



**Jr. High School  
Cheerleading Handbook**

**2026-2027**

**Revised January 2025**

Pearland Independent School District

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## **1.0 Philosophy/Purpose**

It is an honor and a privilege to be a cheerleader. Cheerleaders and spirit groups exist to promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, and wholesome, enthusiastic school spirit. They are first and foremost representatives of their school. All behavior is in accordance with the rules as stated in the PISD Student Code of Conduct. Group members have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. As a result of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad are expected to maintain a high standard of behavior both on and off campus.

## **2.0 Objectives**

Cheerleaders are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and executing cheers and dances. They are also expected to be able to demonstrate a skill level suitable for the squad position and the timing necessary for group performance. They are to enthusiastically show spirit to all teams through support, personal attitude and attendance at events designated by the coaches and approved by the principal.

## **3.0 Definition**

Cheerleading year: The rules and procedures outlined in this constitution are in effect from the time the student is selected to the cheerleading squad until the completion of the following cheerleading year.

## **4.0 Commitment**

Candidates selected as a member of the cheerleading squad are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full cheerleading year. Any cheerleader who voluntarily forfeits or relinquishes their position before the end of the cheerleading year without the approval of the principal or principal designee and cheerleading coaches may forfeit his/her opportunity of trying out the following year.

## **5.0 Cheerleader Safety**

1. Cheerleaders follow the guidelines established by the National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS). The handbook is available at ([www.NFHS.org](http://www.NFHS.org)).
2. Cheerleaders unable to meet the physical requirements of cheerleading do not participate without the written approval of a physician. Cheerleader's physical ability must be in accordance with National Federation of High School Sports (NFHS).
3. Cheerleaders who have an injury/illness which prohibits them from practicing must provide a written note from their doctor stating the reason. This note includes the nature of the injury/illness, the length of time of the restriction, the specific task that cannot be performed and any other special instructions including when they are released back to practice. Lack of participation as result of injury/illness is categorized as an unexcused absence if a note is not provided. ***Parents/guardians cannot excuse a student from practicing due to illness or injury.***

## **6.0 Attendance**

1. Cheerleaders attend all practices, performances and other events scheduled by the cheer coaches.
2. Cheerleaders must attend summer camp.

### **Practice and Performances**

- a. The cheer coaches are to be notified for absences prior to the absence occurring.
- b. Failure to notify the coaches in writing, regardless of the reason, prior to a practice or event is an unexcused absence.
- c. Request or notifications must be in writing from a parent.
- d. Absences may be excused for illness or family emergency and in some cases medical appointments.
- e. Absences are not excused for work, vacation, appointment, non-UIL activity involvement, All-Stars, etc.
- f. Absence from school does not release the cheerleader's parent or guardians of the responsibility to notify the cheer coaches.
- g. Each unexcused absence results in a consequence as designated by section 9.3.
- h. At the coach's discretion, Cheerleaders accumulating more than 3 unexcused absences or 3 suspensions may be asked to forfeit their position on the squad.

## **7.0 Cheering Activities**

**Cheerleaders are required to** participate in the following as determined by the sponsor:

- Jr. High tryouts
- Home football games
- Home basketball games
- Camp
- All fundraisers
- Yearbook pictures
- Pep Rallies
- Other events scheduled by the cheer coaches

## **8.0 Academic Eligibility for Participation**

To be academically eligible at the beginning of the school year, students must be academically eligible according to the UIL No Pass/No Play rule.

If at the end of the first six weeks, the student passes all classes for the six weeks period, the student is eligible for participation according to UIL guidelines.

In order to be academically eligible for any nine weeks period a student shall not have a recorded grade lower than 70 on a scale of 0-100 in any course for the preceding nine-week period.

A student who's recorded nine weeks' grade average in any course is lower than a 70 at the end of a nine-weeks period is academically ineligible to participate in games, competitions, performances, and other cheer events. Academic ineligibility is effective seven calendar days after the last day of the nine-week period during which the grade lower than 70 was earned. **Academic ineligibility does not restrict a cheerleader from practice.** Academic ineligibility continues for three weeks and is not removed during the school year until the student is passing all subjects taken. Refer to the *UIL Side by Side* Manual at:

[https://www.uiltexas.org/files/policy/TEA\\_UIL\\_Side\\_by\\_Side.pdf](https://www.uiltexas.org/files/policy/TEA_UIL_Side_by_Side.pdf)

A list of courses that are exempt from this policy can be found on the district's athletic website.

Academically ineligible students must continue to attend classes and all practices and must sit out of all games, performances and other cheer events designated by the coaches. Academically ineligible students are not allowed to wear the cheerleading uniform.

**If a cheerleader is ineligible for any two grading periods, the cheerleader automatically forfeits their position on the cheerleading squad for the balance of the school year. This does not include courses designated in *UIL Side by Side* Manual or designated by the Pearland ISD School Board as exempt from the ineligibility rule.**

## **9.0 General Rules, Expectations and Consequences**

Cheerleaders are expected to behave in a manner that is becoming to the individual, as well as to the organization and school they represent. They are aware that in or out of uniform they are representatives of their junior high school and the Pearland Independent School District.

### **9.1 General Rules**

1. Cheerleaders follow all Pearland ISD rules, policies, and guidelines.
2. Cheerleaders wear designated attire for practice, performances, camp, or other events designated by the cheer coaches.
3. Cheerleaders have their hair up and secure as per NFHS rules.
4. Only cheer coach approved jackets, sweats, sweaters, or other attire are worn with the designated uniform or spirit attire.
5. Cheerleaders are jewelry free at all cheer events.
6. Cheerleaders refrain from chewing gum or eating during all cheer functions.
7. Cheerleaders refrain from using cell phones during all cheer functions.
8. Cheerleaders use only clear nail polish or have a standard French manicure that is no longer than  $\frac{1}{4}$  of an inch and flat or rounded tips at all times.
9. Cheerleaders maintain control and possession of their cheer items at all times.
10. Cheerleaders have required items upon arrival to all cheer functions. This includes but is not limited to poms, uniform, shoes, clothes, etc.
11. Cheerleaders will participate or support the fundraising efforts or events designated by sponsor.
12. Cheerleaders follow all PISD, NCA, UCA, ACA, and other professional cheerleading association rules and regulations. In the event that camp rules or

other local rules at establishments where the squad is practicing, performing, or attending events are stricter than those of our standard handbook, the house rules are to be followed.

13. Cheerleaders leave all areas used by the team clean. All trash is disposed of properly. Other items and supplies are stored properly both before and after all cheer functions.

## **9.2 Expectations**

1. Cheerleaders are respectful, positive, and considerate towards everyone.
2. Cheerleaders refrain from cursing or arguing.
3. Cheerleaders arrive on time to practices, performances, camps or other event designated by the cheer coaches. Cheerleaders do NOT leave without the approval of the cheer coaches.
4. Cheerleaders act in a safe manner.
5. Cheerleaders have natural color or highlighted hair which meets the coach's approval.
6. Cheerleaders do not have any visible tattoos.
7. Cheerleaders do not display any form of public affection during school, at school activities, or while wearing the cheerleader uniform.
8. Cheerleaders should not engage in inappropriate messaging, dialogue, use of content (pictures, labels, artwork, etc.) on any social networking site, email, texting, etc.
9. Cheerleaders maintain proper sideline behavior at all times during games or events. This includes:
  - Displaying cheer and spirit
  - Staying focused and devoting attention to the game or event at hand
  - Staying in correct formation or stance
  - Demonstrating respect during the National Anthem and all school songs
  - Jumping/Tumbling during the entire game or event
  - Refraining from excessive talking amongst the cheerleaders
  - Refraining from excessive talking to the general public or family members during an event
  - Refraining from excessive breaks while in sideline formation (only one cheerleader out at a time for drinks/restroom)
  - Refraining from unsportsmanlike conduct or taunting of other teams or team members
10. Cheerleaders do not miss the last practice before a performance, camp, or other event designated by the cheer coaches.
11. Cheerleaders do not wear a cheer uniform to a non-cheerleading function. *(This includes eating after the game, at the end of your game, Halloween, etc.).*
12. Cheerleaders turn in all monies, forms and paperwork on dates and times designated by cheer coaches.

### 9.3 Consequences

#### A. Infractions of “General Rules and Expectations”

Failure to comply with the “Rules and/or Expectations” will result in the assignment of physical conditioning (accountability) and an infraction.

Physical conditioning exercises are completed in the time designated by the cheer coaches. Failing to complete the physical conditioning exercises in this time frame results in suspension from events until it is complete. *Exception: Fundraising events are still required.*

**Any cheerleader accumulating 5 Infractions (failure to comply) is suspended from one event. Any cheerleader accumulating five (5) incomplete accountabilities is suspended from one event.**

#### B. School Related Discipline and Automatic Forfeiture of Position

At the coach’s discretion, at any time in the cheerleading year, the following may result in automatic forfeiture from the cheerleading squad for the remainder of the cheerleading year (any remaining balance for equipment must still be remitted).

- Expulsion, suspension from school, or ALA/DAEP assignment
- ISS for any reason other than dress code or tardies
- Involvement in criminal activity on or off campus, or any act punishable by law
- Assault or harassment of coaches or squad members
- Theft of squad, school, or individual property
- Initiation or hazing

Cheerleaders assigned to ISS may not perform or wear the cheerleading uniform for the duration of time they are in ISS.

#### C. Suspension and Forfeiture of Position on the Squad

Cheerleaders are suspended from the squad by the cheer coaches for infractions of the rules, policies, guidelines, and expectations set forth in this document or for the infraction of Pearland ISD’s rules, policies, or guidelines. Parents will be notified by coach upon each suspension.

Cheerleaders suspended from the squad are:

- required to dress identical to the team
- suspended from an event designated by the coach(es)

- required to utilize team transportation (if provided)
- required to remain in an area designated by the coach (i.e. sit on the sidelines)
- required to follow all policies and guidelines in the handbook

#### **10.0 Transportation**

Failure to provide prompt (no more than 15 minutes after practice ends) and consistent transportation following a cheer event/practice may result in consequences.

#### **11.0 Monies Collected by Coaches**

Cheerleading coaches collecting monies from students give receipts stating the amount of monies collected and what the money is to be charged toward (trip, uniform, banquet, etc.).

#### **12.0 Tryout - Eligibility**

Students in 7<sup>th</sup> grade are eligible to tryout for cheerleader if all the following qualifications are met:

1. Prior to tryouts candidate and parent must sign and return a form stating they have been informed of the tryout process and agree to comply with the guidelines and information provided in the tryout packet. This document and other required documents listed in the tryout packet must be turned in to the cheerleading coaches by the designated time.
2. Candidate and/or candidate's parent must have attended a "Cheer Interest Meeting" and have received the tryout packet and be enrolled in PISD.
3. Candidate has no U's in conduct and no more than two N's during the current cheerleading year.
4. Candidate must end the semester prior to tryouts with a grade of 70 or higher in all subjects.
5. Candidate must be academically eligible according to the UIL "No Pass No Play" standard at the time of Cheerleading tryouts.
6. Candidates enrolling in a Pearland ISD school from another school district are held to the standards identified in this document. These candidates' discipline and academic eligibility are verified to ensure compliance.

### **13.0 Selection Process**

A campus administrator may be present during the entire tryout process. Results will be posted the next day after school.

Panel tryouts are closed to everyone except judges, district administrators, cheer coaches and tryout volunteers selected by the cheer coaches. There are no students, candidate family member(s) or existing/former PISD cheerleaders allowed in the tryout room or in the collection or tabulation of scores. Only cheerleading candidates and tryout designees are allowed in the tryout area on judging day.

### **14.0 Tryout – Clinic Guidelines**

The cheerleading coaches are responsible for the preparation and distribution of an information packet covering the tryout clinic. This packet includes specific tryout dates, times, attire and procedures. The building principal must approve this information prior to distribution. Before the student is allowed to participate in the tryout clinic process the candidates and parents must sign a form stating that they have been informed of the process and are in compliance with all information in the packet.

### **15.0 Scoring Criteria**

Candidates will be judged for categories that include tumbling, spirit/enthusiasm, motion technique, voice projection, jumps, entrance, dance, and cheer.

Scores are calculated by averaging the individual judges' scores and rounding to two decimal places. Candidates' scores are ranked in order from highest to lowest.

<b>CATEGORY</b>
<b>Tumbling/Entrance</b> Cartwheels, round-offs, BHS, tucks, layouts/fulls
<b>Jumps</b> Level of execution, technique
<b>Cheer</b> Technique, strength of motions, memory, voice, pacing, eye contact, genuine spirit
<b>Dance</b> Technique, strength of motions, memory, timing, eye contact, energy/entertainment
<b>Overall Impression</b>

A range of 12 to 16 top-ranking candidates will be selected to join the cheerleading squad.

## **16.0 Judges**

There will be a Coaches Panel consisting of three (3) or four (4) coaches and/or teachers employed by Pearland ISD whom have completed the required training according to UIL and district requirements.

OR

There will be a total of three (3) impartial judges having outstanding credentials and references from the following three organizations: The National Cheerleading Association, Universal Cheerleading Association, and American Cheerleading Association etc. ***Former PISD cheerleaders may not serve as a judge for cheerleader tryout.***

## **17.0 Exceptions**

In the event of a tie, Olympic scoring will be used to break all ties. The high and low judge's score will be thrown out. If a tie still occurs it will be broken by the combined cheer score of all the judges. If the tie still remains, it will be broken by the combined dance score of all the judges.

## Junior High Cheer Handbook Acknowledgement

I acknowledge that I received a copy of the Pearland Independent School District's 2026-2027 Jr. High Cheerleading Handbook. Further, I understand that I am held accountable for behavior and am subject to the disciplinary consequences outlined in this document.

I read in full the Pearland Independent School District's 2026-2027 Jr. High Cheerleading Handbook and understand the duties and responsibilities of being a member of a PISD cheer squad.

I agree to follow this document to best of my ability, and if unsuccessful, I accept the disciplinary consequences outlined in this document.

I was given the opportunity to ask questions and receive clarification.

As a parent/guardian of a 2026-2027 cheerleader, I understand that I am held to the policies set forth in this handbook. Infraacting these rules directly or indirectly for any reason will jeopardize my child's position on the team.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheerleader's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheerleader's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Printed Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent's Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date