EAGLE MOUNTAIN-SAGINAW ISD
Athletics

Middle School Cheerleading Handbook 26-27

Our Purpose

Cheerleading is a vibrant part of the community that comprises Eagle Mountain-Saginaw ISD.

For campuses and the community, cheerleading exists in order to promote:

- Tradition
- Spirit
- Ambassadorship

For participants, cheerleading exists to provide students:

- Multiple leadership opportunities
- A sense of family
- Promotion of school spirit
- Occasions to learn and exhibit sportsmanship and citizenship
- Assistance in achieving academic excellence

These multiple opportunities help students grow and mature, both physically and emotionally, resulting in citizens who embody the EMS ISD cheerleading program.

Program Membership

The cheer team consists of the following people:

The team will consist of a minimum of eight 8th graders and eight 7th graders with no more than twenty cheerleaders in case of a tie.

The mascot will be one girl or boy who is classified as a seventh or eighth grader.

The cheer coach will be a well-qualified individual who has the passion to lead, coach, and mentor the cheerleaders in his/her program.

Cheerleader openings that occur **after** tryouts will not be filled.

Cheerleaders who move to EMS ISD or transfer after the tryout process has been finalized must wait until the following year to try out for EMS ISD squads.

Candidates interested in trying out for cheerleader will try out for the school for which he/she is zoned unless he/she is on a transfer. Then, the child would try out for the school to which he/she has transferred.

Commitment

It is an **honor** that requires not only **commitment**, but also **hard work** and **dedication**. Being part of the cheer program is a **year-round commitment.**

Members of the cheer program will devote and pledge themselves to components outlined in the handbook.

A cheer member will serve from the day of selection until the last day of school the following academic year.

Cheer members need to be aware that their EMS ISD cheer commitments will come first. Jobs, outside cheer teams/sports, etc., need to be considered before trying out for cheer teams. Any outside commitment will not be considered as a reason to miss any cheer event/game.

Duties & Responsibilities

LEADERSHIP

A cheer member is one who is willing to set aside his/her own personal agenda for the whole program's pursuit of excellence. This is done by living the EMS ISD ethical principles and through hard work, dedication, and self-discipline.

Members will demonstrate good sportsmanship, promote school spirit, and display genuine concern for others.

ACADEMICS

Any cheerleader who receives a grade **below 70** at the end of a grading period may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time set by the EMS ISD UIL Athletic Eligibility Schedule.

Any cheerleader who becomes ineligible **will not** be allowed to **perform, travel with the squad, or wear his/her uniform for any reason for the term of ineligibility.**

Any cheerleader who has been ineligible for **any** two six-weeks grading periods during the current school year will be dismissed from the squad for the remainder of the year.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

It is important that EMS ISD cheer members realize the level of commitment that is necessary to make a team successful. Attendance at all games and cheer events is not only crucial, but also **mandatory**. Absences jeopardize the entire team and hinders success. Failure to fulfil attendance requirements may result in disciplinary consequences including possible removal.

An absence to a game/event will only be considered excused in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness/accident (resulting in missing school)
- Funeral or death in the family
- UIL or school-related performance/event

If a cheer member is absent for an unexcused reason, he or she may not participate in the cheer activity that day or evening. An absence is considered missing half or more of the school day.

Mascots are responsible for attending all events decided upon by the campus cheer coach. They will be treated as a member of the cheer team and held to the same expectations. Mascots are responsible for the care and upkeep of their mascot uniform.

All cheer members and mascots are **required** to attend summer camp and summer practices as determined by the campus.

SPORTING EVENT EXPECTATIONS

The focus for EMS ISD cheer is to support our school and teams in any way possible. In order to allow our members to be involved in other organizations and to be able to succeed academically, we will be following the schedule of games below:

- Football: all home games (B team, A team games)

The following will be determined by the campus:

- Volleyball: support via signs, etc.
- Basketball: Girls- One home game; Boys- One home game (support via signs, etc. for both)
- Cross Country: support via signs, etc.
- Track: support via signs, volunteers, etc.
- Tennis: support via signs, volunteers, etc.
- Soccer: support via signs, etc.

The campus principal will have final approval of events for cheerleaders to attend. UIL permits a student to cheer one night per week.

PHYSICAL

Cheerleaders must be capable of performing the essential functions for a cheerleader. Functions as listed:

- Cheerleaders will demonstrate clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm, and coordination.
- Cheerleaders will perform physical moves that may involve jumps, balance, agility, and upper body strength.
- Cheerleaders will exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness and will be able to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in heat and cold weather.

Cheerleaders must uphold the skill level demonstrated (i.e., tumbling, stunting, jumps, etc.) at tryouts while striving for continuous improvement. **The coach is responsible for determining which stunts and lifts are age appropriate and are safe for practice and game performance**. Failure to uphold skills may result in consequences to be determined by the coach.

All physicals and required Rank One paperwork must be completed prior to tryouts. This physical needs to be completed within 6 months prior to tryouts and will remain in effect until May 1, 2027.

FINANCIAL

A payment schedule may be set for all payments due.

All cheer members must be current with their payment schedule. Not being current may result in missing cheer events or games.

Cheer members who owe a balance on their account will not be eligible to try out the following year until the amount is paid in full.

Tryout Procedures

Cheer tryouts will be held in the second semester of the school year.

Tryout packets will be handed out at the parent/candidate meeting to explain the tryout point scale and process.

All physicals and required Rank One paperwork must be completed prior to tryouts. This physical needs to be completed within 6 months prior to tryouts and will remain in effect until May 1, 2027.

EMS ISD tryouts and clinics are closed to the public. Parents are asked to drop off their daughter/son and leave the EMS ISD facility. There will be no areas for parents to wait. Candidates will be given an ending time for their tryout session. Parent pick-up will be in a specific location that will be announced during the tryout clinic. All cheer candidates will be escorted in/out by a cheer coach or administrator.

There will be **NO CELL PHONES** allowed in any of the tryout areas. Candidates are asked to leave cell phones at home. We will have a phone readily available in case of emergency.

The candidates will try out before a panel of judges. The judges' scores will count 100%. The scores will be tabulated under the supervision of an administrator and new squad members' names will be posted.

Judges for the EMS ISD cheer tryouts are experienced and knowledgeable of cheerleading and have had previous judging experience. **All judges' decisions are final.** Mascot tryouts will be determined at the campus level.

Although we understand that unfortunate circumstances may arise (i.e., illnesses, injuries, outside obligations, etc.) EMS ISD cheer will only conduct one tryout per year. If a student is unable to participate in this tryout, he/she must wait until the following year. If a candidate fails to show up for his/her assigned tryout time, she/he will not be permitted to tryout at all. It is important that all candidates report to the designated tryout site on time.

Candidates must attend practices during the tryout clinic held after school hours. Should a candidate need to miss a day of tryout clinic, coaches should be made aware at least 24 hours in advance. If the absence is a result of an emergency or illness, coaches should be contacted and informed within 24 hours of the missed practice.

Candidates must meet all extracurricular participation criteria in academics, citizenship, and attendance for the current school year.

Academic eligibility to try out for cheerleader is based on the cumulative average in **EACH** core subject (average of the six weeks grades through the most recent 6-week reporting period) shall be **70** or above for each core class.

Citizenship eligibility shall be based on all classes taken. To be eligible to try out, a student must have no more than one "N'". In addition, any "U's" in citizenship will disqualify a student from participating in the selection.

No student who has more than one term of placement in SAC, or out-of-school suspension, or an alternative education program will be eligible to try out. Any student who has been expelled from school for any portion of the current year will be unable to try out.

All candidates must have all debts paid to EMS ISD prior to being eligible to tryout. If a cheerleader quits or is dismissed from the squad, he or she will be ineligible to participate in the cheerleading program the following school year. However, the cheerleader may appeal this policy to a campus administrator. The administrator's decision is final.

Tryout Requirements

BEFORE TRYOUTS

Parents and candidates are responsible for completing, signing, and returning all forms handed out at the mandatory tryout meeting. These forms must be returned by the set time and date. Parents need to read all information carefully and sign forms to give permission for their daughter/son to participate.

Candidates are expected to learn and perfect skills and technique prior to attending the tryout clinic. The purpose of the tryout clinic is to teach each candidate tryout material only. The following skills will not be taught during the clinic: stunting, jump technique and tumbling skills.

All physicals and required Rank One paperwork must be completed prior to tryouts. This physical needs to be completed within 6 months prior to tryouts and will remain in effect until May 1, 2027.

DURING TRYOUTS

During the tryout process, the following are all evaluated in front of the judges: jumps, tumbling (not required to make the squad), cheer abilities, motions, memory, overall impression, and dance ability.

During the tryout, no part of any official cheer uniform may be worn (i.e., specific squad bows, special squad socks, etc.). White cheer shoes will be permitted, but with nothing attached to the shoe to signify involvement with a previous or current squad.

AFTER TRYOUTS

Results will be posted as determined at the campus level.

Parents may inquire about their child's tryout results by submitting a request for their child's score to the designated administrator. Inquiries concerning other students' tryout results, including scores, will not be shared.

Discipline Process

An EMS ISD cheer member takes on the role of a respectful and disciplined athlete who should be always a model for her/his peers—in school, after school, and in the community. This is a very visual position, and your peers are looking at you. Along with this position comes a great deal of responsibility, good work ethic, and a spirit of cooperation with parents, coaches, other cheerleaders, and other students. Each squad member will be held to these high standards **in and out of school.** All accountability will be handled in such a way as to teach the team member the ethical principle that applies to the circumstance

Safety

If selected, the student must have a current physical form on file prior to the first workout before they are allowed to participate.

All participants must be trained and qualified for proper landing and spotting techniques before they are allowed to stunt.

All participants must go through appropriate stunt progressions, qualifications, and always follow safety standards.

No playing around or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt/practice session.

Absolutely no jewelry will be worn during practices, games, or events. Jewelry includes all body piercings.

No tumbling or building of any stunts is permitted unless a cheer coach is present. Due to the increased athleticism of today's cheerleaders and the complexity of some stunts performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic sport, of serious injury.

General Information

If an incident should arise that is not specifically addressed in this document, the coach and/or school administrator will address the incident on an individual basis including the involvement with a district administrative committee. This committee will be comprised of all middle school principals and district athletic administration.