



Department of Fine Arts



***HIGH SCHOOL***  
**CHEERLEADER GUIDELINES**

reviewed 8/23



# Cheerleader Guidelines High School

## Purpose of Document

The Katy ISD Cheer Guidelines provide procedures and standards that govern all high school cheer programs. The information provided explains the qualifications and responsibilities of high school cheerleaders. Additional campus cheerleading guidelines, as noted in this document, are created and published by each campus. All students and parents are responsible for familiarizing themselves with the contents of this document and must complete and return the enclosed Signature Form according to the deadline communicated by each campus.

## Table of Contents

Tryout Qualifications.....	4
Selection Process.....	5
Responsibilities of Cheerleaders/Parents/Guardians.....	6
Discipline and Consequences.....	8
Demerit/Merit System .....	10
Letter Jackets .....	11

The contents of this handbook are not contractual, and do not give rise to a claim of breach of contract against Katy Independent School District. Furthermore, the contents of this handbook apply to all students of the district, as the contents now appear in the handbook or may be amended in the future.

## Tryout Qualifications

- Residency:** Candidates must reside within the attendance boundaries of the campus for which they are trying out. Residency and student transfer information will be confirmed at the campus prior to tryouts to determine eligibility. When a new campus is scheduled to open, students should tryout for the school they will attend in the fall.
- Grade Level:**
  - Tryouts are open to current 8<sup>th</sup> – 11<sup>th</sup> grade students.
  - Team Levels (Varsity, JV or Freshmen) will be determined at the campus level and communicated 24 hours prior to tryouts.
  - UIL maximum age requirements are in effect.
- Academic Standing:**
  - Candidates must have a cumulative **2.00 GPA** that is calculated using all six-week averages of current school year, prior to tryouts.
  - Candidates must earn 5.0 academic credits at the end of the tryout year in order to assume their role as a cheerleader/mascot for the next academic year.
- School Behavior:** Candidates may not have received any of the following during the current school year:
  - A “U” in the conduct category on any report card
  - More than two “N’s” (Needs Improvement) on any report card
  - More than two Level II/Level III disciplinary infractions, or a combination thereof.

NOTE: for purposes of this criteria only, the campus high school principal may identify specific Level II behaviors which will be excluded from this tabulation for determining eligibility for tryouts

  - Placement in OSS or OAC
  - Any Level IV/Level V disciplinary infraction
- Physical Examination:**

Candidates must submit a “Preparticipation Physical Evaluation” signed by a licensed physician. The due date for this form will be established by the campus and must be turned in by that date to tryout. Preparticipation forms turned in during the current school year for other activities will fulfill this requirement.
- Participation in Pre-Tryout Clinic:**

Candidates should attend each day of the pre-tryout clinic to help prepare for tryouts. Clinic details will be established by each campus. During the clinic, each campus will specify what is to be performed at tryouts.
- Parent Meeting:**

In order to be eligible to try out, each candidate and a parent/guardian or adult representative must attend the mandatory orientation meeting to discuss the selection process and cheerleader responsibilities. Any parent/guardian who is unable to attend this meeting must contact the cheer coach prior to the date of the meeting to receive the information for his/her student to be able to participate in the tryouts.
- Forms:**

All required forms are due prior to tryouts. Required forms include, but are not limited to: Personal Student Information form, Preparticipation Physical Evaluation, Regular Extracurricular Travel and Consent to Emergency Treatment of Student, UIL Concussion Acknowledgment, Student and Parent Agreement to Cheerleading Regulations and Guidelines, etc.

## Selection Process

High school cheerleader selection is done by impartial judges who observe the candidates in a series of activities and skills performed in a single session. Students must be physically present at cheer tryouts in order to be eligible for selection.

### 1. **Tryout Format:**

The tryout process is organized and facilitated by the cheer coach. In addition to the judges, the cheer coach(es), senior cheerleaders, and up to three designated faculty members may also be present in the tryout room.

- Cheerleading tryouts for all squads of the school will be scheduled on the same date, time, and location.
- Cheer tryouts are closed to all spectators.
- A minimum of three qualified judges will be used for tryouts.
- Judges may not be relatives or private coaches of candidates. The judging panel cannot include more than one Katy ISD employee.
- At least one campus administrator must be present to observe the entire duration of the selection process.
- During the tryouts, each judge will assign points based on candidate demonstration of cheerleader skills and functions.
- The scoring template for each campus will be distributed to candidates prior to tryouts.
- Candidate order will be determined prior to try-outs.
- During the judging and tabulation of scores, students are referred to by number only.
- The required uniform for tryouts will be specified by the campus and published in advance. No item with cheerleader identification may be worn or displayed.
- Candidates and/or any person acting as a representative on their behalf are prohibited from having any form of communication or personal contact with any judges before, during, or after the tryout process. Violation of this guideline will result in the immediate removal of the candidate from the process and/or squad if candidate had been selected. Judges are instructed to report any incident of this activity to the campus administrator.

### 2. **Tabulation of Results:**

- Each judge will score each candidate's performance using a numeric scale (1-10 for example). The judge must initial any change to a rating or sum of ratings.
- Scores from each judge are tabulated to yield one total score for each candidate.
- Candidate's total scores are ranked in numerical order.
- Candidates with the highest numerical total are selected as cheerleaders according to cheerleader numbers/teams specified at each campus.
- In the event a tie needs to be broken to determine the final position on the squad, an established tie-breaking procedure will be implemented. The judges' decision is final.
- Each campus will establish how tryouts/selection results will be communicated to candidates.
- Appeals for any component of the cheerleading tryout process, including final results, must take place at the campus level. Grounds for appeal may be made in reference to mathematical calculations or procedural impropriety only.  
Appeals must occur within five (5) school days and during normal school business hours once final results have been announced.

- Appeal results/decision will be final at the campus level.

### 3. **Size of Squad and Special Positions:**

- **Size of Squad** – The maximum number of cheerleaders for any squad is 14.
- **Alternates** - Alternates are not named. If a vacancy in a cheerleading squad occurs two or more weeks prior to the first day of school, the vacancy may be filled by naming the student with the next highest composite score. At the time a vacancy is filled, uniform and accessories will be ordered at parents' expense. The tryout results are maintained in an administrator's office for use if this circumstance arises.
- **Captain(s)** – The cheer coach selects the cheer captain(s). Each campus will publish information regarding selection and responsibilities of the cheer captain(s).
- **Mascot** – Having a mascot is a campus decision. If a mascot is to be selected, the campus will establish and publish a job description and selection procedures. There can be up to two students selected to serve as mascots per campus.

**Loss of position at any time will result in the forfeiture of any allocated or expended funds.**

## Responsibilities of Cheerleaders/Parents/Guardians

### **Time Commitment:**

Cheerleading is time consuming. Every cheerleader is responsible to be present at each activity and perform to the best of his/her ability. Before scheduling out of school activities, such as competitive cheer or gymnastics, carefully evaluate the time demands of schoolwork and cheer. The consequences for not meeting responsibilities are assumed at the time of selection.

1. **Cheerleading Activities:** Cheerleaders will attend the events specified by their campus. Failure to attend required activities may result in dismissal from the squad. High School cheerleader activities can include, but are not limited to:
  - UIL competitions
  - Scheduled practices, including summer, after school, and weekends
  - Athletic/campus/community events as designated by the cheer coach and/or administration
  - Summer camp
  - Non UIL cheer contests as designated by campus/program
2. **Practice:** All activities related to cheer practice (number of practices, time/location of practices, etc.) are determined by the cheer coach and the campus. This includes all cheer camp dates and summer practices.
3. **Camp:** Cheerleaders must attend the summer camp selected by the cheer coach. Information and dates for the summer camp are provided at the pre-tryout parent meeting. Failure to attend and participate in the summer camp and activities may result in removal from the squad.
4. **Attendance:** Attendance at assigned events is required. If a cheerleader is unable to attend an assigned activity, the cheer coach or his/her designee must be notified in writing in advance of the absence. Consequences for missing required events/practices will be established by the campus. All cheerleading squad members must travel to required/assigned events in Katy ISD provided transportation.

5. **Cost to Families:** Maximum required expenditures shall not exceed \$900.00, which includes summer camp expenses. Payment due dates are established by each cheer coach and campus. Failure to meet required financial responsibilities will result in removal from the squad.
6. **Academics and Behavior:** Cheerleaders are expected to maintain high standards in academic performance, behavior, and to serve as positive role models for the student body. Cheerleaders who do not meet these standards are subject to school disciplinary consequences and/or cheerleading consequences. These consequences may include probation and/or dismissal from the team.
7. **Responsibilities of Cheerleaders:**
- Follow all rules and regulations outlined in the Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct.
  - Adhere to appropriate rules, regulations, and established high standards of behavior.
  - Fully cooperate with the cheer coach and administration in investigations involving disciplinary infractions.
  - Exhibit an attitude of respect toward individuals and property by conducting oneself in a responsible manner.
  - Serve as an appropriate role model for other students.
  - Maintain required standards of academic performance.
  - Arrive fully prepared and on time.
  - Exhibit proper and appropriate wear of uniforms and/or practice apparel whenever worn and as directed by the coach.
  - Fulfill all financial responsibilities as required by membership on the squad. Any financial concerns should be addressed with the campus cheer coach and/or campus administration.
8. **Responsibilities of Parents:**
- Stay informed of the rules, regulations, and procedures that are applicable to the extracurricular organization.
  - When student participation in certain activities is considered “optional” by the campus coach and/or administration, parents may be responsible for providing/arranging transportation to and from the event.
  - Pick up students on time after practice and events.
  - Attend all parent meetings.
  - Cooperate with school administration and/or cheer coaches in establishing and maintaining a quality organization.
  - Submit any concerns, ideas for improvement, and/or guidelines/procedural changes in writing directly to the cheer coach.
  - Encourage student adherence to established rules, regulations, and procedures.
  - Ensure fulfillment of all financial responsibilities required of the student as a member of the squad. Any financial concerns should be addressed with the campus cheer coach and/or campus administration.
9. **Parent organizations and booster clubs:** May be formed to promote the school program or to complement a particular student group or activity in a way that is consistent with the District’s philosophy and objectives, within adopted Board policies, and in accordance with UIL guidelines, if applicable. (Policy GE).

## Discipline and Consequences

1. **Standards:** Students involved in extra-curricular activities are expected to maintain high standards of ethical conduct. Extra-curricular participation is a privilege and not a right. Any misconduct that reflects negatively on Katy ISD, the campus, or the program may fall under these outlined consequences. The outlined consequences and demerit/merit system are intended to deal with misconduct that occurs within the school's jurisdiction.
2. **Code of Conduct for Students Involved in Extracurricular Activities:** All students are expected to adhere to the Katy ISD Student Code of Conduct. Cheerleaders who violate the District's Discipline Management Plan and Student Code of Conduct will be assigned appropriate school disciplinary consequences for the infraction. Disciplinary infractions may also result in a student's dismissal from the squad or limited participation.
3. **Short-Term Restrictions:** Campuses may assign short term (1-3 week) restriction(s) due to any of the following: poor academic performance, inappropriate behavior, or failure to fulfill published responsibilities as outlined in campus constitutions and/or by-laws.
4. **Academic Probation/Ineligibility:** A cheerleader who receives a grade lower than 70 on a report card will be placed on probation/ineligibility for at least three weeks. Specific dates for regaining academic eligibility are contained in the TEA/UII Academic Eligibility Calendar.  
**Exception:** Advanced Courses as designated by the Texas Education Agency and identified by Katy ISD are exempt from the "No Pass, No Play" policy.
5. **Suspension/Dismissal for behavior:** Cheerleaders will be given due process. Since cheerleading is an extracurricular activity, the administration's decision is final. For a given instance of misconduct, a cheerleader can:
  - Receive cheer consequences (demerits, cheer suspension, dismissal).
  - Receive school consequences (detentions, ISS, OSS, assignment to a DAEP/JJAEP).
  - Receive a combination of both.
6. **Suspension Definition:** A cheerleader who is suspended from the squad is not permitted to perform at any cheer event and cannot wear uniforms or uniform components or accessories at any time during the period of cheer suspension. Students on suspension are required to attend practice. Students on cheer suspension may not attend any overnight trips.

### **Actions which can lead to suspension:**

- **Conduct Grade** – A cheerleader who receives a second "N" in conduct will be suspended from the cheer squad for a period of three weeks.
- **Demerits** – All Katy ISD Cheerleaders will follow the district's demerit/merit system. The accumulation of a certain number of demerits may result in a suspension.
- **Social Media** - Any inappropriate behavior, including representation on any social media platform, that is disrespectful to the district, the school, the program, or the coaching staff, may result in suspension, per the discretion of the campus administration and coach. This includes unfavorable, questionable, or illegal actions, as documented through social media platforms or use of electronic communication devices.



7. **Dismissal Definition:** Loss of position on cheer squad for remainder of the school year.

**Actions which can lead to Dismissal:**

- **Academic:** Any cheerleader who is academically ineligible for two of the three weeks during a semester will be immediately dismissed from the squad.
- **Conduct Grades:** A total of (3) “N” ‘s or (1) “U” in the conduct category will result in immediate dismissal from the squad.
- **Demerits:** All Katy ISD Cheerleaders will follow the district’s demerit/merit system. The accumulation of a specified number of demerits may result in dismissal.
- **Level II – Level III:** More than two Level II/Level III disciplinary infractions, or a combination thereof, will result in dismissal from the squad.
- **Level IV – Level V:** Any Level IV or Level V infraction will result in dismissal from the squad.
- **Out of School Suspension or Alternative School Placement:** Any cheerleader placed in OSS or OAC will be dismissed from the squad.
- **Hazing:** Any cheerleader who participates in any activity which meets the definition of hazing or who fails to report such an activity will be dismissed from the squad.
- **Social Media:** Any inappropriate behavior, including representation on any social media platform, that is disrespectful to the district, the school, the program, or the coaching staff, may result in dismissal, per the discretion of the campus administration and coach. This includes unfavorable, questionable, or illegal actions, as documented through social media platforms or use of electronic communication devices.
- **Repeated Restrictions (Probations or Suspensions):** A cheerleader who is placed on repeated restrictions (probations or suspensions) for failure to establish/maintain proper conduct or attitude according to organizational by-laws may be dismissed from the squad. Written notification of the possibility of dismissal on the next occurrence will be issued prior to dismissal.
- **Criminal Offenses:** Any cheerleader who pleads guilty or who is convicted of a misdemeanor involving alcohol, drugs, a criminal act, or a felony, will be removed from the cheerleader squad for the remainder of the school year.
- **Deferred Adjudication:** Any cheerleader who accepts deferred adjudication in lieu of a finding of guilt or innocence in a criminal proceeding will be placed on probation until the end of the school year or until a judgment of not guilty is rendered, whichever occurs first.

## Demerit/Merit System

### **DEMERIT SYSTEM:**

The demerit system is defined as a system of cuts due to infringements of rules and regulations. This demerit system will be used from the time the squad is named/determined through the end of the cheer year.

- A record of demerits/merits received by each member will be maintained by the coach and made available to parents.
- Members who accumulate ten (10) or more demerits will be placed on a three-week suspension.
- Members who accumulate twenty (20) or more demerits will be dismissed from the squad.
- The coach and/or administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses which have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. Demerits will be assigned as they occur. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach or administration according to the severity of the offense.

**Failure to be Prepared (1-5)** – Specific behaviors will be outlined by the campus. The coach and administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses that have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach and/or administration according to the severity of the offense. (e.g., not having correct uniform or equipment).

**Inappropriate behavior (1-10)** – Specific behaviors are outlined by the campus. The coach and administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses that have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach and/or administration according to the severity of the offense. (e.g., poor attitude or sportsmanship).

**Absences and Tardiness (1-5)** – Specific behaviors are outlined by the campus. The coach and administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses that have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach and/or administration according to the severity of the offense. (e.g., unexcused absence from a game or event).

**Maintenance of properties, facilities and equipment (1-5)** – Specific behaviors are outlined by the campus. The coach and administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses that have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach and/or administration according to the severity of the offense. (e.g., misuse of equipment or failure to clean up).

**Insubordination (5-10)** – Specific behaviors are outlined by the campus. The coach and administration have the authority to give demerits for offenses that have not been included or that have been inadvertently excluded. The number of demerits issued will be determined by the coach and/or administration according to the severity of the offense. (e.g., disrespect to a coach or teammates).

## **MERIT SYSTEM:**

The Merit System is defined as points earned for displaying exceptional behavior and/or service. Natural consequences are an important lesson in developing the character of young adults. Natural consequences also deter negative behavior. The coach(es) will determine both when merit activities occur and how many merits are possible per activity prior to the activity. Individuals will not receive merit opportunities not offered to the entire squad. The use of a Merit System is optional and will be defined by the campus. Three (3) merits may eliminate one (1) demerit. The number of merits used towards the elimination of demerits may be limited to thirty (30) during one cheer year. Merits are considered a privilege and are not a requirement.

Merit opportunities may include, but are not limited to:

- Volunteering at school or in the community.
- Attending another organization's events or concerts
- Attending workshops or events with advance approval of the coach
- Providing items for the team as designated by the coach

## **General Travel Guidelines**

Review all policies and regulations for student trips to ensure your group is eligible for the type of travel you are planning. Regulations for Fine Arts student travel can be found at <https://help.katyisd.org/help/fmg-regulation>. In addition to Katy ISD regulations, the Fine Arts department recommends the following:

- 1 Chaperone for every 14 students traveling.
- For all overnight travel during the instructional school year, an administrator should be present.

## **Letter Jacket**

Letter Jackets will be available to Varsity squad members in good standing at the conclusion of one full varsity year. These jackets come at the expense of the cheerleader and are not included in the required fee for being a cheerleader.

The Varsity coach reserves the right to not allow a cheerleader or mascot to order a Letter Jacket due to probation/suspension periods, unacceptable grades, demerits, etc.

- Once fitted for a Letter Jacket; the cheerleader is still expected to uphold high expectations.
- If a member is dismissed from the squad for any reason (academics, behavior, demerits, etc.) the letter and all cheer related patches will be removed.
- Cheerleaders must participate in events outlined by the campus such as, but not limited to spring practices/games, summer practices, camps, volleyball season, football season, basketball season and competitions.

Page remains blank

## Katy ISD Cheerleader Guidelines Signature Page

I have received a copy of the Katy ISD Cheerleader Guidelines. I have read and understand the conditions for tryouts and for maintaining membership in the organization. I agree to abide by all policies and procedures governing the organization.

This page must be signed by both the student and parent/legal guardian of the student and returned to the coach or activity sponsor before the student can participate in the activity.

**Signing this page signifies that the student and parent/legal guardian of the student has read and understands the guidelines governing cheer squad members in Katy ISD.**

Student's Name (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Signature:

\_\_\_\_\_

Father/legal guardian (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Father/legal guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_

Mother/legal guardian (please print):

\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Mother/legal guardian:

\_\_\_\_\_

This signature page must be signed and turned in prior to tryouts.

Page remains blank