

Gateway
Cheerleading
Constitution and Code of Conduct

I. PURPOSE

The Gateway College Prep Varsity and Middle School Cheer teams support athletic events, school organizations, and entertain the GCPS community. Through these experiences, they help to uphold the purposes of the school district. Because of these responsibilities, members of the squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus than that of their peers. In or out of uniform, members are representatives of the Gateway Cheer and Gateway College Prep School.

II. ELIGIBILITY FOR TRYOUTS

- A. Candidates must be a student, or have proof of acceptance, of Gateway College Prep School.
- B. If a candidate was previously a cheerleader and quit or was dismissed for any reason in the current school year, they are not eligible to try out for the upcoming school year.
- C. A candidate must be able to meet all financial obligations and deadlines listed in the try out packet after making the team.
- D. A candidate must not have failed any two grading periods (9 weeks), consecutive or not
- E. A candidate must not have been suspended or expelled from school, whether they were at Gateway or not, in the current year.
- F. Candidates must have turned in the required paperwork by the deadline stated in the paperwork packet.
- G. Candidates who have turned in try-out paperwork by the deadline, must also have attended the mandatory try-out meeting with a parent/guardian *even if they were on the squad prior*.
- H. Cheer team candidate is required to complete a UIL concussion form before try-out, and a UIL packet and physical afterwards
- I. Candidate must have attended the mandatory clinic and try-out unless there was an approved school event, or injury/illness with a doctor's note explaining the injury/illness in detail.
- J. Candidates must be able to make the summer practices, summer camp, sporting events, and the selected contests of the year. Missing ANY part of the aforementioned will result in the team member forfeiting their position on the team. Those who think they cannot make these should not try out.

III. TRYOUTS

- A. The try-out clinic date and times are listed in the try-out packet. Candidates must attend both clinic and try-out in person unless they are in another Gateway event or injured to the point that they cannot perform. In that case, they can submit video of them performing the *exact material* they learned in clinic. If injured, a doctor's note explaining the injury/illness in detail is required, as is a try-out video.
- B. The tryout clinic and try-outs itself are closed to everyone except the cheer sponsors, candidates, judges, administration, and graduating senior cheerleaders.
- C. Cheer candidates must wear athletic clothing to the clinic. Candidates must try out in a solid white t-shirt (NOT a tank top) and solid black shorts (NO colored or white trim). Socks must be solid white no-show. Hair must be in a pony-tail and NO bows. No jewelry at any time during try-outs or clinic. If not adhered to, this will affect your presentation categories in the try-out score card.
- D. Once final tabulations are complete, the candidates will be ranked.
- E. In the case of a candidate making the squad and then quitting, the next highest scorer would take that candidate's place.

IMPORTANT NOTE: Replacements will only occur before the first business day of May to enable clothing/uniforms for summer practice and summer camp to be ordered and in on time for the replacement cheerleader. Summer practice and summer camp are requirements whether the candidate made the team originally or is a replacement cheerleader. Summer practice and summer camp is when the squad bonds and learns the year's choreography. If an opening on the squad occurs after the first business day of May, there will not be a replacement. Likewise, if the replacement cheerleader cannot make the practice and camp dates, they will not be allowed to fill the open role and the next highest scorer will be contacted and offered the position. Missing ANY part of summer camp or summer practice will result in the cheerleader forfeiting their position on the team.

F. **Cheer Skills Try-out Score:** Cheer candidates will be judged on a Yes/Maybe/No score card by two outside judges and the cheer coach. The judges will look at jumps, tumbling, cheer, dance, and spirit and judge every skill of the candidate as yes (advanced enough to make the squad), maybe (room for growth), or no. Please see the attached score card for more details.

Please see the try out score card on the following page

Cheer Try-Out Score Card

Candidate #:

CATEGORY	SKILL	YES	MAYBE	NO
RUNNING TUMBLING <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no depending on the kind of tumbling displayed.</i>		YES: -Round-off Back-handspring or more	MAYBE: -Cartwheel or Round-off	NO: -Nothing -a weak Cartwheel or Round-off
STANDING TUMBLING <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no depending on the kind of tumbling displayed.</i>		YES: -Standing Back-handspring or more	MAYBE: -Front or Back Walkover	NO: -Nothing -a weak Front or Back-Walkover
JUMPS <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no per jump.</i>	Toe-touch	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Right Hurdler	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Left Hurdler	YES	MAYBE	NO
CHEER <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no per cheer skill.</i>	Motion technique	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Voice projection	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Memorization	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Overall presentation	YES	MAYBE	NO
BAND DANCE <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no per band dance skill</i>	Motion technique	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Voice projection	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Memorization	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Overall presentation	YES	MAYBE	NO
SPIRIT <i>Judges, please circle yes, maybe, or no per spirit skill</i>	Crowd engagement	YES	MAYBE	NO
	Overall presentation	YES	MAYBE	NO
TOTAL SCORE		NUMBER OF YESES:	NUMBER OF MAYBES:	NUMBER OF NOES:

G. School Citizenship/Character Scores: The school citizenship/character scores will be made up of two current *core* (math, science, social studies, foreign language, or language arts/English) teachers of the candidate's choice. The candidate will list these two teachers on their try-out packet in the space provided and *the cheer sponsor* will send a yes/maybe/no Google survey to the teachers. Teacher recommendation scores are confidential in an effort to encourage teachers to continue to participate in the try-out process. The questions will be the following:

- a. 1. The student is kind and encouraging to their classmates. (How well do they work in groups? How inclusive are they of others? Are they sincere in their actions and words towards others?) *Yes No Unsure (=Maybe)*
- b. 2. The student is respectful and polite to you, the teacher. (Do they handle requests with maturity? Are they sincere in their actions and words towards you? Do they treat authority-you-with respect?) *Yes No Unsure (=Maybe)*
- c. 3. The student tries their best in class and at school. (Do they turn in work on time? Is the student reliable to finish activities they volunteered for or were assigned? Do they ask for help or attend tutoring when grade is low or failing?).
Yes No Unsure (=Maybe)
- d. 4. The student has strong school pride. (Do they respect the classroom and our campus? Are they involved in some capacity on campus? Do they speak positively of Gateway College Prep?) *Yes No Unsure (=Maybe)*
- e. 5. Would you recommend this student to be a cheerleader and representative for our school? *Yes No Unsure (=Maybe)*

H. How final try-out score is calculated: Members of the cheer squad will be chosen based on the number of yeses, noes, and maybes that the candidate earned in the skills scorecards and teacher scorecards. They have the opportunity to earn up to 25 yeses, with 15 potential yeses coming from judges and 10 coming from teachers. If after looking at number of yeses there is a tie, candidates will be chosen based on the highest number of maybes and the least number of noes. *If a tie continues to occurs, the coach has the authority to break the tie.*

I. Squad Size: The final number on the squad is up to the cheer sponsor who may take into consideration how many stunt groups and competition alternates she wants that year.

IV. MEMBERSHIP RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. Each member of the Cheer Squads will be required to be enrolled in the cheer class. These cheerleaders will earn PE credit (or elective credit if they have been in the class before).
- B. Each member is required to participate in all assigned fund-raiser activities to help the team's needs and offset financial obligations. It is also the responsibility of the member and/or their parent/ guardian to fulfill any financial requirements that the cheerleader activities demand. This includes fees throughout the year, such as candy, craft, and pep rally supplies for example.

- C. Members are required to purchase all necessary items listed in the try-out packet with the total balance paid by the deadline stated in the try-out packet.
- D. Members need to maintain a level of physical fitness that will allow them to participate fully in all aspects of cheer. There will be summer camp and summer practices. Missing ANY part of summer camp or practice will result in the cheerleader forfeiting their position on the team.
- E. Inform the sponsor immediately of any disorderly conduct or activities that would involve yourself or a fellow cheerleader. (This includes off campus and online behavior.)
- F. Members will participate in all team activities identified by the sponsor, including but not limited to practices, pep rallies, athletic games, fundraisers, community events, and competitions.
- G. All cheerleaders will participate in supporting all of the sports at Gateway including playoffs. This may include cheering at games, spirit send offs, making signs, or putting together gifts for athletes as directed by the cheer coach.
- H. Membership and commitment to the team begins immediately after tryouts. Demerits and strikes can be earned directly after try-outs.

V. ABILITY TO PERFORM

- A. Cheerleading involves many aspects of athletic attributes requiring members to stay in fit form. All members will have a current physical on file completed by a medical doctor before try-outs.
- B. Any member suffering from injury or illness will be excused only by a written note from the doctor explaining in detail the extent of the injury and workout limitations. Parent notes for illness/injury will ONLY be accepted PRIOR to that practice/performance. The note must be an email from a parent email address. In order to return to full participation, the member must have a medical release from the doctor on file. *Hand written parent notes will not be accepted.*
- C. Any cheerleader unable to perform due to injury or illness may be assigned other duties to help fulfill their responsibilities as a Cheer Squad member. Alternative assignments will be assigned to injured cheerleaders to earn credit for the class. Assignments are based on the sponsor's discretion.
- D. All cheerleader performances will be based on the sponsor's discretion. The sponsor will and can adjust who participates in various activities at any time.

VI. ATTENDANCE

- A. Summer practices, summer team camp, and the selected cheer contests of the year are mandatory for all team members. Cheerleader summer practice and camp dates are included in the try-out packet. If you cannot make the entire summer camp and practices, you will be dismissed from the squad. Please only try-out if you can make the dates listed in the try-out

packet. Missing ANY part of summer camp or practice will result in the cheerleader forfeiting their position on the team.

- B. Practices and performances must be attended by all team members for all athletic games, pep rallies, community events, and other events determined by the sponsor. All events assigned by the sponsor in which the sponsor gave a two week notice will be absolutely mandatory.
- C. Members absent from school will not be permitted to participate in an afterschool performance or activity unless the student has been involved in some other school activity or prior approval has been made by the sponsor and administration. This absence must be excused and any evidence, online or otherwise, of this absence being for an unexcused reason will result in an automatic strike or dismissal from the team based on the sponsor's discretion.
- D. Excused absences include: personal illness/accident with a detailed and explanatory doctor's note, funeral or death, and school approved activities. Family reunions and weddings and other celebratory events must be told to the sponsor two weeks ahead of time to be excused. Other emergencies/events will be judged by the sponsor on a case by case basis. **Non-excuses** for missing required activities are: out of town trips, vacations, work, birthdays, non-school competitions, college visits (they can easily be scheduled when there is not a cheer event), and other events at the discretion of the sponsor.
- E. Members will remain at performance for the entire time, unless approved by the sponsor.
- F. Habitual absences or tardiness can result in benching, probation, or removal from the team.
- G. The sponsor will set a practice schedule, but additional practices can and will be added. We will have additional practices when the team has additional performances or contests. This may include before school, afternoon, or evening practices. If you are going to be absent from practice and it is an excused absence, you must notify the sponsor prior to practice beginning.
- H. If a member misses a practice, they are responsible for all material covered in that practice.
- I. Tutoring and make-up tests should be scheduled during lunch or outside practice hours, unless approved by sponsor prior to practice. Students who choose to get tutoring during practice when there were other times available will not be excused. Teachers and tutoring companies will be contacted to validate that tutoring during practice was the only time available.
- J. Missing any practice for any reason, excused or unexcused, can result in the team member not making a performance.

VII. GAMES and PERFORMANCES

- A. Each member must provide her/his own transportation to and from home games, pep rallies, functions, practices, and other events that take place in the Georgetown area. Missing events due to transportation issues is not excused.
- B. For home events, members will meet at a designated time and place in the assigned complete uniform with hair and make-up already finished. Members should be ready to warm-up. If a team member is not in her/his complete uniform, including hair and make-up, she/he will earn demerits. You are expected to be head to toe, ready to go!

- C. For away events, in the event that we have/need a bus, members are required to ride the bus to and from away games or out of town events unless 48 hours of notice has been given to the sponsor that the parent will take their child to or from the event.
- D. The team will stay together during breaks in the games. They will not be permitted to wander without permission.
- E. Members will not perform at athletic events when they occur on weekends, holidays, Fridays before holidays, or school early-outs unless it is a play off game OR a competition.

VIII. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

- A. Members will purchase items deemed necessary by the sponsor.
- B. Uniforms and accessories will be chosen by the sponsor.
- C. Each member is held responsible for the care and cleanliness of items and will be responsible to pay for any items lost or damaged while in possession.
- D. Team members are eligible to earn a letter jacket after a full year on the varsity cheer squad.
- E. Payments for uniforms and accessories must be met by the deadline listed in the try-out packet or the candidate will be dismissed from the squad, should they make the team. The next highest scorer will take their position.

IX. ACADEMIC ELIGIBILITY

- A. Cheerleaders must pass every subject at each grading period. If a member is failing, they must bring proof of passing grades every 3 weeks. The Cheerleaders follow the UIL guideline of No Pass No Play.
- B. Any nine-week failure will result in a 3 week suspension from performances. If a member is still not passing after the 3 week suspension, the member will be dismissed from the team.
- C. If ineligible due to academics, the member must still attend every practice, game, performance, and class.
- D. A member is removed permanently for the school year if they fail any (2) 9-week grading periods in the school year- consecutive or not.

X. DISCIPLINE

Discipline will be administered within the cheer teams at the sole discretion of the sponsor, in the best interests of the program to preserve the integrity of the team. *The following disciplinary rules are guidelines only; the sponsor has the sole discretion to assign disciplinary sanctions for any given misconduct, taking into consideration the severity of the misconduct, the disruption to*

the program, and the likelihood that the misconduct will tend to undermine the success of the program as a whole. Members with excessive demerits may be removed from the team. Cheerleaders who are removed from the team will drop the cheer class and get their schedule changed immediately. There will be 3 levels of discipline in the cheer teams. The levels are classified as 1. Demerits 2. Strikes and 3. Immediate Removal. They are detailed as follows:

Level 1 - Demerits

Daily Discipline Infractions will be counted as “Demerits”. Each “Demerit” received by an individual will be noted. Once a member receives 6 demerits, a STRIKE will be given. If a team member receives 3 “Strikes” throughout the entirety of the school year, she/he will be removed from the program.

You may receive “Demerits” for the following minor infractions:

1. Tardiness to cheer class, practice, game, event, performance or report time. Being on campus or at a location but not the assigned position or area is counted as a tardy.
2. Missing or incorrect uniform piece, practice outfit, and/or game day outfit at any practice, game, event, or performance.
3. Not wearing designated game-day attire to school, performance days, or any other days determined by the sponsor.
4. Not bringing designated items to practice, games, or performances.
5. Not turning in specified documents and/or inventory to the sponsor on time. The team member will accumulate 1 “Demerit” each day the specified document or inventory item is late. Examples include medical release forms, inventory pieces, competition waivers, supplies or props for events, etc.
6. Usage of inappropriate language at any practice, game, event, or performance.
7. Wearing any jewelry to practice, games, events or performances.
8. Not pulling hair back when required.
9. Incorrect performance hair and/or make up.
10. Failure to observe rank. This includes interrupting and/or talking over your captain(s), sponsor, or any guest coach.
11. Not standing at attention, not smiling, and talking excessively during practices, games, or performances.
12. Usage of phones without permission.
13. Talking to and/or interacting with friends without permission during games and performances.
14. Removing any piece of uniform during games without the sponsor’s permission.
15. Chewing gum during practice and/or performances.
16. Assigned detention or notice from teachers regarding behavior.

Level 2 - Strikes

Mid-level disciplinary infractions will be counted as “Strikes” and will be documented. The “Three Strike” policy is outlined below. In the event of a “Strike”, the parent will be contacted via email, phone call, and/or letter. Strikes can be given from an accumulation of every 6 demerits. **However, you may receive an automatic “Strike” for the following reasons below.** If a team member receives 3 “Strikes” throughout the entirety of the school year, she/he will be removed from the program.

1. Unexcused absence from assigned practices, games, performances, or events.
2. Leaving practice, games, and/or competition without the sponsor's approval.
3. Vulgar or lewd behavior at practice, games, and/or performances.
4. Poor or dangerous conduct on bus and/or dressing area.
5. Destruction of property or desecration of facilities.
6. Wearing cheer uniform inappropriately in public and/or to parties.
7. Lending uniform pieces or costumes to a non-squad member, friend, family member, etc.
8. Excessive PDA (Public Displays of Affection) including making out in public, displaying “hickies”, and/or any other behavior deemed inappropriate by the sponsors or School Administration.
9. Posting inappropriate photos or content that may undermine the integrity of the cheer program on any Social Media site (consequences may be assigned on a case-by-case basis). This includes making poor choices on social media; posting negative/inappropriate/lewd text, pictures, posts, or videos that undermine the program or the sponsor.
10. The sponsor will deem what is inappropriate or undermining content.
11. Insubordination to the Sponsors, Officers, and Parent Chaperones.

Level 3 - Immediate Removal

A meeting will be set up with an Administrator, the sponsors, parent(s), and the cheer team member if removal from the team is necessary. A member may be immediately removed from the team for the following major disciplinary infractions:

1. Smoking, vaping, drinking, or possessing any drug, alcohol, and/or tobacco product on campus or as a felony/misdemeanor in public. This also includes admitting to and promoting drug, alcohol, or tobacco use on social media sites or in text messages.
2. Suspension or expulsion from school for 3 or more days.
3. Fighting
4. Theft.
5. Indecent exposure in public and/or on any form of online communication or text messaging.
6. Engaging in taunting or bullying in person or via any form of technology or social media.

7. Engaging in conduct punishable as a felony and/or conduct resulting in an arrest.
8. Failing to comply with school policies applicable to participation in Athletics, and/or failure to follow UIL Rules.
9. Engaging in conduct that tends to undermine the integrity of the Cheer program.
10. Failing 2 report cards (do not have to be consecutive report cards).
11. A Cheerleader may be removed from the team with just cause as determined by the sponsors and/or principal.
12. If a Cheerleader is removed for any of the above reasons, she/he may not try out for one calendar year from the day she/he is removed.
13. If a Cheerleader resigns or quits the team, she/he may not try out for one calendar year from the day she/he resigns.
14. If a Cheerleader is removed from the team or resigns, no refunds will be given, and all Letterman privileges will be revoked.
15. Failure to attend Summer Camp
16. Failure to attend Summer Practices
17. Not fulfilling financial obligations by deadline

XI. EXPECTATIONS

- A. Cheerleaders are expected to be responsible for their school work and attendance, keeping cheer/dance materials and uniforms in pristine condition, mandatory items, and knowing routines. Cheerleaders are expected to communicate with sponsors about questions, schedules, absences, and concerns.
- B. Cheerleaders may not have unnatural hair color or nail color. The sponsor will determine what is a distracting color for cheer.
- C. Nail length and shape needs to be kept natural and short for safety in stunting.
- D. Members will be required to sign a social media contract stating they will maintain a high level of appropriateness online as a representative of the Gateway Cheer program.
- E. Parents are expected to be supportive of their cheerleader, the Gateway Cheer program, and sponsor. Parents are expected to communicate with the sponsor about concerns.
- F. Cheerleaders must be ambassadors to the school, maintain academic excellence, and be a positive role model.
- G. Communication over something a cheerleader is concerned about needs to follow this pattern: Cheerleader to Officer, Officer to Director. If needed, the director will get in touch with the parent. Parents should only email the director regarding parent concerns.

H. Cheer parents will be required to volunteer at one game per year for All-Sports Booster Club. An exception to this will be a donation specifically to All Sports Booster in lieu of volunteering.

XII. OFFICER SELECTIONS

- A. Candidates must first make the Cheer team.
- B. Candidates must be entering grades 10th- 12th and have been on the Varsity Gateway Cheer squad for at least 1 year. Middle School officers must have been on the Middle School team at least 1 year.
- C. Officer candidates must have an overall grade average of 85% or higher. Average is determined by 1st semester averages.
- D. Team members who have been ineligible at any 9 week period during the current school year are not eligible to try out for officer.
- E. Tryouts for officers may include candidate choreographed cheer, interview, essay, teaching skills, and teacher recommendation score from original try outs. Candidates will be judged by the director and two outside judges. The number of officers will be determined by the Director. Officer(s) who do not follow the Code of Conduct, Cheer Constitution/ Handbook may be removed at the discretion of the Sponsor. **CAPTAINS ARE EXPECTED TO BE LEADERS AND SET THE EXAMPLE.**

XV. ASSUMPTION OF RISK AND RELEASE FROM ALL CLAIMS

All team members will be coached, instructed and conditioned to compete at the peak of their abilities. Each coach receives training in the dangers and prevention of related injuries. However, with athletic participation comes the reality of possible injury. Many injuries are not preventable. Orenda Charter School District does not assume any responsibility in case an accident or injury occurs. Your signature on this Handbook signature page acknowledges receipt and acceptance of this release of Orenda Charter Schools or all claims, demands, actions, judgments, and executions.

Orenda Charter School District does not provide, and is not responsible to cover the costs of medical treatment for any related injury or ongoing medical treatment. Student families should possess their own health insurance.

Gateway Cheer Team Handbook/Constitution Agreement

We have read the Handbook/Constitution and understand how it applies to Cheer members of the Gateway College Prep. We agree to abide by its rules and regulations. We understand that at any point the Team member does not abide by the rules of the Constitution there will be disciplinary action. We understand that at any point the Director sees that a Gateway member is undermining the integrity of the program it is grounds for dismissal. If we do not agree with the handbook, we will not try out.

_____ Date_____

Candidate's Signature

_____ Date_____

Parent's Signature

Two CURRENT CORE teachers the cheer coaches can send recommendations to:

Teacher 1

Teacher 2