



TUPELO HIGH SCHOOL
Wavettes

TUPELO
CHEERLEADING

Tupelo High School Spirit Program Handbook

Tupelo Public School District
2026-2027

Statement of Purpose

The honor of representing Tupelo High School requires that a spirit squad member maintain a conscientious attitude at all times, both in extracurricular and academic activities. As representatives of Tupelo Public School District, our mission as a cheerleading/dance squad is to model excellence in academic, athletic, and personal pursuits. Our purpose is to serve our community as ambassadors of Tupelo High School. We aim to develop student-athletes by creating a competitive, uplifting environment used to prepare athletes for success at the next level. The rules and regulations of the Tupelo High School Spirit Squad Agreement will serve as a guideline to help each cheerleader/dancer successfully meet the responsibilities required in the spirit program.

Tupelo High School Spirit Program Handbook

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Tupelo High School Spirit Program

Mission Statement

With each passing year, our program is not only aiming to maximize crowd engagement at Tupelo High School, we are competitively performing to our best ability, showcasing our dedication to constant refinement and building a firm foundation for athletes to come.

Overview

- The procedures and expectations outlined in this handbook are in effect from the time the student is selected until the next tryout date.
- These rules apply to all cheerleaders/dancers in the program equally.
- Academic policies are in effect for the school year.

Core Values

- Academic Excellence
- Dedication
- Perseverance
- Teamwork
- Effort
- Sportsmanship
- Citizenship
- Spirit

Commitment

- Candidates selected to be a member of the cheer/dance squad are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full cheer/dance year. (Cheer Only: This is longer than a traditional cheerleading season, as we anticipate competing in several cheerleading competitions going into the spring semester.)
- Any cheerleader/dancer who voluntarily quits the squad before the end of the year will not be allowed to try out for the next year.
- Anyone that does not try out for the team the following year or does not make the team at tryouts will be removed from the cheer/dance block period at the end of that grading period.

Competition (Cheer Only):

- The full squad will be involved with competition season, designated as on-mat athlete or positional alternate.
- Creating a competitive team requires all members to fulfill their commitments.
- Big Goals, Small Steps.

Eligibility & Tryout Procedure

Qualifications

- Currently enrolled - Candidates for all Tupelo Spirit Squads must be currently enrolled in the Tupelo Public School District.
- MHSAA Requirement - Cheerleaders/Dancers will maintain eligibility requirements as set forth by the Mississippi High School Activities Association. Cheerleaders/Dancers will follow all rules as set forth by MHSAA. Safety rules and glossary may be found at www.misshsaa.com.
- Pursuant to MHSAA regulations, a student must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0 or a C average. At the time of tryouts, if the candidate does not meet this academic requirement, he/she will be ineligible for tryouts.
- Attend Cheer/Dance Clinic - the activities of the clinics are designed to benefit the candidate. Attendance will be required of all candidates.
- Cheerleader/Dancer Application - Parents/guardians and candidates will sign and return the Tupelo High School Spirit program, Athlete, and Guardian Agreement. These signatures also indicate an acknowledgment of the physical requirements for both clinic and participation. Parents will assume responsibility for any injuries that may occur as a result of practice or performance.

Selection

- A panel of qualified, independent judges will be hired. These judges will evaluate each candidate individually and in a group. The candidates will be judged on the basis of the qualities listed on the sample score sheet. Each candidate will be assisted in learning these qualities and techniques during the week of the mandatory clinic.
- The candidates will draw a tryout number and a tryout group. A random drawing conducted by Coach Hagemann will determine a candidate's number and group. The coaches reserve the right to reassign numbers and/or groups in order to fill gaps left by the candidates who may not tryout.
- All candidates must be in compliance with the Tupelo High School extracurricular attendance policy. The coaches will verify class attendance each day. Candidates are NOT to check out early on the day of tryouts. In cases such as family illness, injury, or other extenuating circumstances, the coaches may make an exception to this policy.
- Only designated school personnel will be allowed in the tryout area.
- The candidates will be notified of the results on the tryout band.
- The squad will also be congratulated via THS social media later that evening.

Squad Makeup

- There will be one Varsity Cheerleading squad representing Tupelo High School.
- There will be one Varsity Pom squad representing Tupelo High School.
- There will be one Junior High Cheerleading squad representing Tupelo Middle School.
- The THS squads will be made up of rising 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders.
- The TMS squad will be made up of rising 7th and 8th graders.
- The coaches will determine the number of cheerleaders/dancers chosen based on the natural break in the scores.

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Responsibilities

Practice/Class Period

- Cheerleaders/Dancers will have 5 minutes of grace period (after tardy bell or practice start time) to get dressed and be in assigned places.
- Any tardy, wrong/missing clothes or shoes, hair not properly pulled up, jewelry unremoved, etc. will be given immediate conditioning.
- All cheerleaders/dancers are required to take the Cheer/Dance Block and will be graded on skills, participation, attitude, and other areas.
 - Cheer Only: Seniors missing a required course for graduation will be approved to replace Cheer Block during the second semester only.
- No phones allowed during any practice. They must be turned in to phone hanging bags.

Sporting Events

Football

- All cheerleaders/dancers will perform at Varsity football games.
- Assigned cheerleaders will cheer at 9th Grade games.
 - Coaches will create Blue/Gold alternating squads to fulfill this requirement.
 - NO CHANGES TO ASSIGNED SQUAD WILL BE MADE.

Basketball

- Some cheerleaders/dancers will perform at Varsity HOME basketball games.

Other Sporting Events

- Cheer Only: All playoff games designated by the coaches to cheer are mandatory.
 - Playoff games are not on the regular calendar and will have a shorter notice than other events.

Community Events

- Cheerleaders/Dancers are expected to serve as ambassadors of TPSD in our precious Tupelo community.
 - They are role-models to children, exhibit respect for authority, and maintain helpful attitudes...
- Attendance in events that the squad is invited to participate in such as parades, High-Five-Fridays, etc. are mandatory.

Community Service

- Community service hours will be set up by the coaches.
- Each cheerleader will be required to provide 5 community service hours per semester within the Tupelo Spirit Program.
- Please contact Coach Hagemann with any volunteer opportunities!

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Expectations

Academic

- Student-athlete first prioritizes STUDENT first.
- Academic eligibility begins each school calendar year (August).
- An athlete whose recorded grade average in any course is lower than a 65 shall be suspended from participating in all cheer/dance events.
 - Minimum suspension is two weeks and will not be removed during the school year until the athlete is passing all subjects.
 - Any ineligible athlete who is failing any subject for more than one term will be removed from the program.
- At discretion of Coach Hagemann, ineligible athletes may be required to attend all class block practices, fundraisers, community service, and other events without participation.
 - Ineligible athletes will not be allowed to perform or wear uniforms for any reason.

Communication

GroupMe

- GroupMe will be our primary means of communication.
- All pertinent information will be located in the GroupMe thread.
- THS Master Calendar will be used to organize and communicate upcoming dates.
- GroupMe will NOT host conversations of conflict/resolution or chat.

Expected Coach Communication

- Requirements and/or feedback the coaches have for the squad.
- Athlete's attendance, grades and/or behavior.
- Locations and times of all events.
- Squad requirements: fees, equipment, uniforms, squad rules, travel arrangements, off-season expectations, etc.
- Procedures in event of unforeseen emergencies.

Conflict

- Parents have the right to know and understand all expectations placed on both them and the athlete. Coaches have the right to know if/when a parent has a concern.
- There may be situations that require a conference to promote resolution of an issue. ● Tupelo Spirit Program has an Open Door Policy, where our coaching staff agrees to discuss any topic of discussion or concerns upon a scheduled, in-person meeting.
 - We will not handle conflict of any sort via technology devices.
 - We will not handle conflict of any sort before, during, or after a practice/performance.
- If the meeting with the coaching staff does not provide a satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian should contact the THS Activities Director.

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Expectations

Conduct

General

- Cheerleaders/Dancers are subject to all rules and regulations of Tupelo High School. ● Cheerleaders/Dancers must also follow the guidelines and procedures of the Tupelo High School Athletics and the TPSD Code of Conduct.
- In or out of uniform, Cheerleaders/Dancers represent THS, TPSD, and Tupelo community and should act accordingly.
- Cheerleaders/Dancers are representatives of Tupelo High School and should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner and uphold the integrity and character of the school, and the athletic and spirit programs.
- Cheerleaders/Dancers are expected to show respect for all those in authority including faculty, administrators, coaches, consultants/choreographers and leaders who have been delegated responsibility by the coaches. Disrespect will not be tolerated. An cheerleader/dancer who is blatantly disrespectful in any fashion will receive disciplinary action up to and including dismissal from the squad.

Behavior

- Cheerleaders/Dancers are expected to behave in a manner that is becoming to the individual, as well as THS, TPSD, and Tupelo community.
- Cheerleaders/Dancers are expected to demonstrate exemplary character at all times.
- NO VAPING WHATSOEVER!
- At all scheduled events, cheerleaders/dancers are expected to have a coachable attitude, strong work ethic, encouraging/supportive mindset, and general respect for all teammates, coaches, and staff.
- Behavior Misconduct: Coaches have the right to discipline for poor attitude with conditioning, benching, or removal at any time.
 - Cheerleaders/Dancers who do not meet these expectations will be counseled by the coaches about necessary improvement, followed by notification to the parent.
 - Cheerleaders/Dancers who fail to improve after discussion with coaches will meet with coaches and Activities Director to sign a behavior contract, followed by notification to the parent.
 - Cheerleaders/Dancers who fail to improve after signing a behavior contract will be subject to removal from the squad.

Extracurricular Code of Conduct (ECOC)

- The ECOC goes into effect immediately following tryouts of the current year until tryouts of the next year. (copy of ECOC will be provided to each candidate in attendance)
- Any incidents that occur after school hours or on the weekend will be disciplined in accordance with the ECOC, which will supersede the Spirit Program Handbook during these times.
- This does not include times that a cheerleader/dancer is participating at a school sponsored spirit event or activity, during which times both the Campus Code of Conduct and Spirit Program Handbook will be enforced.

Social Media

- All cheerleaders/dancers will post appropriate, tasteful content on social media platforms. Posting any inflammatory, derogatory or inciteful material is prohibited.

- All cheerleaders/dancers are required to permit Tupelo Spirit accounts for following.
- Failure to comply could result in dismissal at the coach's discretion.

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Expectations

Presentation

- Cheerleaders/Dancers are to wear uniforms for school activities only.
- Proper attire must be worn to practice and games.
- Nails must be trimmed below the fingertips (active length) and clear or nude at scheduled events.
- No jewelry during practice/performance/game (exception: game pearls).
- No gum chewing during practice/performance/game.
- No THS cheerleader/dancer apparel should be worn by anyone that is not a THS Spirit Athlete.
- Hair must be out of the face at both practice and games (hair style determined before each event).
- Hair length should be no longer than mid-back when down and/or when put in a low ponytail.
- Only approved hair ornaments may be worn and hair must be a natural hair color.
- No tattoos can be visible while in uniform.
- Correct full uniform including shoes, shell top, skirt, pants, bow (cheer), white ankle socks, bag, jacket, etc.
- If your uniform is too small, upon the coaches' discretion, you will not be able to perform. Uniforms will be approved by Coach Hagemann at uniform fitting.
- Failure to adhere to these rules set forth by MHSAA will result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the squad.

Uniform

- Athletes will be expected to turn in uniforms belonging to school by the scheduled date.
- Athletes are responsible for damage/loss to any part of a uniform.
- Uniforms are expected to be washed after each use during the season.
 - NO USE OF DIRTY UNIFORM!
 - Wash inside-out, then hang dry to protect emblems.
- Athletes may not wear uniform to non-cheer/dance functions.
- Athletes may not lend out uniforms, warm-ups, practice clothes, etc. to someone not on the squad.
- No cutting/altering fabric without approval by Coach Hagemann.

Safety & Transportation

- No leaving practice/performance/game without Coach Hagemann's permission/dismissal.
- No acrylic nails beginning date of first practice as this is a safety hazard.
- Hair length should be no longer than mid back when down and/or when put in a low ponytail as this is a safety hazard.
- A coach or other knowledgeable designated school employee will be in attendance at all practices/performances/games and will accompany the squad on provided transportation when required.
- All practices will be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheer/dance.
- Training in proper spotting techniques is mandatory.

- Warm-up and stretching will precede all events.
- All athletes will participate in a strength and conditioning program.
- Athletes must utilize designated transportation to/from away events/games.

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Discipline

Overview

- Any cheerleader/dancer dismissed from the squad for disciplinary reasons is not eligible to participate in the next tryout without approval from Coach Hagemann.

In-School Minor (ISM)

- During Cheer/Dance Block: tardiness, jewelry, wrong practice wear, hair down, inappropriate nail length, etc.
- These violations will result in immediate conditioning.
- Three prompts to begin or finish conditioning will result in an office referral.

Out-of-School Minor (OSM)

- During Scheduled Events: full uniform (including make-up), tardiness, jewelry, lack of equipment (poms, bag), hair down, nail polish/length, etc.
- Three OSM will result in benching for the total next event (game, parade, etc.)

In-School Suspension (ISS)

- Athletes assigned to ISS may not perform, wear uniform, or practice while serving ISS; however, benched athletes will be required to attend the event with the coaches.
 - First Offense - benching next scheduled event
 - Second Offense - benching next two scheduled events
 - Third Offense - removal from squad

Out-of-School Suspension (OSS)

- Athletes assigned OSS having failed to abide by published school rules relating to conduct, use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other illegal activities will be subject to review by the coaches and the principal.
- Results from review could result in removal from the squad.
- Any drug/alcohol violations will be disciplined in accordance with the TPSD Student Code of Conduct at school or for any school sponsored activities.
- Any member expelled or placed in the Structured Day Program (SDP) will be removed from the program for the duration of the school year.

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Attendance Policy

Overview

- Failure to adhere to the Attendance Policy below could result in disciplinary action, up to and including dismissal from the squad at the coach's discretion.
- Athletes will attend all in/out of school practices and scheduled events.
- Cheerleaders must attend all choreography.
- Pursuant to Board policy JBD, students must be present at least 66% of the school day in order to perform at evening sporting events.

Absence

- Absences must be cleared/approved by Coach Hagemann PRIOR to the practice/event. • Any absence without prior notice (E/UE) will result in benching for half of the next event.
- SUMMER: Athletes may miss no more than 3 events during the summer. This includes any practices, meetings, community activities, and fundraisers from tryouts until the first day of school in August.
- FALL: Athletes may miss no more than 3 events in the fall semester. This includes class blocks, after-school practices, assigned games, meetings, community activities, competitions and fundraising from the first day of school until the end of December.
- SPRING: Athletes may miss no more than 3 events in the second semester. This includes practices, assigned games, meetings, community activities, competitions and fundraising from January first until the last day of practice.
- The following rules for attendance will be strictly enforced:
 - A miss is a miss for whatever reason.
 - Leaving early or arriving more than 5 minutes late to an event constitutes a miss.
 - Being tardy 3 times to an event constitutes 1 miss.
- Cheerleaders Only: cannot miss practice two weeks before competitions or last practice before a performance or scheduled event.
- Cheerleaders/Dancers are responsible for their own transportation to and from practices.
- Cheerleaders/Dancers are expected to be dressed and on time for all activities. Being more than 5 minutes late is an absence.

Injury

- If a cheerleader/dancer acquires or develops a physical condition or injury that prohibits him/her from performing such activities as stunts, jumps, tumbling and running, he/she will not be permitted to participate until submitting a written release/clearance by a licensed medical provider.
- If a cheerleader/dancer is injured, he/she will not be allowed to perform any activities that would endanger his/her safety or the safety of the team.
- Injured cheerleader/dancer must provide a physician's note including the nature of injury, specific length of restriction time, tasks cannot be performed, and any special instructions.
- Injured cheerleaders/dancers will attend practices, games and other activities while they are injured. Any exceptions to this rule must be approved by the coaches.
- Any absence (E/UE) could result in being moved to a different position in routine, gameday line, or performance.

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Attendance Policy

Summer Camp

- Cheerleaders/Dancers will attend UCA/UDA Summer Camp (mandatory). Failure to attend camp will result in dismissal from the squad.

Banquet

- Any squad member who is dismissed or quits the team will not be allowed to attend the End of the Year Banquet as either an athlete or guest.
- Squad members removed due to injury will still be able to attend with approval from the coaches.

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Financial Obligation

Monies Collected

- Coaches have no access to the Booster Club Fund. Information regarding this account will be supplied by the Treasurer.
- Coaches cannot collect money.
- All expenses provided are estimated until you receive an actual bill for your athlete's order.
- Cheer Only: Our goal is to make it to High School Cheer Nationals in Orlando, Florida. This cost is not reflected in the Cost Estimate Sheet. Disney fundraisers will be a separate obligation.
- If an athlete is removed or quits the squad, they are responsible for reimbursement to the Booster Club if any payments have been paid out.
- There are absolutely NO refunds from THS Spirit Program.

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Financial Obligation

Disney Savings

- If we meet our desired goal of qualifying for Disney, our Varsity Team will travel to compete in the National High School Championship in Orlando, FL. ○ Dates: Feb. 4-8, 2027
 - Cost: approximately \$2,400 per Cheerleader
 - Extra practices WILL be scheduled leading up to this competition and will be prioritized.
- To help offset the large investment, our Booster Club Treasurer will manage a savings fund for your Cheerleader, as optional to put back each month in the event of qualification.

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Booster Club

Booster Club Overview

- All booster clubs will follow TPSD policy.
- Booster Clubs are formed by school patrons to help enrich an organization's participation in extracurricular activities, as this should be their primary focus.
- All fundraising efforts should support the goals of the school and cheer/dance squads, but not exploit students.
- Spirit Program Booster Clubs should have a board of directors / officers comprised of at least a President, Treasurer, and Fundraising Chair.
- Two signatories are required on Booster Club checks.
- Donations of monetary value, snacks, water all accepted to the booster club fund.

2026-27 Cheer Booster Positions

- President - Krisha Mims
- Treasurer - Jameatrice Ewing
 - all cheer accounts/spending/funds
- Fundraising Chair - Barley Juarez, Denise Prust, Cheryl Bell
 - all fundraising efforts, football program
- Team Bonding/Events Chair - Amanda Scales
 - team bonding, community service, football program

2026-27 Dance Booster Positions

- President - Kellie Mathis
- Treasurer - Misty Rigby
 - all dance accounts/spending/funds
- Fundraising Chair - Courtney Finley & Ginger Harbour
 - all fundraising efforts, football program
- Team Bonding/Events Chair - Cooper Ogg
 - team bonding, community service, football program

Meetings

- All parents should attempt to attend the Booster Club meetings to stay informed with the program.
- All parents will be required to attend/work at least one fundraiser.
- Interest Meetings and Team Meetings will be mandatory for parents of all cheerleaders/dancers.

Spectator Behavior

- Relatives and friends should understand that the athletes have responsibilities during scheduled events.
- Photos and conversations should be held at designated time by the coaching staff.

- Parents are expected to assist with scheduled events as needed by the program.

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Tupelo High School Spirit Program Handbook Athlete & Parent/Guardian Agreement

Athlete Name: _____ Grade: _____

1. Parent/Guardian: I have read and fully understand the rules and regulations that will govern my child representing Tupelo High School as a cheerleader/dancer. I understand that this is an extracurricular sport and attending practices, games, functions, camp, choreography, and competitions are all part of the required commitment. I understand the fundraising obligations.
2. Athlete: I have read the Social Media Expectations and agree to adhere to these expectations.
3. Athlete: I will, to the best of my ability, follow all of the requirements set forth in the TPSD Spirit Program Handbook.
4. Athlete: I have read and understand the TPSD Student Athletic Handbook and TPSD Code of Conduct.
5. Athlete: I understand the commitment involved and if I fail to adhere to these policies, it will be addressed by the Head Coach, Assistant Coach, Activities Director, and Principal. I understand that by not upholding these expectations, I will be dismissed from the squad.

Cheerleader/Dancer Signature _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Name (printed): _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____ Date _____

Parent/Guardian Address: _____

Parent/Guardian Email: _____

Parent/Guardian Cell Phone #: _____

Cheerleader/Dancer Cell Phone #: _____

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