensure their child is transported to and from practices, games, and fundraising activities.
- Parents will also be responsible for supervising during public fundraisers and activities such as the car wash and other fundraising activities.
- Follow the chain of command, coach first, if you have questions or concerns about the cheerleading program.
- Meet the financial obligation for Sheffield Cheerleading with regard to deadlines

IV. Coaches Responsibility

- Will work with the head cheerleader to schedule and inform the squad about all meetings, practices, games, fund-raisers, game attire, and camps.
- Will supervise all practices, games, fund-raisers, camps, and other activities.
- Will decide on ordering and fundraising, as well as collect and account for all money.
- Will keep a record of attendance, cooperation and demerits.
- Will check grades throughout semesters as well as progress reports.

V. Selection and Membership

- Cheerleading tryouts shall be in the spring with off-campus judges who have no ties with the Sheffield City School system and who are not residents of Sheffield.
- Candidates for cheerleading tryouts must have the required forms completed and returned to the coach before being allowed to try out.
- Physicals must be completed and signed by a doctor before any candidate can participate in workshops or tryouts.
- The Varsity squad will consist of a maximum of 20 cheerleaders. The Jr. High squad will consist of a maximum of 15 cheerleaders.
- The final number of cheerleaders will be determined by the natural break in the scores.
- Each squad will have a captain and co-captain for the squad. Head cheerleader must have served as a cheerleader on that same squad for at least one year. He/She is responsible for all communications affecting the squad and working closely with the coach.
- Head and Co-Head cheerleaders will be selected by the cheer coach. Teacher evaluations, scores and observations shall assist the coach in his/her selections.
- If the head or co-head cheerleader cannot fulfill his or her duties they will be removed from the position.
- During tryouts, in the event of a tie, the participant's information will be scrutinized by the following categories: teacher recommendation, dance performance, toe touch score, back handspring score for varsity and tumbling score for Jr. High, individual cheer score and chant score.

VI. Cheerleading Rules

Cheerleaders...

- Will display maturity, be kind, use sound judgment and good sportsmanship and should continually exemplify strong character and leadership qualities
 - **There is NO room for personal conflicts, so do not bring them to practice, a game, or any other cheer activity. Rude remarks, comments, or behavior will result in demerits.**
 - **DISRESPECT to coaches, volunteers, or teammates will not be tolerated and will result in demerits.**
 - Will support Cheerleading and refrain from making derogatory comments about your squad or other school groups. This includes all forms of social media.
 - Will not use foul language
 - Must refrain from bickering among the immediate squad and/or with other squads or other school groups
 - Public displays of affection while in uniform are **not** allowed
- May not smoke, drink, use drugs or become involved in physical altercations ON OR OFF CAMPUS.
 - **THESE ARE GROUNDS FOR IMMEDIATE DISMISSAL/AND OR PROBATION**
- May not have any visible tattoos or body piercing. Jewelry of any kind may NOT be worn while practicing or cheering (rings, earrings, naval piercings, etc.)

- May not chew gum, eat candy, or drink sodas while practicing or performing.
- Will not have cell phones out during practice, warm ups, games or fundraising unless permission is given by the coach. This includes but is not limited to talking, text messaging, internet, camera, etc.
- Must obey ALL school rules (student handbook) and honor code at ALL times
 - **Misconduct, dishonesty, or ANY reason for placement in ISS or alternative school is not tolerated (see Demerit System)**

VII. Attendance Guidelines

- Cheerleaders must attend ALL camps, practices, meetings, fundraisers and games unless pre-approved by the coach.
 - Summer camp is mandatory for participation as a Sheffield Cheerleader.
- If there is a reason for a cheerleader to be absent, he/she must let the coach know in **ADVANCE**. It is the responsibility of the cheerleader, not the parent to inform the coach of an absence.
- Cheerleaders are allowed 3 excused absences during **SUMMER PRACTICES ONLY** with no doctors excuse required.
- DO NOT wait until practice, game or fundraiser to inform the coach of a field trip with school or it will be considered unexcused.
- DO NOT ask someone else to relay the news of your absence. This is your responsibility to discuss with your coach.
- Excused absences include illness with a doctor's note, death in the family, or school related trip.
 - Excuses must be given to the coach the next time you see them. Failure to do so will result in a demerit. If an excuse is not received within 1 week then the absence will be considered unexcused.
- If you check out on the day of a fundraiser, practice, game, or event you must text your coach upon leaving school. Remember illness must have a doctor's excuse.
- If you do not attend school on the day of a fundraiser, practice, game, or event, you must notify the coach first thing in the morning.
- If you miss a practice, you will be required to make up your conditioning upon your return.

VIII. Practice Guidelines

- You will be removed from practice and/or benched the following game or activity for failure to participate in practice! This includes failing to follow instruction or constructive criticism!
- **Warming up is not optional --- you must participate in order to cheer.** Warm ups will be led by Captain and Co-Captain. You will follow their instructions.
- Will not practice without a coach or school representative present
 - **NEVER BUILD A STUNT WITHOUT A COACH PRESENT**
- All practices are closed to the public. Only coaches and school personnel are allowed in practices. This includes practices held at local gyms in which the entire squad attends.
- You may not leave practice until you have been dismissed by the coach.

- Be prepared for practice in appropriate attire (shoes, workout gear, hair up) with no jewelry, etc.

IX. Game/Performance Guidelines

- **Uniformity is mandatory!** Cheerleaders will match at **ALL** games (**EVERYONE** will have the same look or you will be benched for the game/event)
 - Keep hair color as natural as possible. Hair color must not reflect negatively on the appearance of the squad (example: streaks of unnatural color)
 - May not wear nail polish, have long or false nails.
 - May not wear jewelry of any kind.
 - Will wear hair in a high ponytail or braid at EVERY game - (*if hair is too short to wear in a ponytail, it should be pulled back off of the face*) Hair hanging in your face will be pinned back.
 - **BRING WHAT IS REQUIRED FOR THE GAME WITH YOU.** We will not stop or return home for shoes, socks, ribbons, bodysuits, etc.
 - **DO NOT ACCESSORIZE WITH PERSONAL CLOTHING. WE ARE A SQUAD AND WE WILL DRESS AS A SQUAD.**
- Arrival Procedures
 - Are expected to BE ON TIME for home games and designated departure time.
 - **PLEASE NOTE:** IF YOU ARE LATE FOR AN AWAY GAME, YOU WILL BE LEFT. You will not be allowed to drive yourself to a game, your parents will have to bring you and you will also receive demerits.
 - In the case where we must provide our own transportation to/from a game, you must ride with your parent, an approved parent, or a school employee approved by the coach. Riding with an unauthorized person is NOT allowed.
- Dismissal Procedures
 - **REQUIRED** to ride the bus provided by the athletic department or with your coach. You may ride home from away games with parents only. A parent must sign you out.
 - May not leave games until the coach dismisses you; check with the coach for further instruction and to ensure the cheering area is clean.
- Basic Performance Guidelines
 - No drinking or eating while on the sidelines or in the stands during game time. All drinks are to be kept in your bag. You can eat during halftime. You can take drinks in between quarters/periods.
 - Must be present at the stadium/gym before the game in order to hang the signs, stretch, and get ready for half time. Come dressed and ready. This time is not for you to finish getting ready. (Coach will inform you on how early to be at game and departure times)
 - Return to sidelines or stands at the appropriate time after halftime/between games. You should be in place 30 seconds prior to the game starting back.
 - Do not ask Captains or Co-Captains for bathroom privileges, ask your coach. You are expected to go before the game and during breaks.

- Will pay attention to the game being played and **cheer accordingly** (show spirit) (**SMILE**)
- Participate by projecting voice, using sharp motions, SMILING, listening to instructions, being respectful to your coach, Captain and Co-Captain, and all volunteers
- Must avoid excessive talking among themselves or with people in stands, “grouping up”, or complaining and practicing cheers which should have been ready before game time
- Regardless of score, cheerleaders will cheer and support team with 100% dedication
- During a player's injury, stop cheering and kneel on one knee. **DO NOT SIT DOWN.**
- There is to be **NO TALKING** during the National Anthem.
- May not leave the court or field at any time unless it is pre-approved by the coach.

X. UNIFORMS

- Cheerleaders are expected to be neat in appearance at all times
- Uniforms must be kept clean, pressed and mended at all times
 - Upon receiving uniforms, it is your responsibility to make EACH uniform fit
 - **DO NOT CUT UNIFORMS**
- Wind-suits, warm-up outfits, jerseys, t-shirts, sweaters, jackets, etc. that are part of a cheerleader’s uniform may be worn by cheerleaders only
 - **May not be worn by boyfriends, sisters, brothers, friends, etc.**
- Dismissed cheerleaders must turn in their uniforms immediately
- Damaged and/or soiled uniforms are the responsibility of the cheerleader at expense of the cheerleader, not squad’s responsibility or school’s responsibility

XI. Financial Obligations

- The parent or legal guardian of the cheerleader will assume all financial responsibilities.
- Responsibilities not met in a timely manner will result in probation or dismissal from the squad.
- All camp fees and camp wear including bags and poms if needed, must be paid in full by set due date. If requirements are not met, cheerleaders will not be permitted to attend camp or continue being a part of the Sheffield Cheerleading program.
- Cold weather wear must be paid for in full before the first football game. Failure to do so will result in probation until requirements are met.
- No camp wear, cheer necessities, wind suits, etc., will be given out until they are fully paid for.
- Fundraising is an important part of a successful cheerleading squad. Fundraisers will be planned to assist you in paying your account AND toward the general cheerleading account. **Both are mandatory.** Failure to participate will result in the cheerleader being responsible for their share of the fundraiser and entire cheer bill.

XII. Social Media Policy

Sheffield City Schools are aware of the popularity and usefulness of social media networking sites such as Twitter, Snapchat, Facebook, YouTube, Vine, Instagram, etc., and support their use by student-athletes, provided that:

- No sexually explicit, profane, lewd, indecent, or defamatory language is posted.
- No derogatory language or negative comments used towards other students or school personnel.
- No nude, sexually-orientated, indecent images or altered pictures are posted.
- No negative comments regarding the squad, Sheffield City Schools, or any member of the squad or your coaches and volunteers.
- Does not portray violence or bullying in any form.

Sheffield Varsity Cheerleading wants to avoid the disruptive impact of inappropriate social media postings for the morale and success of the team. Participation in cheerleading is a privilege, not a right. If it comes to the attention of a coach or faculty member that any member of the squad or their immediate family violates the above Social Media Policy, the member in violation will face disciplinary action and/or dismissal from the team and the discretion of the coach and administrators.

XIII. Competition

- The Jr. High and Varsity Cheer squad will compete in two competitions each year. The AHAA Cheer Championship held in November at Wallace State and the Southern Regional Championship held in December in Birmingham.
 - Extra/separate practices that are JUST for competition practice and not game/pep rally practice may be required. They are MANDATORY. The demerit system still applies to competition practices.
- If the squad receives and accepts a bid to the National High School Cheer Championship, all members will be required to attend.
 - Accepting a bid and attending nationals will be a decision made by the coach and administrators based on the readiness and skill level of the squad.
 - If a bid is accepted to national, additional practices may be required. These practices will be mandatory in order to compete and be on the competition mat.
 - Fundraisers will be planned throughout the year in anticipation of being selected to compete at Nationals.

XIII. Demerit System

Cheerleading is a **team sport**; therefore, in order for our squad to be successful, each members are required to give 100%. **Rules and requirements are strictly enforced and will be followed by ALL cheerleaders.**

- Acquiring a set number of demerits will result in benching, permanent suspension and dismissal from the squad.
- Any cheerleader dismissed from the squad or who voluntarily quits for any reason will not be allowed to participate in tryouts for a period of one school year.
- The demerit system is established by coaches and administration and will be thoroughly explained to the cheerleaders.
- The following items will result in permanent dismissal from Sheffield Cheerleading Squads: pregnancy (which would be a health risk) or marriage.
- In the case of **in school or out of school suspension**, cheerleaders will receive an initial 2 demerits for “Failure to obey ALL school rules (student handbook) and honor code at ALL times.” Additional demerits will be received for all missed practices, events, and games. Accumulated demerits MAY result in dismissal from the squad.
- Sponsor will keep track of demerits for all members and the sponsor’s say in giving demerits is final.
- Demerits will run from the date of tryouts until the next tryout.

Schedule of Demerits:

- Five demerits = benching of one game
- Eight demerits= temporary probation (benched two weeks/parent conference)
- Twelve demerits= temporary probation (benched three weeks/ parent conference)
- Fifteen demerits= permanent suspension

Probation is a temporary time period in which cheerleaders must dress out and attend all practices, must dress out (uniform) and attend all games, ride to/from away games with coach and sit in uniform beside the coach at events. The demerit system begins immediately after tryouts in the spring and will conclude with tryouts the following year.

The demerit system will be strictly followed by both sponsor and members of the Sheffield High School cheerleaders. Because unforeseen circumstances can arise throughout the season, the coach reserves the right to give demerits for discipline issues not mentioned in this handbook.

Demerit System Based off of Cheerleading Constitution			
II. Responsibilities of Cheerleader			
All potential incidents cannot be predicted, therefore ANY and ALL acts deemed detrimental to the team can result in demerits or dismissal from the squad.	Failure to participate in spirit promotion	Failure to follow clean up procedures	
Demerits may vary	1 Demerit	1 Demerit	
VI. Cheerleading Rules			
Failure to display maturity, sportsmanship, and sound judgment	Chewing gum, eating candy, or drinking sodas while practicing or performing	Use of cell phones at practice, games, or events without the permission of Coach	Failure to obey ALL school rules (student handbook) and honor code at ALL times
3 Demerits	1 Demerit	2 Demerits	2 Demerits
VII. Attendance Guidelines			
Failure to attend, practices, meetings, fundraisers and games unless pre-approved by the coach	Late to practice, meeting, games, fundraisers, or team events	Failure to contact coach in the case of illness, absence, check out, etc	Failure to provide a doctor's excuse to the coach by the next practice (After 1 week, it becomes unexcused)
2 Demerits	1 Demerit	1 Demerit	1 Demerit
VIII. Practice Guidelines (2 Demerits)			
Failure to participate and/or follow directions from coach or captains in practice	Practicing or stunting without the coach or school personnel present	Be prepared for practice in appropriate attire (Will result in sitting out from practicing)	Leaving practice without being dismissed by the coach
IX. Game/Performance Guidelines			
Failure to show up prepared with all items/equipment (poms, megaphone, bows, etc.)	Failure to meet the guidelines for participation based on uniformity (Results in benching)	Failure to follow the basic performance guidelines	Failure to follow the arrival/dismissal procedures
1 Demerit	2 Demerit	1 Demerit	2 Demerits
XI. Financial Obligations (1 demerit on each occurrence)			
Failure to make payments by due date	Failure to participate in group fundraising		
XII. Social Media Policy (Minimum of 2 demerits)			
Failure to adhere by the social media policy in any aspect will result in a minimum of 2 demerits. Each case of social media abuse will be investigated on a case by case basis and can result in more demerits, benching, or immediate dismissal from the squad. The severity of the infraction will be evaluated by the coach and administrators to determine consequences.			

NONDISCRIMINATION STATEMENT

The Sheffield City School System does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, disability, or age in its programs and activities and provides equal access to the Boy Scouts and other designated youth groups. The following persons have been designated to handle inquiries regarding the non-discrimination policies:

Julie Box, Special Education and 504 Coordinator, 300 W. Sixth Street Sheffield, AL 35660 256-383-0400

Carlos Nelson, Federal Programs Coordinator, 300 W. Sixth Street Sheffield, AL 35660 256-383-0400

DECLARACIÓN DE NO DISCRIMINACIÓN

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Julie Box, Educación Especial y Coordinador de 504, 300 W. Sixth Street Sheffield, AL 35660 256-383-0400

Carlos Nelson, Coordinador de Programas Federales, 300 W. Sixth Street Sheffield, AL 35660 256-383-0400

**2020-2021 Sheffield
Cheerleading Program Contract**

I, _____(print name), have received and read the Sheffield High School Cheerleading Handbook and understand that failure to follow the handbook will result in demerits and/or suspension/expulsion from the cheerleading program. All potential incidents cannot be predicted, therefore ANY and ALL acts deemed detrimental to the team can result in demerits or dismissal from the squad. I also understand that situations may arise that would lead to additional policies and guidelines being added to this handbook by either the sponsor or administrators. Cheerleaders and parents will receive any changes made in writing.

Signature of Participant

Date

Parent Signature

Date