

**Fort Bend Independent School District**  
**Middle School**  
**Cheerleading Handbook**  
**2014-2015**

*This handbook becomes effective immediately for the tryout process in the Spring of 2014 and remains in effect for successful candidates throughout their tenure as 2014-2015 Cheerleaders.*

# MIDDLE SCHOOL CHEERLEADER HANDBOOK

## I. PURPOSE

The purpose of cheerleading is to promote school spirit, develop a sense of good sportsmanship among students, support activities, encourage a sense of pride, and to establish good character expected of a middle school cheerleader in Fort Bend Independent School District.

## II. COMPOSITION

Each school will have a cheerleader **squad of twelve (12) cheerleaders**, made up of seventh and eighth grade students. Cheerleader eligibility will be based on the FBISD cheerleader requirements and skills and a merit system to include conduct, grades and citizenship. The top 12 candidates will be selected, with no designated number, from either grade.

## III. SELECTION PROCESS

A. Sponsors will verify eligibility. Cheerleaders must meet and maintain specific Texas Education Agency and Fort Bend Independent School District academic eligibility standards for each group. Candidates may not have received more than two failing nine weeks grades during the current school year, through the third nine weeks grade report. Students may not try out if they have a current “incomplete” in any course.

### B. STUDENT CONDUCT

1. Student conduct in and out of the classroom must be commendable. An accumulation of two (2) or more “Unsatisfactory” or “Needs Improvements” during the current school year will cause a student to be ineligible for tryouts.
2. If a student has been a cheerleader during the current school year and was removed from the position due to an infraction of the conduct requirements, the student will be eligible to try out for the following year if the student, at the time of the tryout, meets all requirements.

C. Eligible candidates for cheerleading will try out during the fourth nine weeks of the school year before a minimum of three designated judges. Certified cheerleading judges will be used. The student body will not select cheerleaders.

**D. Additional requirements:**

1. At the time of tryouts, a student must be enrolled in the sixth or seventh grade at the school or K-6 feeder school for which tryouts are being held.
  2. The student must have completed and returned to the sponsor prior to the week of cheerleading training the following:
    - a) A release form signed by parent or guardian;
    - b) A permission slip explaining estimated expenses, policies and procedures, and other requirements signed by parent or guardian and returned to the sponsor before tryouts; and
    - c) A current physical examination report.
  3. A student must have presented the current report card to the coach/sponsor prior to the week of cheerleading training.
  4. A training clinic will be held by the coach/sponsor prior to tryouts. Candidates should make every effort to attend.
- E. All candidates must wear solid-colored shirt and shorts, void of any writing or symbols.
- F. Cheerleader candidates will be allowed to provide video for judges' evaluation if they are unable to perform all required activities due to injury. The candidate must provide a physician's letter explaining the specific injury and restrictions prior to beginning the try out. They must complete all aspects of the program not restricted by the injury and identified in the physician's letter. The video must not show candidates as current cheerleaders in any way.

#### IV. REQUIREMENTS/RESPONSIBILITIES

- A. All cheerleaders are expected to follow the code of conduct as outlined in the Fort Bend ISD Student Handbook, and as developed by campus sponsor/cheer coach with approval of the principal.
- B. Sponsor/Cheer coaches are responsible for enforcing the cheerleader discipline policy fairly to all cheerleaders.
- C. The Cheerleader Discipline Policy does not replace or supercede the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan or Extracurricular Handbook.
- D. These rules apply to all cheerleaders/mascots at all times during their elected term.
- E. The following rules of conduct for participants in FBISD school-sponsored extracurricular activities apply 24 hours a day, seven days per week, and fifty-two weeks per year:

**Loss of privilege for one calendar year, then permanent removal for second offense**

Selling or delivering marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, abuseable glue, aerosol paint, or any other mood-changing, mind altering, or behavior affecting drug is strictly prohibited and will result in elimination from further participation in all extracurricular activities for:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Offense**, one calendar year.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense**, for the remainder of the student's school career.

**Other Removals**

The following infractions are strictly prohibited:

1. Using, possessing, or being under the influence of marijuana, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, abuseable glue, aerosol paint, or any other mood-changing, mind altering, or behavior affecting drug;
2. Possessing, using or being under the influence of an alcoholic beverage;
3. Theft or stealing;
4. Engaging in lewd, disruptive, or other offensive conduct that affronts school district standards of propriety.

Upon the administration's determination that a FBISD student participating in a school-sponsored extracurricular activity or organization has violated any one of the four infractions enumerated above, at **Other Removals**, the student shall lose the privilege of further participation in that organization or activity as provided below:

- **1<sup>st</sup> Offense:** 10 hours of approved community service and 20 school days of suspension from active participation in any/all FBISD extracurricular activities. If the offense occurs when the student is not actively participating, the suspension shall apply beginning with the next period of participation following the offense. If the student is involved in more than one activity, the suspension shall apply to all activities concurrently. The student shall not serve more than one 20-day suspension for the first offense.
- **2<sup>nd</sup> Offense:** 20 hours of approved community service and 40 school days of suspension from active participation in any/all FBISD extracurricular activity. If the offense occurs when the student is not actively participating, the suspension shall apply beginning with the next period of participation following the offense. If the student is involved in more than one activity, the suspension shall apply to all activities concurrently. The student shall not serve more than one 40-day suspension for the second offense.
- **3<sup>rd</sup> Offense:** the student shall be suspended from further participation for one calendar year.
- **4<sup>th</sup> Offense:** the student shall be eliminated from further participation in all activities for the remainder of his/her school career.

A student or parent may appeal the student's loss of extracurricular privileges through FBISD Board Policy FNG.

**Notice:** Participation in fundraising activities for an extracurricular activity does not guarantee selection for the team or extracurricular activity. An assignment to an athletics class does not ensure final selection onto any team.

## V. CUMULATIVE 20 POINT DEMERIT SYSTEM

### A. DEMERIT RECORD

1. The record will be established for all cheerleaders, both varsity and sub varsity.
2. The record will record infractions for the entire school year, as identified by the sponsor/cheer coach.
3. Demerits cannot be worked off or retracted
4. ***The record will be maintained solely by the sponsor/cheer coach and must be kept confidential. A cheerleader may view his/her own record.***
5. ***When a demerit is recorded on the record, the sponsor will initial the entry and ask the cheerleader to do likewise.***
6. When a cheerleader receives a total of 5 demerits, the sponsor will personally counsel with the cheerleader.

### B. 10 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS = NOTICE

1. When a cheerleader reaches a total of 10 demerits, the cheerleader will be placed on notice and the sponsor will notify the cheerleader and his/her parent/guardian.
2. The notice status will be documented in writing by the sponsor and signed by the principal. The notice statement will be mailed to the parent or guardian.

### C. 15 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS=SUSPENSION

1. When a cheerleader reaches a total of 15 demerits, he/she will be suspended for a 3-week period. The cheerleader is prohibited from performance activities and wearing uniforms. They will continue to practice.
2. The suspension status will require the sponsor to meet with the cheerleader and his/her parents with a campus administrator present. The suspension will continue until the meeting takes place.

**D. 20 CUMULATIVE DEMERITS = DISMISSAL FROM SQUAD**

If a cheerleader accumulates 20 demerits, the cheerleader will be dismissed from the cheer squad. A written notice and copy of the demerit record will be prepared by the sponsor/coach and signed by both the sponsor/coach and principal. A copy of the notice will be mailed to the student's parent or guardian, with a copy sent to the District's athletic director.

**E. ADDITIONAL DISCIPLINE**

In addition to demerits issued for infractions, the sponsors/coaches may administer additional discipline, such as warnings, additional sign making, or others as deemed necessary.

## DEMERITS ISSUED FOR THE FOLLOWING INFRACTIONS

	Demerits
▪ SMOKING	10/ Offense
▪ ISS (In-School Suspension)	4/ Day
▪ AFTER SCHOOL / SATURDAY DETENTION	2/ Day* *Maximum 4/Occur
▪ DELIBERATE DISOBEDIENCE TO SPONSOR/COACH	10/ Offense
▪ DISRESPECT TO SPONSOR/COACH OR OTHER ADULT	5/ Offense
▪ UNSPORTSMANLIKE CONDUCT TO SQUAD MEMBERS / OTHER STUDENTS	2/ Offense
▪ USE OF PROFANITY	5/ Offense
▪ UNEXCUSED ABSENCE	5/ Offense
▪ EXCUSED ABSENCES	2 / Absence* *Demerits issued beginning 6th excused absence
▪ TARDIES	1 / Offense* *3 tardies = unexcused absence
▪ INAPPROPRIATE DRESS	5/ Offense
▪ UNIFORM INFRACTIONS	1/ Offense
▪ STUNTING WITHOUT SPONSOR/COACH APPROVAL	5/ Offense
▪ INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR	5/ Offense
▪ DEADLINES / RESPONSIBILITIES	1/ Offense

In addition to discipline consequences available under the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan, demerits may be issued for the infractions listed above. An assessment of demerits does not supersede or replace the discipline consequences available under the Fort Bend ISD Discipline Management Plan



**FORT BEND INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT  
CHEERLEADER DEMERIT RECORD**

**Cheerleader:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Campus:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Sponsor:** \_\_\_\_\_

INFRACTION	DATE	DEMERITS ISSUED	COACH'S INITIALS	Cheerleader's Initials
<b>VIOLATION OF SCHOOL CONDUCT CODE</b>				
▪ <b>Smoking (10)</b>	1			
	2			
▪ <b>ISS (4)</b>	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
▪ <b>After School/Saturday Detention (2)</b>	1			
	2			
	3			
	4			
	5			
	6			
	7			
	8			
	9			
	10			

INSUBORDINATION					
▪ Deliberate Disobedience (10)	1				
	2				
▪ Disrespect (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
▪ Unsportsmanlike Conduct (2)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
▪ Use of Profanity (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
ABSENCES					
▪ Unexcused (5)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
▪ Excused (2)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				

<b>TARDY (1)</b>	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
<b>INAPPROPRIATE DRESS (5)</b>	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
<b>UNIFORMS (1)</b>	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
<b>STUNTING W/O APPROVAL (5)</b>	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
<b>INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOR (5 max.)</b>	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				

DEADLINES/RESPONSES (1)	1				
	2				
	3				
	4				
	5				
	6				
	7				
	8				
	9				
	10				
	<b>TOTAL DEMERITS:</b>				

**NOTATIONS:**


Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                  **Sponsor/Coach**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_  
                  **Campus Administrator**

## **VI. EXPECTATIONS**

### **A. UNIFORMS**

Uniforms worn by the cheerleaders are decided at each campus. Cheerleaders will wear their school's official uniform at the games and when representing their school at special events. Cheerleader uniforms are District property; therefore, the cheerleader will be required to return the uniforms at the end of the season. Conditions for possessing and using the uniforms will be explained in the tryout packet provided to each candidate.

### **B. SKILL REQUIREMENTS**

All skills will be judged on a scale of 1-5, with 1 being the lowest, and 5 the highest.

1. Good coordination
2. Good sense of timing and rhythms; i.e., dance skills
3. Good vocal projection
4. Good physical posture
5. Good poise and stage presence
6. Knowledge of variety of stunts (at least two)
7. Knowledge of yells and routines

### **C. PRACTICES**

1. During the summer and school year, the sponsor, according to the needs of the group, will regularly schedule practice. This may include morning and/or afternoon practices.
2. No one other than the cheerleading group will be allowed to attend these practices without special permission from the sponsor.

### **D. CHEERLEADING CAMP**

1. Attendance at a summer cheerleading camp is required. All expenses will be the responsibility of the cheerleader.
2. An adult cheerleading sponsor or other school employee designee must accompany the cheerleaders to camp.

## **E. SPORTING AND SPECIAL EVENTS**

1. The building principal and cheerleader sponsor will determine cheerleader attendance and participation at sporting or other events.
2. The district will provide transportation.
3. Cheerleaders must be in attendance at school on the day they are to perform. Exceptions include doctor's appointments, funerals, and other reasons as approved by the building principal and sponsor.

## **F. CHEERLEADER DUTIES**

1. Cheerleaders must attend all home football games and selected volleyball and basketball games. Cheerleaders are not permitted to lead cheers for two separate contests during a school week.
2. Cheerleaders shall be familiar with the rules and all officials' sport signals and be able to lead an appropriate cheer corresponding with the call.
3. In cases of two games on one night, cheerleaders must attend the home game unless there is a difference in district honors.
4. Cheerleaders shall portray good sportsmanship and good citizenship at all times.
5. Cheerleaders are to be well groomed:
  - a) No excessive make-up.
  - b) No jewelry other than small earrings.
  - c) No gum chewing while in uniform.
  - d) No dirty or unpressed uniforms.
  - e) No unpolished shoes.
  - f) Hair must be pulled back from face and eyes.
6. Appropriate behavior is expected at all times, especially when representing the school in front of crowds.

## **G. DISCIPLINE OR PENALTIES FOR FAILURE TO FULFILL CHEERLEADER'S OBLIGATIONS**

1. If a cheerleader violates a rule, the coach/sponsor, faculty or administration may report the violation. The report should immediately be presented to the coach/sponsor, who will determine the demerits, (see coach/sponsor duties in Article IV).
2. Cheerleader participation will follow all UIL *no pass, no play* guidelines.
3. The principal may remove a cheerleader as a result of serious or persistent misconduct, or when the principal deems necessary.
4. The following behaviors are prohibited while on campus, or while participating in or attending school activities, or at any time while wearing a cheerleader uniform:
  - a) Smoking or possessing tobacco products
  - b) Use of undesirable language or unacceptable behavior; i.e., cheating, fighting
  - c) Defacing of school property
  - d) Receiving a "U" in conduct
  - e) Receiving an "F" in more than one six-weeks grading period

A cheerleader will be subject to a 5-school day suspension from the squad for a first offense, a 10-school day suspension for a second offense, and dismissal from the squad for the remainder of the school year if found guilty of a third offense.

5. All excused absences must be verified by a written excuse, signed by a parent or guardian. The written excuse must be turned in the following day. If no excuse is turned in, the absence will be considered unexcused.

## **VII. COACH/SPONSOR GUIDELINES**

### **A. COACH/SPONSOR DUTIES**

Coach/Sponsor duties include the following:

1. Make schedules for games, uniforms, practices, etc.
2. Assign duties in all activities
3. Inform all cheerleaders of changes in schedule, upcoming events, etc.
4. Give announcements to administration
5. Approve or veto all ideas, cheers, stunts, skits, signs, etc.
6. Maintain the merit/demerit records and notifies the cheerleader, the parents and the administration, if probation or suspension is necessary.
7. Be responsible for supervision of all items/equipment ordered and for the collection of money.
8. Be responsible for a grade, tardy, absence and conduct check with teachers and discipline action taken by grade level principals.
9. Be responsible for ensuring that no routine is used that could result in serious injury to a cheerleader.
10. Be trained according to Fort Bend Independent School District and UIL guidelines.
11. Develop a merit/demerit system. Parent and cheerleader will be provided with a copy of this system and will return a signed copy, indicating their agreement to adhere to the conditions within the merit/demerit system.



## **VIII. SAFETY GUIDELINES**

### **A. Safety guidelines**

1. Cheerleaders will adhere to the safety guidelines outlined in the Safety Guidelines recommended by UCA Camps (see addendum).
2. Squads must follow a conditioning and flexibility program and follow the qualification systems for partner stunts.
3. Coach/sponsor must participate in training and be able to assist/teach techniques and stunts to cheerleaders.
4. Cheerleaders must be supervised at all official events i.e., practices, games, pep rallies, etc.
5. Adequate matting must be provided.
6. Written, oral and posted warnings concerning the risk involved must be provided.
7. An emergency plan must be in place.
8. If competitions are attended, mats and professional spotters must be provided.

## **IX. FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **A. District funding**

1. The district will provide funding for the basic uniform and accessories.
2. Transportation to sporting events will be provided by the district.

**X. MASCOT QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION**

A. Mascots will be utilized only if the school chooses to have a student serve as mascot.

B. Qualification and Selection

1. The mascot shall be governed by the cheerleader constitution.
2. Tryout qualifications are the same as for cheerleading.
3. The mascot shall attend all games, functions, practices, etc., unless excused by the sponsor.
4. The mascot shall be under the authority of the cheerleading coach/sponsor.