

Columbus High School Cheerleader Constitution

Columbus Municipal School District supports Cheerleading as an extracurricular activity in our schools. In order to maintain a safe climate at all times, the policies and procedures listed herein must be adhered to at all times.

Cheerleading is a highly visible activity and carries with it a great deal of responsibility, which is borne by those selected as cheerleaders. Their behavior and conduct should exemplify good character and judgment at all times, on and off campus.

Academic rules for students participating in activities:

The MHSAA eligibility rules require each student participating in MHSAA sanctioned competitions to make "satisfactory progress toward graduation." Each school district determines the requirements for "satisfactory progress toward graduation" through its graduation requirements. Each school district must interpret this according to its requirements. In situations which require "judgment," schools are directed to "interpret the rules for the benefit of the students." Additionally, according to Mississippi law, a student must maintain a grade point average of at least 2.0 or a C average. This will be measured at the conclusion of the first semester using the semester averages of all the courses the student is taking. Students who do not have a 2.0 or a C average for the first semester will be ineligible for the second semester. At the end of the school year, each student's grade point average for the year will be assessed. This assessment will reflect the average for the entire year using the final grades for each course. If the student does not have a grade point average of at least 2.0 or a C average, he/she will become ineligible for the fall semester. Students may attend summer school, extended school year, take correspondence classes, participate in credit recovery programs and take advantage of other related options to establish a 2.0 or C average to regain eligibility. Students must complete these programs prior to the first day of the next year or the next semester. A 2.0 or "C" average may be calculated in two ways: by grade point average or numerically. Grade Point Average: A=4, B=3, C=2, D=1, F=0. Numerical: Average all the semester or year end averages and place the average in the local grading scale. If the overall average is a "C" or better, the student is eligible. A student athlete may become eligible for the second semester only once during his/her high school career if he/she fails the year end average the previous year, by achieving at least an overall 2.0 or C average at the end of the first semester. This will be done in order to keep the student on track for graduation.

GUIDELINES AND POLICIES FROM MISSHSAA

1. Cheerleading/Dance is considered a sport activity.
2. ALL AACCA School Cheer Safety rules in the current year's safety rules **must** be followed by cheer teams.
3. National Federation rules listed in the current year's Spirit Rules Book **must** be followed by cheer teams.
4. Hair Devices: Hair must be worn in an appropriate manner for the activity. Hair can be secured out of the face by using bobby pins or plastic-coated barrettes.
5. All jewelry is prohibited during participation (practices or performing). Religious medals and medical medals are not considered to be jewelry. A religious medal without a chain must be taped and worn under the uniform. A medical alert medal must be taped and may be visible.
6. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff. The midriff is not to be visible when standing at attention.
7. Glitter must readily adhere to the hair, face, uniform, or costume. Glitter may be used on signs, props, or backdrops if laminated or sealed.
8. Spring-assisted floors (or any height-increasing apparatus) are illegal for use during performance competitions. These devices are, by definition, "height-increasing apparatuses" and should not be used for anything other than a teaching tool.

Cheering at Basketball Games

1. Squads must be 3-4 feet from any boundary line.
2. Squads must not be in the free-throw lane extended during live balls.
3. Squads must remain outside the playing area during a 30-second time-out.
4. Fans cannot use artificial noisemakers or noise enhancers.
5. Cheerleaders may use megaphones.

I. Cheerleader Purpose and Philosophy

- A. To promote and uphold school spirit
- B. To develop a sense of good sportsmanship among students and athletes
- C. To promote unification of the crowd's involvement during athletic events
- D. To strive to build better relationships between schools
- E. To strive to uphold the highest personal, as well as, cheerleading standards

II. Tryouts

A. Requirements for Trying Out and Participation in Cheerleading

- 1. Cheerleader must not be guilty of misconduct in school. Students may not try out for cheerleader if they have OSS for that school year. The clear disciplinary record must be maintained to continue as a cheerleader. Refer to Code of Conduct in Columbus Municipal School's student handbook and Conduct for Cheerleaders.
- 2. Cheerleader must agree to attend all cheerleader practices prior to election.
- 3. Cheerleaders must agree to attend all practices and school trips if elected.
- 4. Students who are currently enrolled in Columbus Municipal Schools are eligible to try out.
- 5. A parent or legal guardian and the prospective cheerleader must sign the "Cheerleader Qualifications and Responsibilities" form before tryouts. This application must be signed by the parent/guardian.

B. Steps in the Selection Process

- 1. Student and parent must attend a mandatory Cheerleader Tryout Information Meeting. At this meeting the Cheerleader Constitution and Qualifications and Responsibilities letters will be read and the parent and candidate must sign a Participation Contract in order to participate in cheerleader tryouts.
- 2. Administration, Athletic Director, and/or Coach will check grades and eligibility requirements on students who attend the mandatory Cheerleader Tryout Information Meeting and turn in the required Participation Contract with appropriate signatures.
- 3. Coaches will assign candidates who are clear on discipline and grades to practice groups.
- 4. Coaches will get teacher recommendations concerning the candidates on a point scale from 1 to 5; 5 is high and 1 is low.
- 5. **Actual Tryouts Procedures:**
 - a) The Cheerleading coach will select 3 independent qualified judges to judge tryouts. Candidates will try out in front of qualified judges.
 - i. A minimum of 3 impartial judges will be chosen based on their expertise in the sport.
 - ii. These judges will be recognized by UCA, NCA, Varsity or they may be cheer coaches from neighboring schools.
 - b) The tryouts will be closed; only the coaches and Athletic Director will be allowed to attend.
 - c) The Cheerleader coach will provide all judges with a rating form and explain criteria for rating students. Candidates will be judged on the following:
 - i. Spirit and Enthusiasm – 5 points
 - ii. Motion Technique – 5 points
 - iii. Appearance and voice projection – 5 points
 - iv. Jumps – 5 points
 - v. Dance Routine – 5 points
 - d) The teacher recommendations will be averaged for an additional 5 points. This will be a total of 30 points on each judges score sheet.
- 6. **Selection of Cheerleaders (Numbers):**
 - a) There will be a maximum of 16 cheerleaders for the Varsity squad. The number of cheerleaders is based on the natural break in the tryout scores.
 - b) NO alternate cheerleaders will be selected.

III. Responsibilities, Requirements, and Conduct

- A. Cheerleader should represent his/her school in such a manner that is above reproach. Members of the

squads must be in and remain in good standing with the school. Upon discipline referral, the coach will call a review of the cheerleader's status.

- B. The coach and/or administration have the authority to recommend suspension or termination of cheerleaders for failure to conduct themselves properly, or failure to fulfill their responsibilities.
- C. The regulations, which apply to all students concerning conduct and behavior, tobacco, alcohol, and/or drugs, apply to all cheerleaders at all times.
- D. Each cheerleader's report card will be checked every nine weeks to determine eligibility.
- E. Because of the time and strenuous activity involved, a cheerleader will be dropped from the squad in case of pregnancy.
- F. A cheerleader must cooperate with the captain, advisor, game officials, and his/her fellow squad members.
- G. Cheerleaders must be prepared to pay for expenses pertaining to Cheerleading, including clinic and uniforms. They are required to purchase uniforms and other items voted on by the squad and approved by the coach.
- H. Cheerleaders are required to meet all deadlines set by the coach (i.e., turning in money, etc...)

IV. Practice and Games Policies

- A. Cheerleading is 100% a team sport. When one member is not present, the entire squad is affected. Participation in practice is imperative to adequately prepare for games, pep rallies, and other events. If a cheerleader is involved in extracurricular activities which conflict with practice and games, then he/she must notify the coach to make arrangements in the best interest of the child to allow participation in activities.
- B. Practices will be held in the school gym or auditorium.
- C. Cheerleaders will be required to attend 100% of all weekly practices and be present for 100% of the practice time to be eligible to cheer at a game or pep rally. If this requirement is not met, the cheerleader will be suspended from the next game or pep rally.
- D. After two suspensions, the cheerleader will be removed from the squad before the 3rd suspension.
- E. Cheerleaders will practice as needed during the summer, football and basketball seasons. Squad members will report appropriately dressed and ready for practice by time designated by the cheer coach. **Practice dress code:**
 - 1. Shirt and shorts- do not lose camp clothes
 - 2. Cheer shoes ONLY
 - 3. Shorts must cover the entire bottom and should not be considered as indecent.
 - 4. NO jewelry of any kind!
 - 5. Hair must be pulled back in a pony tail or braid; short hair must be pulled back off of face.
- F. Tardiness to practice or a game, between 1-9 minutes, for any reason will result in 1 demerit and 3 demerits for 10 minutes or more (up to 30 minutes). Tardy is defined as not being dressed and ready to perform at the EXACT time assigned. If a cheerleader arrives more than thirty minutes late, she will receive an unexcused absence. Leaving early (less than 30 min) from a practice for any unexcused reason will result in 3 demerits. Leaving early from a game unexcused (less than 30 min) will result in 3 demerits. Leaving early is defined as leaving before the cheer coach has dismissed the squad. If a cheerleader leaves more than 30 minutes early from practice or a game, she will receive an unexcused absence.
- G. **COMMUNICATION IS THE KEY!** Cheerleaders are expected to notify the cheer coach any time they are going to be absent, tardy, or may need to leave early. If there are VALID reasons, at the discretion of the cheer coach, no demerits will be given. Please provide written notice from a parent.
 - 1. Any absence or tardy will automatically be counted as unexcused unless it can be classified as excused. Unexcused absences from practice will result in SIX (6) demerits for each absence. Permission for absence must be received directly from cheer coach prior to the absence. Only the cheer coach can approve an absence or tardy. Cheerleaders must be picked up on time. There is a 10 minute grace period for pickup.
 - 2. EXCUSED ABSENCES ARE THE FOLLOWING:
 - a) Personal illness (must turn in a doctor's excuse if regular occurrence)
 - b) Doctor/dentist's appointment approved in advance by the cheer coach (must turn in a doctor's excuse)
 - c) Death in the family
 - d) All other absences must be approved by the cheer coach.
- H. **Work, extracurricular activities, other sports and all personal business MUST be scheduled around**

practice. Failure to do so will result in an automatic unexcused absence.

V. Football/Basketball Games

- A. All varsity cheerleaders will cheer at all varsity football games and must be dressed, ready for home games, and on the field thirty (30) minutes prior to game time; or at the time designated by the cheer coach.
- B. All cheerleaders should be ready to cheer at all times. Be prepared for rain at the football games.
- C. When cheering, the squad will wear the official uniform designated for that game. If one member wears a raincoat, everyone must wear a raincoat, etc.
- D. Each cheerleader must wear the uniform, briefs, socks, shoes and hair ribbon selected by the cheerleader captain and approved by the cheer coach.
- E. Cheerleaders must be at basketball games at the time designated by the cheerleader coach and must return to her cheering position prior to the second half of the game.
- F. Squad members may not participate in any cheering activity on any day they are absent from school more than ½ of school.
- G. Any unexcused absence from a basketball or football game will result in 6 demerits. A second unexcused absence will result in dismissal from the squad.
- H. Each week sign groups will be assigned certain duties before and after the game. Failure to complete sign group responsibilities will result in 6 demerits per occurrence.

VI. Transportation

- A. Transportation is provided by the district. Parents may be called on to help chaperone.
- B. All cheerleaders must return with the coach from away games, unless prior written arrangements have been made to the satisfaction of the coach and/or Athletic Director.

VII. Competition: Will be decided later.

VIII. Summer Camp

- A. Attendance at camp is mandatory.
- B. The final decision of the date, location and type of camp will ultimately be the coach's choice. The cheerleader must attend pre-camp practices as planned by the coach.

IX. Fund-raising

- A. Fundraising will be decided on by the squad.
- B. Any cheerleader who doesn't meet the minimum fundraising requirements for any fundraiser must pay the difference.

X. Additional Requirements and Rules of Conduct

- A. **All cheerleaders must pass a medical physical examination.**
 - 1. Each cheerleader must be physically able to participate in long periods of vigorous activity without undue fatigue. Cheer coach will provide a strength training program that will need to be followed over the summer. Fitness may be checked during the first weeks of school. Lack of conditioning can cause serious injuries to athletes.
 - 2. Each cheerleader will be required to demonstrate cheer skills in any capacity. Failure to meet these requirements may result in suspension from the squad. Any condition that may hinder these activities must be made known to the cheer coach prior to clinic/tryouts or as soon as the condition arises.
 - 3. If a cheerleader can not for some temporary reason participate in a game or practice, she must participate as completely as the medical condition allows. **Attendance is required unless physically unable to do so.**
- B. **Appearance during football/basketball games, pep rallies and practice**
 - 1. Uniform must be kept neat and clean.
 - 2. Hair must be off of the face and shoulders.
 - 3. Short hair and all **bangs** must be pinned back out of eyes.
 - 4. Make-up must be natural, no heavy eye make-up or glitter.
 - 5. Absolutely no jewelry is allowed.
 - 6. Sweats, warm-ups, or leg tights will only be worn while cheering in extreme cold and only when instructed by the cheer coach.
 - 7. Natural smiles, pep, good grooming and posture should always be evident. Cheerleaders should be

confident and in command of the situations at all times.

8. Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation. The appropriate length means the nails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands. No colored polish is allowed during games.

C. Conduct - the general conduct of every cheerleader must be above reproach at all times.

1. Cheerleaders must not use language that is considered foul or inappropriate.
2. No squad member will show disrespect to the coach at any time.
3. There will be no smoking, drinking or use of drugs; doing so can result in dismissal if there is sufficient evidence.
4. There will be NO cell phone use allowed during practices or during games with the exception of halftimes.
5. Cheerleaders must change from their uniform after any game or pep rally before the cheerleader goes to any social event (date, party, etc.).
6. Should a squad member have a problem with the squad, it should first be discussed with the cheerleader coach who will determine if it should be discussed with the entire squad. Squad members should not discuss squad problems outside the squad meetings/practices at any time.
7. Squad members should not argue amongst themselves at any time during a game or pep rally.
8. Placement of a cheerleader in ISD will result in 3 demerits per day of ISD.
9. Placement of a cheerleader in OSS will result in removal from the squad.
10. Additionally, demerits will be given and cheerleaders disciplined according to the Demerit System attached.

D. Uniform

1. If you are dismissed, you are to turn in all school owned materials immediately.
2. Care should be "Excellent" at all times. Uniforms should be cleaned as soon as possible after a game so that it will be ready to go on the spur of the moment.
3. No part of the uniform is to be worn except for games and to school on game day, unless coach gives permission.
4. No part of uniform is to be worn by anyone except a member of the squad.
5. All uniforms must be returned clean at the end of the cheer year.
6. At NO time while in uniform should a cheerleader be in physical contact with a member of the opposite sex. Cheerleaders will not exhibit public display of affection during any cheerleading activity. If the cheerleader does exhibit public display of affection, he/she will be benched/penalized at the coach's discretion.

XI. Safety Procedures

- A. All squad members must pass a medical examination and have proof of insurance.
- B. Stunts and stunt progressions - all partner stunts must be legal according to the National Federation of High School Association's Spirit Rules Book for the current year and approved by the cheerleading coach.
- C. All rules/regulations established by the MS High School Activities Association will be followed.
- D. No stunts should be performed by any squad member without the cheer coach present and aware of stunts being performed.
- E. Shoes are required to be worn at all practices, games and events.

XII. Squad Captain/ Co-Captain

A. Squad Captain/Co-Captain

1. Each squad member who wishes to be considered for a captain position must submit captain's packet stating why she wants a leadership position and feels she is qualified.
2. Captain should be a senior (varsity) with at least one year of experience.
3. Co-captain acts as captain in his/her absence whether at practices or games.
4. Selection Method
 - a) Cheer coach Evaluation - 50%
 - b) Confidential Squad Vote - 50%

B. Varsity Squad Captain Duties (additional duties in Captain's Packet)

1. Display model behavior that reflects a positive school and personal image.
2. Have a captain's notebook at all practices and meetings.
3. Meet with the coach weekly to join in the planning of practices, pep rallies, and games.

4. Be responsible for leading the squad in game situations, starting chants, etc.
5. Be responsible for coordinating summer practices with the approval of the cheer coach.
6. Act as special communicator between cheer coach and squad during summer and school year.
7. Plan pep rallies, in conjunction with the squad, and have them approved by the cheer coach no later than Tuesday the week before the pep rally.

XIII. Lettering

Varsity cheerleaders must cheer 2 years in the sport on a varsity level in order to receive a varsity letter. All requirements must be met by the cheerleader including attendance, fundraising, participation, etc. The cheerleader must be in good standing and successfully complete the season. She must have attended 90% of all games and 75% of practices with no unexcused absences and have received no more than 7 demerits in order to receive a letter. The final decision of receiving a letter is at the coach's discretion.

XIV. Dismissal

- A. Once a cheerleader has received 15 demerits, she will be removed from the squad and monies received for expenses will be forfeited. If there is an outstanding expense not paid for, the parents will assume responsibility for that amount as well.
- B. If a cheerleader is dismissed from the squad due to having 15 demerits, he/she will NOT be permitted to tryout and return to the squad the following school year.
- C. **If a cheerleader quits the squad, she will automatically receive 15 demerits; therefore he/she will NOT be permitted to tryout and return to the squad the following school year**

Demerit System

- 1.0 tardy/leave early to a practice or performance or not picked up on time (1-9 minutes). If a squad member arrives/leaves in excess of thirty minutes tardy, she will receive an unexcused absence.
- 3.0 inappropriate practice clothing, shoes, hair, jewelry, or fingernails; **SHOES ARE REQUIRED.**
- 3.0 incomplete uniform (socks, ribbons, shoes, poms, etc.)
- 1.0 continuously getting out of position in game lines or talking in game lines.
- 1.0 "goofing" or "horseplay" during games or practices.
- 3.0 causing/ participating in a disturbance with other squad members
- 3.0 improper care of uniform
- 6.0 unexcused absence from practice or mandatory meeting.
- 3.0 ISD (3 per day of ISD)
- 6.0 not fulfilling cheerleading responsibilities (signs, fund-raising, money deadlines, etc...)
- 5.0 performing any stunts without the presence of a cheer coach.
- 6.0 unexcused absence from any game, performance, or practice absence from any mandatory special event.
- 15 cursing or arguing with other squad members or cheer coach at any time
- 15 2nd unexcused absences from practice 2-weeks before camp or 4 weeks before competition.
- 15 drinking, smoking, fighting, using drugs in or out of uniform
- 15 placement in Alternative School program
- 15 disrespect to a cheer coach
- 15 absence from a mandatory competition
- 15 Quitting the squad

The coach is the only person authorized to issue demerits to cheerleaders. Once a cheerleader has received fifteen (15) demerits, she will be removed from the squad and monies received for expenses will be forfeited. Parents will assume responsibility for any outstanding expenses.

Game Suspension: (In addition to demerits)

1. Missing weekly practice during game season- suspended from the game and pep rally that week.
2. Missing one activity (game or pep rally) without permission from coach or due to ISD- suspension from game or pep rally
3. Leaving during a game or pep rally (except in case of an emergency)- suspended from the next game.
4. Late for the game- suspended from the next game.

These offenses will only occur once. In the event of it occurring a second time, the cheerleader will be dismissed from the squad.

Benching: Cheerleaders may be benched for not performing cheers, chants, and dances at the expected level of performance. The length of the benching is at the discretion of the coach.

- 4 demerits: Cheerleader will be benched for the first quarter of the game
- 6 demerits: Cheerleader will be benched for the first half of the game
- 8 demerits: Cheerleader will be benched for the entire game

****If a cheerleader is benched, she must report to the game dressed in her uniform and sit with the coach.**

Amending Procedure: This constitution may be amended during the school year by the coach and/or administrator. Cheerleaders will be immediately notified of any changes.

Columbus High School
CHEERLEADING PARTICIPATION CONTRACT

Participation in the CHS cheerleading organization is a privilege, not a right. In order for the cheerleader or mascot to retain this privilege, the policies and procedures contained in the constitution must be adhered to in the spirit of discipline, education and overall goals and objectives of the Columbus Municipal School District and the Columbus High School Cheerleading program.

The policies and enforcement procedures are relative to the CHS Cheerleading program and will be administered accordingly. The rules, regulations, and policies are all outlined in the CHS Cheerleading Constitution.

I, _____, will do my best as a Cheerleader to always set a positive example for the Columbus High School student body. I plan to follow the rules set forth in the Cheerleading Constitution and understand the consequences if I fail to adhere to the rules and regulations. I will commit myself to attending **all** practices, fundraisers and performances, and I will always strive to have a positive attitude. I will respect my coaches, captain(s) and fellow squad members at all times.

Student Signature

Date

I, _____, have read the CHS Cheerleading Constitution and am fully aware of the time, expense and discipline that membership would include to my child. I understand and agree to abide by all provisions of the CHS Cheerleading Constitution. I further stipulate that I will assist the CHS Cheerleader coaches and Columbus High School in the monitoring and enforcement of the constitution policies and procedures. I support my child in this endeavor and understand the implications that will result in the event that the rules and regulations are not followed.

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date