

2012 – 2013

Palestine High School

Cheerleading/

Mascot Constitution

The purpose of the Cheerleader/ Mascot organization is to support athletic functions, to promote school spirit and good sportsmanship, good citizenship, to set an example worthy of the position and first and foremost be representatives of the school. Being a cheerleader/ mascot is an honor and a privilege. Cheerleaders should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position and in accordance with the rules as stated in the Palestine ISD Student Code of Conduct. Members of these groups have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus and academic achievement than of their peers.

Objectives:

Cheerleaders are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and remembering cheers, dances, and routines. They are also expected to be able to publicly demonstrate a skill level suitable for the team position. Off the field they are to enthusiastically support all athletic teams through advertisement, personal attitude, and attendance any event chosen by the coaches and approved by the principal.

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 next tryout date. The cheerleading season includes football season and basketball season and other events as decided by the cheerleading coach(es). This does not include the academic guidelines. Because of TEA rules, the academic policies are in effect for a school year.

Eligibility – Try Out

A student is eligible to try out for cheerleader if either of the two conditions are met:

- At the time of the tryout, the student is enrolled in the Palestine Independent School District and is trying out at the school where the student is registered to attend for the next school year
- If the student is not currently enrolled in the PISD, but is registered to attend PISD next school year and completed all necessary enrollment/ transfer paperwork through central office.

Academic Grades:

- To be eligible for tryouts, students must not have more than two failing grades in any combination of subjects for the current school year. To be eligible for tryouts, students must currently be passing all subjects.
- UIL rules on No pass/ No Play will apply during the cheerleading year.
- Academic probation means the student may not practice, dress, travel, or sit with the organization at performances.
- Failing two six weeks in any combination of subjects will result in dismissal.

Discipline:

- Any student who has previously been removed from the squad for disciplinary reasons, is not eligible for cheerleading tryouts without approval from the principal and the coach(es).
- Disciplinary history is given consideration with regard to eligibility for tryout. Individual approval from the campus principal and cheer coach(es) must be given if:
 - The student has previously been removed from the squad for disciplinary reasons.
 - The student has been assigned ISS, Friday night school, or detention a combination of 3 times, or
 - The student has an excessive number of disciplinary referrals, has been assigned to DAEP, and/or suspended from school by any PISD administrator.

Outstanding fees/ Balances

- Any student who has any outstanding balance of fees or money due to Palestine ISD for any organization will not be allowed to try out unless fees are paid in full. This includes any fees related to cheerleading in the past.

Commitment:

- To be eligible for tryouts, students and parent/ legal guardians MUST attend one of the schedule "Pre Try-Out Parent Meetings".
- Candidates selected to be a member of the cheerleading squad are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full cheerleading year. Any cheerleader who voluntarily quits the squad before the end of the cheerleading year without the approval of the principal and the coach will not be allowed to try out for the next school year.
- Cheerleaders are required to be at all practices, assigned games, and events. Failure to show up on time and stay for the entire planned practice/ game/ event will result in disciplinary action and ultimately lead to removal from the squad. School related functions that are critical to success in the classroom are not counted against the cheerleader.
- A student who misses a cheering event for practice of another sport or school activity must notify the coaches 3 days prior to the absence in order to work out a schedule.
- Class practice that is excused by the school will not count against the student. However, if the class practice is critical to an upcoming event, the coach will determine whether or not the student will participate. Students will be dismissed if they have more than nine (9) absences in any one class per semester (by review of administration and coach(es)).
- Definitions:
 - Planned Practice –after school practice or summer practice scheduled more than two (2) weeks in advance
 - Planned Event – Once an individual has been assigned an event, he/she must cheer for the entire duration of the event. Arriving more than fifteen (15) minutes late, or leaving more than fifteen (15) minutes early will count as an absence and will be subject to disciplinary rules.

- An exception is related to taking the SAT/ ACT test. It has been approved by administration for a student to leave a game after halftime or possibly miss a game on the night prior to taking the SAT. In order for there to be no penalty, the student must give written notice to the coach at least two (2) weeks prior to the event.

Selection:

Palestine High School will have a centralized tryout for the selection of the high school cheerleading squads. The goal is provide a consistent, equitable and monitored tryout process for all high school cheerleader candidates. The tryout date is determined by the coach(es) and will be posted and announced to students a least one month prior to the tryout date.

High School cheerleaders shall be selected by a scoring method that assigns a weight of 80% to the scoring of judges and 20% by the average of teacher recommendations. Teachers will rate students according to their behavior, work ethic, leadership, ability to work with others, and character. These scores will be averaged and then calculated as 20% of total candidate's score.

Tryouts:

- The candidate must sign up by the deadline
- Current members must be a member in good standing
- Candidate must meet all the eligibility for tryout criteria as listed previously
- All paperwork must be signed by the candidate and parent/ legal guardian by deadline
- All members must tryout each year
- If a candidate does not attend clinic prior to tryouts, it is the responsibility of the student to make arrangements with other candidates for tryout information or material missed.
- In order to insure equity, affordability, and safety for students during the tryout procedures, the tryout uniform should be:
 - Plain white tee
 - Solid black shorts
 - White socks
 - Tennis shoes – not cheerleading shoes
 - Sports bra
 - All hair must be in a ponytail
 - No jewelry
 - No long or brightly colored fingernails
 - Minimal make up
 - No glitter or stickers
- Numbers will be drawn during clinic to determine tryout order
- Applicants will be judged on motions, voice projection, jumps, tumbling (mats will be provided), and dance.
- Tryouts will be held in the gym designated by the coach(es). Candidates may not leave the dressing room/ waiting area until tryouts are complete. Tryouts are CLOSED to the public.

- Once tryouts are complete, candidates will be asked to leave the campus. Once scores are tabulated, the results will be posted on the school district website.

Squad Make-Up:

The varsity squad will a of minimum of 10 cheerleaders, with a maximum of no more than 16 cheerleaders with no more than a 5 point difference between scores. The squad will be made up of the top scoring sophomores (who choose to try out for varsity), juniors and seniors. The minimum scoring requirement for varsity members is 60 points.

The junior varsity squad will be made up of a minimum of 10 cheerleaders, with a maximum of no more than 14 with no more than a 5 point difference between scores. The squad will be made up of the top scoring juniors and sophomores. The minimum scoring requirement for junior varsity members is 40 points.

All candidates must meet the minimum scoring requirements in order to be placed on a squad. In the event there are not enough candidates who earn the minimum score, the squad makeup may be smaller than the maximum number allowed.

In the event that a cheerleader quits or resigns BEFORE summer camp, the next candidate in line of scores will be the replacement. There will not be any replacements after summer camp. Members will not be allowed to return once he/ she quits the squad or withdraws from Palestine ISD.

Judges:

There will be a 3 panel judge. Judges will be selected from professional cheerleading associations, universities, and/ or out of district sponsors. Judges will not hired to judge tryouts if they have tutored or taught the cheerleader candidates during the current school year. Every attempt will be made to hire judges who have not worked with students in the Palestine area. Professional judges will be instructed to judge the candidates based only on mastery of skills that they demonstrate during tryouts.

PISD Cheerleader Coaches/ drill team coaches or employees of Palestine ISD may not serve as a judge for cheerleader tryouts.

Tabulation of Scores:

Each judge will enter each candidate's scores on a pre-designed score sheet. Tabulations will be checked by a technical assistant and then prepared for tabulation. The judge(s) scores will then be averaged with the teacher recommendation for final scoring. Candidates will be ranked from high to low and the appropriate number selected for each squad. Scores will be calculated to two decimal places.

Each candidate must score the minimum percentage of points for his/ her squad in order to be placed on a cheerleading squad.

Scores will remain with the Principal until candidates are notified. Original scoring sheets will be retained for 30 days following the tryout date. Scores given for a student by an individual judge will not be changed by a coach, technical assistant principal, or principal designee.

Exceptions

In case of a tie, both students shall be selected.

A video can only be used after notification to the cheerleading coach(es) and only in case of recent surgery or broken bones that impair a student participating in a "specific skill" of the tryout. If the video is used, only a small segment of the video that shows the "specific skill" done by the student prior to tryout may be judged. A video may not be used showing the individual performing in a competition setting, All-Stars, or Nationals, etc. A medical doctor's note indicating the specific skill the student is incapable of performing will be required prior to video use. Coach(es) will make the guidelines available to the judges if a video is used for tryouts.

Parent Request for Scores:

Any candidates request to receive his/ her scores must be made through written request from parent/ guardian. Parents may request to see her/ his own child's score (no rank score) from the judging panel. By law, all other student scores are protected and cannot be shared with anyone except the sponsor, principal, or principal designee.

Letter Jackets:

Only Varsity cheerleaders may earn a letter jacket which is in accordance with the other UIL sports. All cheerleaders must cheer for at least 5 of the basketball games even if involved in other school activities. Unexcused absences will apply and may prevent the cheerleader from lettering.

Costs:

Once members are selected, the coaches will determine and schedule fittings for uniforms, shoes, etc. A schedule of payments will be sent to parents with totals of money due and when each payment is due. Parent/ guardians will be asked to sign a financial contracts agreeing to pay associated costs. The first payment of \$150 will be due at the time of the first fitting. If the cheerleader does not pay the \$150, the cheerleader will not be fitted for a uniform. Not paying the \$150 deposit due at the time of the first fitting could result in the cheerleader being dismissed from the squad. Additional payments will be due before any uniforms or accessories are released to the cheerleader. Outstanding balances will result in cheerleader being removed from the squad. A refund will not be made for items that have already been ordered. All payments will be due prior to camp.

Fundraising opportunities will be offered during the season. Every member will be required to take part in fundraising events held by the cheerleading organization. Any member not participating in fundraising events will be required to pay their his/ her share of the cost.

Captain and Co-Captain Selection Process:

The coach/ coaches will choose the captain and the co-captains based on a separate try out process. These students will be held to a higher standard and will be required to sign a contract stating their expectations and responsibilities. The student must agree to the standards or forfeit the position to the next appointed captain. If the cheerleading coach(es) believe a captain is not meeting the expectation set forth, the coach may remove the captain at any time during the season. Under no circumstances does a captain position infer or replace any directives given by the coach(es). All cheerleading squad practices, meetings, etc must include the presence of a cheerleading coach. Any meetings or practices held by cheerleaders or parents without the knowledge and consent of a cheerleading coach will result in the dismissal of the cheerleader.

Mascot Information:

The mascot is required to attend camp as all cheerleaders are required. The mascot is responsible for making up skits for pep rallies and posters and whatever is necessary to help the overall spirit of the team. The mascot will interact with the crowd and cheerleaders. The mascot will appear before the same panel of judges as the cheerleaders. Prop and costuming should be used. Score will be based on originality, energy, and props. Mascots will follow the same guidelines as outlined in the cheerleading constitution.

Cheerleader Managers:

The coach(es) will choose the manager for the squads based on application and knowledge of the sport.

Conduct/ Rules/ Demerits

Cheerleaders are expected to behave in a manner that is becoming to the individual, as well as to the organization they represent. They should be aware that, in and out of uniform, they are representatives of the cheerleading squad and the high school they attend and should behave accordingly.

Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include ensuring that cheerleaders' websites are appropriate. The internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Any communication such as MySpace, Facebook, or photo sharing, etc appearing on the internet is public domain even if it is marked private. Cheerleaders are responsible for their personal websites and postings as well as for postings on other students' websites. The area of appropriateness will include, but are not limited to language (abbreviated or alluding to), pictures, suggestive poses, clothing, reference to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Any question of appropriateness will be decided by the administration and coach(es).

Any cheerleader removed from his/ her squad for disciplinary reasons during the current cheerleading year will not be eligible to participate in the next year's tryouts without the approval from the administration and coach(es). Areas to be reviewed will include, but not be limited to review of the reason(s) for the removal and student records since removal (academic grades, discipline records, attitude, etc.)

Students who have been removed and those who voluntarily quit retain no rights to the team awards, recognitions, etc. They lose all privileges associated with cheerleading membership, including attending cheerleading only event, using cheerleading facilities, and wearing cheerleading attire.

Proper manners should be used at all time, especially when addressing adults. Mutual respect and politeness toward members within the squad are basic elements that contribute to the total success of the squad. All members are expected to abide by PISD's Student Code of Conduct rules relating to conduct, possession and/ or use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other illegal activities. The possession and/ or use of alcohol, tobacco, and illegal drugs are expressly forbidden and will not be tolerated in or out of uniform. Any infraction of this nature will result in immediate dismissal from the squad. Any student removed from the cheerleading squad will also be removed from the cheer class.

Cheerleaders are expected to be at all practices/ events and be on time. A cheerleader who misses the practice before a planned event will not be allowed to participate in the event. Any absence must be cleared by the sponsor prior to the practice. Excused absences may include: personal illness, death in family, illness in the family that requires out of town travel, funeral, mandatory court appearance, and religious holidays. Unexcused absences include: work, vacation, appointments, non-UIL involvement, all-stars, etc. Summer practices are mandatory. Calendars of planned practices and events are given to cheerleaders months in advance and it is the responsibility of the cheerleader to adhere to that schedule. Any cheerleader missing more than 2 planned practices or events during the summer will result in immediate dismissal from the squad. Cheerleading camp is mandatory. Missing camp will result in dismissal of the cheerleader from the squad. A member absent from school must turn in a doctor's note to the coach(es). Work will not interfere with cheerleader's practices or event schedule. College class should not interfere with cheering; however if college is necessary and there is no other academic solution for the student, then the class must be approved by the coach ahead of time and there must be documentation to prove the need of the class. A cheerleader who misses any combination of 3 practice/ events during the season will be removed from the squad.

Cell phones usage has become a distraction for cheerleading practices and events. The coach(es) may collect cell phones prior to any event or practice. Parents need to be aware of this policy. Parents may have the coach's cell phone number in case of an emergency. Returning from away games, the students will have their phones at least 30 minutes before arrival back to the school.

When there is a school trip to an out of town event, the members must ride to and from the event on the bus. There is a form that can be filled out in the school office and must be signed by an administrator in the event that a student needs to ride home with their parent or alternate transportation. Cheerleaders will not be allowed alternate transportation unless this form is filled out and return to the coach(es) prior to the event.

Cheerleaders hair will be of a natural color and no visible tattoos are to be seen. A cheerleader will be benched until these things are corrected.

Members are expected to follow instructions. Failure to do so will result in demerits. Demerits will require extra conditioning as determined by the coach and accumulation of demerits could ultimately

result in dismissal from the squad. Any member placed in Alternative School (DAEP) will be immediately dismissed from the squad. Any member that resigns, quits, or is dismissed may not tryout during the current year without the review and approval of the administration and coach(es).

Coach(es) reserve the right to handle discipline occurrences on a case by case basis. Once a cheerleader accumulates 5 demerits, a Demerit Sheet will be sent home for both student and parent/ guardian to sign. The cheerleader may not participate in any cheerleading event until the Demerit Sheet is signed and returned to the coach(es). All squad dismissal hearings will be held by the coach(es) and parent/ guardians. The following is a list of possible infractions.

Demerits

One Demerit

- Being insubordinate, including not following directions the first time given
- Wearing inappropriate workout clothes when practice begins, including not having cheerleading shoes
- Being tardy to cheerleading class including being in the locker room or hallway when the tardy bell rings
- Wearing jewelry
- Complaining excessively
- Using cell phone without permission
- Chewing gum
- Eating and/or drinking during an event
- Exhibiting lack of knowledge of cheers (can also result in being benched from cheering)
- Wearing dirty uniform articles
- Wearing any uniform article incorrectly or missing any uniform article
- Conversing with the crowd, team or one another during an event
- Displaying unsportsmanlike conduct

Five Demerits

- Using profane language
- Being reported by a teacher for misbehavior
- Failing to notify the coach(es) prior to any absence
- Lying/ intentional deceiving
- Being referred for disciplinary issues
- Appearing at any event inappropriately dressed as directed for the event. For example, but not limited to, missing bow, hair not worn as directed by coach(es), missing pieces of uniform. The cheerleader may NOT participate in any event until appearance is corrected.
- Allowing any other student or person wearing any part of cheerleader's attire or uniform.

Ten Demerits

- Wearing uniform without consent of coach(es) for any activity other any school function
- Displaying disrespect toward the coach, captain, or other member of the team
- Being more than 15 minutes late for a planned event or practice
- Failing to maintain proper sideline behavior; excessive talking among cheerleaders, talking to people in the crowd, not paying attention to the event or game, stand in correct formation/ stance, not cheering/ spiriting, jumping and tumbling the entire game or pep rally, only one person out of formation at a time for drinks, no taunting the other team, cheerleader will show respect during the National Anthem and both school songs
- Leaving any game, pep rally, or event prior to completion of clean up.
- Leaving the field/ court the entire game/ pep rally/ during the entire event
- Being tardy on return to the court/ field after half time break. Cheerleaders are expected to back on field/ court ready to cheer at least 5 minutes before half time ends (benched 3rd quarter).
- Behavior/ acting in a an unsafe manner as determined by the coach(es).
- Leaving food, trash, or mess in dressing room halls, or any performance areas.

Fifteen Demerits

- Displaying public affection during school, at school activities, or while wearing the cheerleading uniform
- Exhibiting conduct that does not exemplify a good role model (such as public information displayed on Facebook). This will be reviewed by coach(es) and principal.
- Fighting on or off campus

Consequences:

Five Demerits – will result in sitting out the first quarter and a Demerit Sheet will be sent home

Ten Demerits – will result in sitting out two quarter, and parents will be notified

Fifteen Demerits – will result in one week probation from all cheerleading activities and parents will be notified

Twenty Demerits- will result in dismissal from the squad and parents will be notified

