



# Spirit Programs Handbook

## 2026-2027



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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **Purpose of the Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs**

The Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs—which include Cheerleading and Drill Team—are designed to provide students with meaningful opportunities to develop and promote school and community spirit throughout the entire school year. Through training, teamwork, and performance, these programs focus on building leadership, encouraging personal growth, and fostering an appreciation for the techniques, skills, and athleticism involved in cheer and dance.

Students in these programs work individually and collectively to uphold the highest standards of excellence in their performances while serving as role models for their peers. As representatives of Midlothian ISD, members are expected to reflect and maintain a high standard of behavior, character, and academic achievement—both on and off campus.

The Spirit Programs aim to inspire pride, unity, and positive school culture through dedication, integrity, and school spirit.

Members are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and remembering routines. They are also expected to be able to publicly demonstrate a skill level suitable for the team position and the timing necessary for group performances.

This Handbook serves as a document to clearly communicate and enforce the expectations for students, parents, directors/coaches and administrators involved in the MISD Spirit Programs. Clear communication about expectations for all stakeholders should provide the foundation for excellence and positive experiences for all involved.

This Spirit Programs Handbook was last amended on February 26, 2026.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **Midlothian ISD Cheerleading Specific Guidelines 2026-2027**

This Cheerleading Guideline document will govern during the 2026-2027 school year and replace any prior rules, guidelines or constitutions previously used.

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

#### **Section I: Selection Process**

##### **A. Eligibility**

1. Candidates must be legally enrolled in Midlothian ISD and attending her/his assigned school in accordance with current district policy on the first day of tryout clinic, unless the student is anticipated to be rezoned by the district.
2. There will be two (2) parent informational meetings about tryouts. At least one parent should attend one of the available meetings along with the candidate. Any extenuating circumstances preventing parent or candidate attendance must be submitted in writing and approved by the principal in advance of the missed information meeting.
3. Candidates must complete and submit the cheer application by the deadline in order to be eligible to try out.
4. Candidates with any outstanding cheer balances from prior cheer seasons are ineligible to try out. Outstanding balances include, but are not limited to: uniform/equipment purchases, mandatory fundraising allotments, returned check fees and any other outstanding balance or unperformed obligation.
5. Any candidate who was removed from a school cheer squad or drill team or who quits the team for any reason, may try out for the following school year under these conditions:
  - a. Prior to tryouts, the candidate and parent/guardian must meet with the coach/director where a documented growth plan will be discussed that will be personalized to address the issues leading to the removal the previous school year, and may include a preliminary probation or suspension period of time.
  - b. If the candidate makes the squad he/she will be placed on that growth plan immediately.
6. If a student is assigned DAEP at the time of the tryout process, they are not eligible to participate in tryouts.

##### **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. All incoming 9th grade candidates must participate in the tryout process. Incoming 9<sup>th</sup> 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. All incoming 10th and 11th graders and all 12th graders who are not a member of the cheer program at the time of tryouts must participate in the tryout process. Eligible candidates 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 natural break of scores and the needs of the program and will not exceed the maximum number of cheerleaders allowed to compete in the UIL Spirit State Championships.
  - iii. Incoming 12th grade cheerleaders 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. An incoming 12th grade cheerleader may be required to participate in tryouts at the coaches' discretion. For purposes of this Spirit Programs Handbook, a cheerleader that is in "good standing" is not currently on probation or any growth plan.
- 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 (e.g., posting date, posting time, website, etc.) will be communicated before tryout dismissal.
- 5. Selections of captains/officers/leaders are at the sole discretion of the coach. Considerations may include skill, leadership qualities, compliance with the Spirit Programs Handbook and other rules, past demerits, other disciplinary action, or any other factors at the discretion of the coach. Squad members who were removed or quit the previous school year are not eligible for leadership positions for the current school year.

## **Section 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 practice 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.
    - f. 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.
    - g. Squad members will only cheer/participate at games and performances designated by the coach.

- h. Squad members are to adhere to all Spirit Rules, which are provided to each squad member after selection posting.
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. Squad members must wear the designated uniform on the sidelines and for each event or performance.
  - c. ALL jewelry, visible or not, including studs and spacers, MUST be removed prior to any cheerleading event or practice. This includes but is not limited to piercings in the ears, nose, tongue, navel, eyebrow, etc.
  - d. Squad members may not have visible tattoos that are distracting, lewd, vulgar or depict profanity or prohibited items (e.g. alcohol, drugs, tobacco).
  - e. Fingernails must be trimmed according to NFHS safety guidelines. Members are to adhere to the *NFHS Spirit Rule: "Fingernails, including artificial nails, must be kept short, near the end of the fingers."*
  - f. Hair should be a natural color when the squad member is cheering/performing or representing the cheer squad. Any visible unnatural hair coloring that is not a natural shade of black, brown, red or blonde will result in the loss of performance/event participation until the violation has been corrected. 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 must be approved by the coach.
3. Uniforms
- a. Squad members will wear the complete designated school uniform as directed by the coach.
    - i. A mascot uniform for games and performances is defined as the full school designated costume.
  - 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 squad member'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 squad member's expense. In the event that this is unsuccessful, the cheerleader will be required to purchase a new uniform at full price. If a new 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, or when not acting in the official role of cheerleader or mascot, unless 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, all school-owned equipment and uniforms 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.
  - h. If a uniform is lost or stolen, it must be replaced at the squad member's expense.
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 the cost of replacing personal belongings that become lost, stolen or damaged.

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 Spirit Programs Handbook, etc.
  6. Attendance, Absences & Communication
    - a. Squad members must communicate with the cheer coach regarding all absences prior to the absence with as much advanced notice as reasonably practicable. Squad members must email the coach prior to class in the event that he/she will be absent from class.
    - b. 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 in a pep rally, game, parade, or other special performance will be determined at the discretion of the coach. In the event of extenuating circumstances, the absence will be evaluated by the 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 must attend the activity and support the team members if able. If a squad member must sit-out three or more consecutive days during the year, a doctor's notes will be required.
    - e. Absences will only be excused under extreme circumstances (e.g., documented illness or injury preventing attendance, attendance at a 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 squad members are subject to UIL cheer competition selection and eligibility rules.
    - b. Varsity squad members are expected to participate in UIL cheer competition unless an extenuating circumstance is approved by the coach in advance of the competition. Any extenuating circumstance must be provided in writing to the cheer coach as soon as possible after the squad member learns that he/she will not be able to participate in the UIL competition.
    - c. 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, raincoats, 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.
    - b. Letter jackets are available for purchase by the squad member during first uniform fittings for the year the student has made varsity.
    - c. All patches and lettering must be approved by the coach prior to purchase.
    - d. Jacket orders must be made through the designated company at the time designated by the coach.
    - e. Letter jackets will be presented to varsity squad members by the cheer coach.
  6. Fundraising
    - a. Squad members will be required to participate in all 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.

### Section 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 punishment as deemed appropriate. Coaches and sponsors will utilize and review this Spirit Programs Handbook and may exercise discretion for consequences for extracurricular code of conduct violations. Violation of any of the below-mentioned rules by a student participating as a squad member will be subject to consequences.
- B. Standards
  1. Squad members will follow all school rules as outlined in MISD Code of Conduct, the Spirit Programs Handbook, and the MISD Student Handbook.
  2. Squad members must not be present at any time at social gatherings where prohibited drugs or alcohol are being consumed by students or peers under 21 years old.
  3. Squad members must not smoke, use e-cigarettes or vapes, use tobacco or prohibited drugs, or alcohol at any time.
  4. Consequence Guides for Student Code of Conduct Violations
    - a. **High School Cheer** - First discipline incident resulting in an OSS or ISS placement of three or more days will result in an automatic and documented growth plan including a probationary period for a duration determined at the discretion of the coach. Second discipline incident resulting in an OSS or ISS placement of three or more days will result in dismissal from the team.
    - b. **Middle School Cheer** - First discipline incident resulting in an ISS placement will result in sitting out one game. Second discipline incident resulting in an ISS placement will result in an automatic and documented growth plan including a probationary period for a duration determined at the discretion of the coach. Third discipline incident resulting in an ISS placement will result in dismissal from the squad. First discipline incident resulting in an OSS placement will result in an automatic growth plan including a probationary period for a duration determined at the discretion of the coach. Second discipline incident resulting in an OSS placement will result in dismissal from the team.
  5. Squad members issued a Disciplinary Alternative Education Placement (DAEP) will be removed from the cheerleading squad.
  6. Squad members are required to follow the MISD Spirit Programs Handbook and the social media expectations described within this Handbook.

7. 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 that conflict with cheer events may be accommodated with prior approval from sponsors. 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 the student and athletic coaches, band directors, etc. regarding schedule accommodations. Non-school related activities will not be accommodated. Conflicts related to family or individual vacations, trips, etc. will not be accommodated and absences related to the same will not be excused.
  8. 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. Coaches may issue consequences as deemed appropriate upon a bullying determination by administration or if other similar behavior occurred. 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. Penalties for Violations of the Spirit Programs Handbook
1. Actions in response to violations of this Spirit Programs Handbook can include a growth plan, counseling sessions, suspension from performances and practices 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.
  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 of sitting, 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.
  9. All squad members are subject to the campus demerit system and all squad members must acknowledge an understanding of the demerit system for their campus.

#### **Section IV: Academic Standards**

- A. Squad members will follow the Academic Requirement (No Pass, No Play) outlined by the University Interscholastic League (UIL). Detailed information regarding No Pass, No Play can be found in the UIL Side-By-Side Document.
- B. Any squad member who becomes ineligible due to failing grades will be placed on a documented growth plan. If a squad member becomes ineligible for two grading periods the growth plan will include a period of suspension. If a squad member is ineligible for three grading periods the student 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.

#### **Section V: Obligations and Commitments**

- A. 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, even if a squad member is not participating in the tryout process for the following year.
- B. All squad members must participate in all events in the yearly term as determined by the coach, in accordance with the requirements and exceptions outlined in this Spirit Programs Handbook.
- 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 outlined in the Spirit Programs Handbook and as designated by the coach with administrator approval.
  - 3. Fundraising requirements.
  - 4. Additional non-UIL competitions (such as out of state performances).
  - 5. Replacement of any lost, stolen or damaged equipment, uniforms or personal belongings.
- E. All payments are non-refundable. If a squad member is removed from or quits the team, refunds are not guaranteed.

#### **Section VI: Amendments**

- A. Any other interpretations and decisions may be made at any time at the coach's discretion.
- A. The district reserves the right to amend the MISD Spirit Programs Handbook at any time.
- B. Notification of changes will be communicated in writing to all squad members via email. It is the parent/squad member's responsibility to review and be familiar with any amendment(s) to the Spirit Programs Handbook. The most up to date Spirit Programs Handbook 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.

#### **Section VII: Cheer Squad Member Oath – This document is found on the next page.**

## **Cheer Squad Member Oath 2026-2027**

Cheer Squad Members will:

1. Follow all rules and guidelines in the MISD Spirit Programs Handbook, MISD Student Code of Conduct, and respective campus handbooks, while at school, outside of school, or while otherwise 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, bullying behavior, or other similar behavior, and will not fight with other students or squad members.
7. Work closely with their coaches, be cooperative, and support and abide by coaches' decisions concerning all aspects of cheerleading.
8. Be cooperative and 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.

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Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **Midlothian ISD Drill Team Specific Guidelines 2026-2027**

#### **Drill Team Year**

The rules and procedures outlined in this Handbook are in effect for one (1) Drill Team Year. High School Drill Team year is from End of Year Banquet to End of Year Banquet.

Middle School Drill Team year is from tryout date to the following year's Spring Show.

#### **Middle School Drill Team**

Participation in the Middle School Drill Team is intended to be a preparation for High School dance and drill team while serving as a learning experience for future dance involvement. Current 6th and 7th grade Dancers interested in Drill Team must audition for the team at their respective school. If a 7th or 8th grader does not make any team, they have the option to take the dance class for more experience. The deadline for enrollment and/or tryouts is established at each campus.

#### **High School Junior Varsity**

Participation in Junior Varsity Drill team is intended to be a preparation for Varsity dance and drill while serving as a learning experience for future dance involvement. Students wishing to participate in JV Drill Team are required to try out. The deadline for enrollment and/or tryouts is established at each campus.

#### **High School Varsity**

Tryouts for Varsity Drill team are open to all 8-11th grade students in good standing. Varsity Drill Team is a year long commitment, and is intended to build campus leaders, promote school spirit and prepare students for future dance involvement. The deadline for enrollment and/or tryouts is established at each campus.

#### **Commitment**

Students selected to be a member of the Drill Team are expected to make a commitment to the activity for a full Drill Team Year. Members are expected to attend camps, and scheduled rehearsals and remain in good standing. Good standing as a team member is defined as a member who has maintained their grades, and received less than fifteen (15) demerits during the Drill Team Year.

The guidelines set forth are designed to ensure program standards for all Drill Team members. The Directors and Campus Administrators reserve the right to make accommodations and adjustments based on extenuating circumstances that are in the best interest of the team. In addition, all Drill Team members will abide by these guidelines, any changes to these guidelines will be put into immediate effect with proper notice to all Drill Team members.

## DRILL TEAM TRYOUT REQUIREMENTS

### Middle School Line Member Selection

1. Drill Team hopefuls may try out at the conclusion of their 6th and 7th grade year. All new hopefuls and returning veterans wishing to be a member of the non-competitive drill team must still participate in the tryout process unless specifically exempted by the Director and/or Campus Administration.
2. Any candidate who was removed from a school cheer squad or drill team or who quits the team for any reason, may try out for the following school year under these conditions:
  - a. Prior to tryouts, the candidate and parent/guardian must meet with the coach/director where a documented growth plan will be discussed that will be personalized to address the issues leading to the removal the previous school year, and may include a preliminary probation or suspension period of time.
  - b. If the candidate makes the squad he/she will be placed on that growth plan immediately.
3. If a student is assigned DAEP at the time of the tryout process they are not eligible to participate in tryouts.
4. Candidates must be currently enrolled in MISD and must reside in the attendance zone of the school they are trying out for. Candidates enrolled in MISD schools must try out at the designated tryout time. No late tryouts will be accepted unless otherwise provided by this Handbook.
5. An individual wishing to be a member of the Drill Team at a particular school who did not meet the residency requirements at the time of tryouts may still audition for the team under the following conditions:
  - a. This tryout process must be completed by August 1st of the upcoming school year. Students that move in after August 1st will be encouraged to try out in the Spring for the next school year and may be placed on the non-competitive team for the remainder of the current school year per Director and/or Campus Administrative discretion.
  - b. Proof of residency or approved transfer must be approved prior to the individual's tryout date.
  - c. Audition process for MS competitive team will include:
    - i. Trying out in front of Director and Squad Leaders
    - ii. The Director will assign a tryout routine, either the current team tryout routine or the tryout routine from their previous school
    - iii. Display of High Kicks, leaps, turns, splits, and other various dance techniques.
  - d. If the candidate makes the competitive team, they will be considered a first year Drill Team member, if the candidate does not make the competitive team they may be placed on the non competitive team with Director and/or Campus Administration approval or they may take the Dance class.

### Middle School Squad Leader Selection

1. The dance team will have squad leaders and the number of squad leaders and possible ranks will be based on the scores and the needs of the team.
2. Members who were removed or quit the previous year are not eligible for a leadership position the current school year.
3. Individuals who wish to try out for a squad leader position must have been a member of the Middle School competition dance team for one year at the campus at which they are auditioning.

4. Squad leader tryouts are held after Line tryouts, and may be held in conjunction with team tryouts, at the discretion of the Director.
5. All selected Squad leaders will become active Squad Leaders immediately following the conclusion of the Middle School Drill Team Year.
6. Squad leaders must be in good standing at tryouts and are to remain in good standing throughout the entirety of the school year.

Squad Leader Responsibilities include but are not limited to:

1. Accept the decisions of the director
2. Be a servant leader and role model for the team
3. Know the Spirit Programs Handbook rules and advise members accordingly
4. Aid, when asked, in handling uniform, jacket and prop distribution
5. Report any problems to the director
6. Assist in any teaching or leading additional practices
7. Inform the director of their squad regarding violations of the Spirit Programs Handbook
8. Assist the director in choreographing dance routines
9. Attend additional rehearsals called by the director

#### High School JV / Varsity Line Member Selection

1. Drill Team hopefuls may tryout at the conclusion of their Eighth grade, Freshman, Sophomore, and Junior year for the drill team. All new hopefuls and returning veterans will go through an audition process.
2. Any candidate who was removed from a school cheer squad or drill team or who quits the team for any reason, may try out for the following school year under these conditions:
  - a. Prior to tryouts, the candidate and parent/guardian must meet with the coach/director where a documented growth plan will be discussed that will be personalized to address the issues leading to the removal the previous school year, and may include a preliminary probation or suspension period of time.
  - b. If the candidate makes the squad he/she will be placed on that growth plan immediately.
3. If a student is assigned DAEP at the time of the tryout process they are not eligible to participate in tryouts.
4. Candidates must reside in the zone of the school they are trying out for, and the candidate must currently be an MISD student. Candidates enrolled in MISD schools must try out at the designated tryout time. No late tryouts will be accepted unless otherwise provided by this Handbook.
5. An individual wishing to be a member of the Drill Team at a particular school who did not meet the residency requirements at the time of tryouts may still audition for the team under the following conditions:
  - a. This tryout process must be completed by August 1st of the upcoming school year. Students that move in after August 1st will be encouraged to try out in the Spring for the next school year.
  - b. Proof of residency or approved transfer must be approved prior to the individual's tryout date.
  - c. The individual must have been a drill team member in good standing at a previous school. A letter of recommendation from the previous director must be provided.
  - d. Audition process will include:
    - i. Trying out in front of Director and Varsity Officer Line

- ii. The Director will assign a tryout routine, either the current team tryout routine or the tryout routine from their previous school
  - iii. Display of High Kicks, leaps, turns, splits, and other various dance techniques.
- e. If the candidate makes the team, they will be considered a first year Drill Team member.
- 6. Any squad member who becomes ineligible due to failing grades will be placed on a documented growth plan. If a squad member becomes ineligible for two grading periods the growth plan will include a period of suspension. If a squad member is ineligible for three grading periods the student will be considered for squad removal.
- 7. A consecutive three year High School VARSITY member in good standing with the team may be "grandfathered" into the team for their Senior Year. The Director exercises final discretion in determining whether eligible members will be required to participate in tryouts.

#### High School JV Leadership Selection

JV sergeants are varsity drill team members who assist the JV team. The number and titles of sergeants selected will be determined by the judges, based on scores and the needs of the team during the officer tryout process. Any JV Sergeant who is demoted will not be eligible to try out for an officer position the following year. Members who were removed or quit the previous year are not eligible for a leadership position the current school year.

At the discretion of the director there may be JV Squad leaders who are JV drill team members. Squad leaders will be chosen by the JV director through a process of dance technique, teaching, interview and team vote. The number of squad Leaders will be based on the needs of the team as assessed by the Director. Any JV Squad Leader who is demoted will not be eligible to try out for an officer position the following year. Members who were removed or quit the previous year are not eligible for a leadership position the current school year.

#### High School Varsity Officer Selection and Retention

1. The number and titles of officers selected will be determined by the judges, based on scores and the needs of the team.
2. Members who were removed or quit the previous year are not candidates for a leadership position the current school year.
3. Individuals interested in trying out for an officer position must have served as a team member from the beginning of the Drill Team Year at the campus for which they are auditioning. Officer Tryouts are held after line tryouts, and can be held in conjunction with line tryouts, at the discretion of the Director.
4. Candidates trying out for officer positions must be academically eligible according to the UIL No PASS/NO PLAY eligibility at the time of tryouts.
5. All selected Officers will become "officers in waiting" immediately after officer results are announced. "Officers in waiting" become "active officers" immediately following the banquet for the following Drill Team Year.
6. Selected officers can be an "active officer" and an "officer in waiting" simultaneously.
7. Any officer that fails ANY class\* more than once will immediately be demoted to a line member for the remainder of that Drill Team Year. (ANY class\* - includes all scheduled courses including Advanced Academics)
8. Any payments made after demotion, that cannot be refunded, will be lost.
9. Officers will be held to the Officer Contract and Agreement upon making the Officer Line and if demoted will not be eligible to tryout for Officer the following year.

10. Officer vacancies will be reviewed and at the discretion of the Director and/or Campus Administration may be filled with the next highest scoring candidate from the most recent officer tryout.

Officer Responsibilities include but are not limited to

1. Accept the decisions of the director
2. Be a servant leader and role model for the team
3. Accept the highest ranking officer as the head officer
4. Accept the next highest ranking officer as the second commanding officer
5. Know the Spirit Programs Handbook rules and advise members accordingly
6. Aid, when asked, in handling uniform, jacket and prop distribution
7. Report any problems to the Director
8. Assist in any teaching or workshop sessions
9. Inform the director of their squad regarding violations of the Spirit Programs Handbook, including absences and demerits
10. Assist the director in choreographing dance routines
11. Attend additional practices as called by the director
12. All other duties as assigned by the director

#### High School Council and Retention

1. The council is an elected group of team members whose purpose is to represent, support, and promote spirit within the organization. The number of council members will be based on team votes and the needs of the team as defined by the Director.
2. Members who were removed or quit the previous year are not eligible for a leadership position the current school year.
3. Any Council member who becomes academically ineligible more than once will be immediately demoted to line member for the remainder of that Drill Team Year.
4. Any payments made after demotion, that cannot be refunded from a vendor, will be lost.
5. Council members who are demoted are not eligible for council the following year.

Council Member Responsibilities include but are not limited to

1. Cleaning & Decorating of the locker room
2. Planning outside social activities
3. Organizing Teacher of the Week
4. Planning and making football gifts for opposing team's drill team
5. Planning spirit gifts for other school organizations on behalf of the team
6. Planning winter retreat & banquet
7. Work with and support the dance officers in everything they do
8. Attend council camp at their own expense
9. Meet at least once a month to plan and organize
10. Organize community Service events

## Drill Team Member Requirements

### General Rules

1. Members must be free to spend the necessary time, as determined by the Director, both during the summer and during the school year.
2. Members are required to attend summer camp, determined by the Director, at their own expense.
3. High School officers (Varsity, JV and sergeants) and Middle School Squad leaders may be required to attend more than one camp at the discretion of the Director..
4. Compliance with all school rules is required at all times at all District Venues, Transportation and All Scheduled Events. The Student Handbook is available on the MISD website.
5. When a bus is provided, members must ride the bus to and from games, contests, and other performances. Students may be released to their parents for emergencies at the discretion of the Director and/or Campus Administrator with written documentation.
6. Members may not hold jobs that interfere with practices, performances, or other scheduled activities of the Drill Team.
7. If a Member chooses to participate in other school activities that may conflict with Drill Team requirements, they must be in regular communication with the Drill Team Director and get prior approval for missing any required activities. They must fulfill all Drill Team requirements to perform.
8. All fundraising must be for the Drill Team as a whole and approved by the Director and Administration. No Drill Team member may participate in any fundraising on their own. Each Drill Team member and parent/guardians are expected to participate in all fundraising events.
9. Any concerns from Drill Team members or parent/guardians should be initially addressed by the Director in an attempt to resolve the concern prior to requesting a meeting with Campus Administration.

### Tardies & Absences

1. If a member will be tardy to practice/class, they need to notify the Director as soon as possible. The Director has the option of excusing the tardy and reserves the right to determine whether the excuse is valid. The Director's decision is final.
2. Reasonable efforts should be made in scheduling any and all appointments so that they do not conflict with Drill Team activities. Excused absences from practice include verified and documented personal illness or death in the family. If you anticipate needing to miss practice, it must be reported one week in advance. The director will determine if the absence will be excused. The Director's decision is final.
3. When a member is going to be absent the Director must be notified. If a member is too ill to attend school and will miss practice the Director must be notified by phone or email before practice/class. Failure to comply with these attendance requirements may trigger a disciplinary response.
4. Only in extreme circumstances should a member miss practice, or not participate, while preparing for performances. Any member who is absent, or does not participate, during any practice the week of performance is not eligible to perform at the game, pep rally, or any other performance of the week unless approved by the director.
5. Absence from a performance, unless approved in advance by the director, may constitute a probationary period or possible immediate dismissal from the Drill Team. If a member knows in advance of a conflict that may prevent them from participating in a performance they must

ask permission to be excused from the performance as soon as the conflict arises. Excusal from a performance is at the discretion of the Director.

6. If a member is absent from school on the day of a performance, the member will not participate in the performance unless previously excused by the Director.

### Practice

1. Practice begins and ends at the time designated by the director. Set practice times will be established and will be common knowledge to all drill team members.
2. Non School Day practices may occur on a limited basis throughout the school year.
3. Members must be on time. This is defined as, in place, wearing designated attire, and ready for warm up when practice time is set.
4. Members must wear designated attire. No gum chewing or eating. No wearing of jewelry during any practice or event unless part of the assigned uniform. Hair must be out of the face. Only water is allowed during practice.
5. Members who are unable to dance due to an injury or recurring illness must still attend all team practices and events, dress out and follow drill team rules. Any Officer unable to dance due to an injury or recurring illness must continue to fulfill their officer duties and attend all practices and events.
6. Members present at school are expected to attend practice, even if excused from participating by the director.
7. No outside visitors are allowed to attend practice sessions, unless approved by the director.

### Performance Participation Full Year (Football, Contest, Spring Show, Camps)

1. All members must participate in and attend all scheduled drill team activities. Appropriate dress and punctuality are required.
2. Members will be asked to purchase required items. Payment in full must be rendered prior to initial use. Payment plans may be discussed individually with the director.
3. Uniforms and Props purchased by the district that are assigned to a member must be maintained and stored appropriately by each member. Any district property damaged or lost must be replaced by the member.
4. Auditions will be held for every performance. High School Members must be present on audition day to be eligible for performance unless at a School Sponsored Event/Competition. Any member who does not perform satisfactorily, per the Director's assessment, or is absent at the audition may be considered as a possible alternate for the designated performance as determined by the director. Middle school dancers will request to make up their missed audition at a time agreed on by the director. All decisions are final.
5. At times alternates may be used at the discretion of the Director and based on the needs of the team.
6. Drill team members are required to abide by Texas No Pass No Play/UII Grading Policy.
7. All ineligible members must attend and participate in all practices.

### Football Game Performance Participation

1. During the football game, and at all times, team members are to conduct themselves in a responsible, respectable manner.
  - a. Non Members are not allowed to sit in the Drill Team section of the stands at any time.
  - b. Breaks will be assigned per the discretion of the Director, students will be required to return to their seats by the assigned time.

- c. Drill team members may not leave any assigned gathering area unless given permission by the director.
- d. All drill team members must return to their specified seating in the stands at the time given by the Director. Failure to do so will constitute disciplinary action.
- e. Only water, and Director approved snacks are allowed while in uniform.
- f. All members are required to participate in stand routines, spirit line drills, and cheerleaders' yells as instructed by the director, highest ranking officer and next officer or designated line member in charge.
- g. Members are to remain in squad formation in the stands, as well as going to and from performances.
- h. High School members who are not performing (Example: did not make the performance line, excess absences, injured, etc.) must still attend the performances, sit with the team in uniform, participate in Spirit line and yells and follow all Drill Team rules.
- i. Any member on suspension, or who is ineligible due to grades, cannot travel with the team, wear the uniform or sit with the team.

#### Performance Appearance

1. All Spirit Wear/Uniforms/Costumes must be approved by the Director.
2. Gum Chewing, eating or drinking are prohibited while members are in uniform, with the exception of water and/or Director pre-approved snacks
3. It is recommended that students wear Director approved, neutral colored corrective lenses during performances if prescribed.
4. Members are expected to pass a uniform inspection prior to game time or performance. Makeup and hairstyle are part of the uniform and will be subject to correction and at the discretion of the Director. Those not passing final inspection will not perform until corrected and approved by the Director.
5. Pride in appearance and the wearing of the proper and complete uniform is mandatory. Appropriate neutral-colored undergarments are mandatory.
6. The uniform and poms will be kept clean and in good condition at all times and ready for a performance.
7. When wearing any drill team attire, including t-shirts, a member will look neat and orderly and will not partake in any form of PDA
8. Drill team members will keep their hair a natural color. Any unnatural hair coloring that is not a natural shade of black, brown, red or blonde could result in the loss of a performance.

#### Conduct

1. Upon making the team, members will be required to sign and adhere to the *District Substance Abuse Policy, and the Spirit Programs Handbook*. Officer, Sergeant and Council leaders will be required to sign and adhere to a contract listing expectations for the leadership on the team.
2. Members are expected to respect one another at all times. Line members are expected to cooperate with the officers at all times. Members are expected to report any problems immediately to an officer or the director.
3. A drill team member will display loyalty to fellow team members. The member will also support and work pleasantly with all school organizations.
4. Members will be conscious of all actions knowing that drill team members should always conduct themselves in a respectable manner in and out of drill team attire. Members are representing MISD at all times.

5. If a member is assigned to OSS, the member will be suspended pending Campus Administration decision, further discipline will be determined by the Director and Campus Administration.
6. A team member that is assigned to DAEP will be removed from the team immediately. If a student is assigned DAEP at the time of the tryout process they are not eligible to tryout.

#### Awards

A high school drill team member is eligible to letter if the member has successfully completed one Varsity Drill Team Year in good standing. The drill team member is responsible for all costs associated with the jacket. Minimally, the jacket will have a sailor collar and school emblem.

#### Dismissal

Dismissal is defined as being removed from the drill team immediately. Dismissal can occur for the following reasons.

- Becoming academically Ineligible three times in a drill team year
- Assignment to DAEP
- Failure to adhere to a growth plan, if applicable
- Any other severe action that the director, and campus administration, feel does not represent the drill team organization in a positive way.

#### Amendments

- Any other decisions or interpretations, may be made at any time at the Director's discretion.
- The district reserves the right to amend the MISD Drill Team Spirit Programs Handbook at any time.
- Notification of changes will be handled in writing to all squad members via email. It is the parent/squad member's responsibility to review and be familiar with any amendment(s) to the Spirit Programs Handbook. The most up to date Spirit Programs Handbook will be posted online under the Student Life tab on the MISD website. Any questions or concerns should be directed to the campus Drill Team Director.

## CHAPTER 4: **Social Media Enforceable Guidelines for Cheerleading and Drill Team**

### DO:

- **Be Supportive Online and Represent your Team & School with Pride:**
  - Use your platform to build others up. Celebrate team achievements, encourage teammates, and show school spirit.
  - Always remember that you are a public representative of your team, school, and community. Content shared should reflect the positive values of sportsmanship, school pride, and leadership.
- **Keep It Clean**
  - No profanity, suggestive or inappropriate content, as determined by coaches and directors in photos, videos, captions, posts, stories, comments or other online activity. Avoid clothing or situations that may be deemed improper or unfit while in or out of uniform.
- **Think Before You Post/Share/Like/Comment**
  - Your digital footprint is permanent—even if deleted, screenshots last. Before creating or connecting yourself to digital content, ask yourself: *"Would I be okay with my coach/director, principal, and parents seeing this?"*
- **Follow School & District Policies**
  - Abide by all social media policies set by the school district.
  - The official team accounts should only be used for team-related content and updates.

### DON'T:

- **Promote Inappropriate Content**
  - Do not post, like, share or cause to be published or distributed anything that could be considered offensive, disrespectful, inappropriate or a violation of the Student Code of Conduct.
  - Avoid posting negative comments about teammates, other teams, school staff, or students.
- **Misrepresent the Organization**
  - If you choose to identify yourself as a member of an MISD Spirit Program, remember that you represent your program in your social media presence and your decisions should reflect that representation well.
  - If you are wearing your uniform (including practice gear or spirit wear), your conduct must reflect the highest standards. There should be no photos in uniform that could be viewed as offensive, disrespectful or inappropriate.
- **No Cyberbullying**
  - Harassment and bullying through any medium or platform are strictly prohibited and may result in disciplinary action.
- **Overshare**
  - Never share information about team matters such as injuries, internal issues, discipline matters or other similar information.

***Violations of or misalignments with these social media guidelines will be handled in accordance with the discipline outlined in the Student Code of Conduct and/or this Spirit Programs Handbook, which could include assignment of demerits, a growth plan, probation, suspension, removal or other consequences as deemed appropriate at the discretion of the student's respective cheer coaches or drill team directors.***

## CHAPTER 5

### **Demerit Guidelines for Cheerleading and Drill Team**

- An "Event" includes any activity, competition or performance.
- This document is meant to address the most common reasons for issuing demerits and is not an exhaustive list. Demerits may be assigned for actions not listed as determined by the coach/director.
- High school cheer squad members will be required to sit one quarter for every two demerits.
- Middle school cheer squad members will be required to sit one quarter for every one demerit.
- Six demerits or more = Growth Plan for cheer and drill.

<b># Demerits</b>	<b>Description of Misconduct</b>
1	Late to practice, performance, bus or any event without director/coach approval
1	Wearing jewelry during any practice, event unless part of the assigned uniform
1	Wearing fingernail or toenail polish that is not approved by the director/coach during event
1	Hair is not out of the face during practice
1	Not prepared with necessary items for required practice or event
1	Not returning paperwork/money or items at the required due date
1	Leaving trash, personal items or school-issued items in the locker room or event area
1	Leaving designated area without director/coach permission during an event
1	Not returning to director/coach designated area at predetermined time
1	Uniform or attire expectations not being met
1	Failure to follow directions or complete assigned duties
1	Allowing non-members to wear/use any pieces of a uniform or related items
1	Chewing gum at any practice/event
5	Missing any practice or event without prior director/coach approval
5	PDA during any event while wearing any school-issued attire
5	Disrespectful verbal or nonverbal actions towards any director/coach or team member
5	Office referral resulting in any detention or one day of ISS
10	Serious behavior that results in ISS for 2 or more days
10	Serious behavior that results in an OSS placement
15	Serious behavior breach as determined by the coach/director and campus administration. Serious violation of the Student Code of Conduct (including but not limited to use or in possession of alcohol/tobacco, or drugs)
1-15	Any other behavior, action or omission subject to assignment of number of demerits deemed appropriate at discretion of coaches/directors.

## **CHAPTER 6**

### **Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs Parent Code of Conduct**

Parenting and coaching are challenging roles. Having a clear understanding between coaches and parents helps create a more positive experience. Parents should know the expectations for them and their children, while coaches should trust that concerns will be discussed respectfully at the right time and place.

Parents should expect their child's coach to communicate:

- Expectations the coach/director has for all members of the team.
- Locations and times of practices, games, performances, and competitions.
- Cost breakdown.
- Procedures that will be followed if your child becomes injured during participation.
- Payment information and deadlines.

Communication coaches/directors expect from parents:

- Concerns regarding their son or daughter expressed directly to the coach at the appropriate time and place as referenced below.
- Specific concerns in regard to the coach/director's philosophy and/or expectations.
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance.

While your child is involved in cheerleading or drill team, they will experience some of the most rewarding moments of their lives. It is important to understand there may be times when things do not go the way you or your child wishes. These are the times discussion with the coach/director is encouraged.

Appropriate concerns to discuss with a coach/director:

- The mental and physical treatment of your child.
- What your child needs to do to improve.
- Concerns about your child's behavior.

Coaches and directors make decisions based on what they believe is in the best interests of all students participating. As you can see from the list above, certain things can and should be discussed with your child's coach/director. Other things, such as those listed next, must be left to the discretion of the coach/director.

Issues NOT appropriate for discussion with your child's coach/director:

- The placement of your student in performances.
- Required dress or attire.
- Decisions made by coaches/directors regarding students which are not your student.

There are situations that may require a conference between coach/director and parent. These are not discouraged, as it is important for each party to have a clear understanding of the other's position.

When these conferences are necessary, the following procedure is outlined to help promote resolution to the issue.

If a parent or student has a concern to discuss with the coach/director, the following process and chain of command are expected:

1. Students should meet with the coach/director at an appropriate time as determined by the coach/director to discuss the concern.
2. If no resolution was found in the meeting between the student and the coach/director, parents may call or email the coach/director to set up an appointment to discuss the concern.
  - a. Parents should limit the discussion to facts pertaining to their student.
  - b. Parents should not confront or attempt to initiate a conversation with the coach/director before, during, or after a practice, game, or performance. These can be emotional times for all parties. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalate tension.
3. If no resolution was found after the meeting between the parent and coach/director, parents may contact a school administrator.
4. If no resolution was found after including a campus administrator, the parents may contact the central administration office to speak with the district administrator overseeing the activity.

Parents and students should note that this process and chain of command for concerns is expected to be followed. However, this process does not alter filing timelines and requirements for formal grievances under Board Policy FNG(LOCAL).

All parties should all work together to communicate in a professional and respectful manner towards conflict resolution in order for students to have an enjoyable and memorable experience in their cheerleading or drill team participation while at Midlothian ISD.

***This Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs Parent Code of Conduct was modeled after the [UIL Parent Information Manual](#) (linked) in an effort to create consistent expectations and guidelines for all stakeholders.***

**CHAPTER 7**

**Growth Plan for Cheerleading and Drill Team**

**Page 1**

**Student Name:** \_\_\_\_\_ **School:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Program:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Start Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Target Completion Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Violation(s)**

Violation(s) of the Spirit Programs Handbook and/or the Student Code of Conduct:

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**Actions or Consequences:**

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**Growth Plan Expectations:**

As part of this growth opportunity, \_\_\_\_\_ will complete the following:

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**Growth Plan for Cheerleading and Drill Team**  
**Page 2**

**Purpose**

This plan is designed to support personal growth, reflect on the impact of choices, and restore trust within the MISD Cheerleading or Drill Team program and broader school community. This process is part of our commitment to encourage students to take ownership of their actions, repair harm, and work toward reintegration as a valued, contributing member of the team.

**In Case of Non-Completion**

By signing this plan, you acknowledge a commitment to growth, restoration, and meeting expectations outlined above. Failure to complete this plan by \_\_\_\_\_, or if additional conduct issues arise, a parent conference will be required to communicate the continuation or modification of the plan, probation or possible removal as a member of the team.

**Acknowledgement & Commitment to Growth Plan**

Student's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Director's/Coach's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

An administrator's signature is included for cases involving suspension, probation or removal:

Administrator's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Midlothian ISD

### Spirit Programs Handbook Acknowledgement Form

Circle the applicable program: Cheerleading or Drill Team

Student Acknowledgement:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs Handbook 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 Handbook that it may result in grounds for disciplinary action that may include removal from the spirit program. I understand that coaches and directors may interpret and implement the Spirit Programs Handbook at his/her discretion, and the district may modify the Handbook without student agreement.

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Student Printed Name

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Acknowledgment:

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have read the Midlothian ISD Spirit Programs Handbook and hereby agree to follow all rules and guidelines set forth in this document. I understand that if my student does not abide by the rules and guidelines in this Handbook that it may result in grounds for disciplinary action that may include removing my squad member from the spirit program. I understand that coaches and directors may interpret and implement the Spirit Programs Handbook at his/her discretion, and the district may modify the Handbook without parent agreement.

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Parent/Guardian Printed Name

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date