



WISD

Cheerleader & Mascot Handbook

2013-2014

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Preamble

The Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook guidelines have been developed to outline the expectations and accompanying procedures for the Wortham High School cheerleading program. This handbook was designed and prepared as a basic operating instrument to define and explain qualification and responsibilities of the cheerleading program.

All extracurricular activity participants will be subject to the provisions of the Wortham Independent School District (WISD) Student Code of Conduct, University Interscholastic League (UIL) regulations, and the Side by Side Texas Education Agency's (TEA) guidelines for cheerleading. The TEA and UIL does permit a school district to impose stricter standards than those in the TEA and UIL requirements, but the district shall not impose more lenient standards.

The handbook guidelines and procedures are reviewed annually and revised when warranted by the cheer sponsor(s). The contents of this handbook apply to all cheerleaders and mascots, as the contents currently appear, or may be amended in the future.

Article I – Purpose

The purpose of cheerleading is to create, promote, and uphold school spirit and a positive school environment by participating at athletic events and extracurricular activities as deemed appropriate by the campus administration and sponsor(s). Participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student, while participation in the extracurricular program is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct.

Article II – Membership

Squad membership will exist from tryout date to the last day of the subsequent school year.

Wortham ISD will have two cheerleading squads.

- The Varsity Squad will consist of **up to** twelve (12) cheerleaders.
 - Tryouts are open to students enrolled in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade during the year of tryouts.
- The Junior High Squad will consist of **up to** ten (10) cheerleaders.
 - Tryouts are open to the sixth and seventh grade during the year of tryouts.

Article III – Expectations

Cheerleaders must enjoy learning and performing cheers, chants, and dances. Cheerleaders must promote and maintain relationships with faculty, administration, student body, and work cooperatively with band, athletic teams, and all school organizations.

Section A – School Leadership

1. Cheerleaders are required to abide by rules and follow directions given by school authorities.
2. Cheerleaders will demonstrate determination, hard work, strength, dedication, and self discipline.
3. Cheerleaders will strive to cooperate and be a part of a cohesive unit.
4. Cheerleaders will strive to improve themselves and others through positive interaction and accountability **in all areas including social media.**
5. **Cheerleaders will exhibit loyalty to the squad and demonstrate leadership, honor, and integrity in all areas including social media.**
6. Cheerleaders will demonstrate good sportsmanship and promote school spirit which will be defined by a generosity and genuine concern for others **in all areas including social media.**

Section B – Physical Functions

Cheerleaders must be capable of performing the essential functions for a cheerleader. Functions as listed:

1. Cheerleaders will demonstrate clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm and coordination.
2. Cheerleaders will perform physical moves that may involve jumps, tumbling, dance, balance, agility and upper body strength.
3. Cheerleaders will exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness, and they will be able to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, and in the heat and cold weather.

If, at any time, a cheerleader cannot perform the afore mentioned functions due to medical concerns, written notice from the attending physician outlining limitations is **required** to be turned in to the sponsor to prevent physical harm or injury.

If the cheerleader cannot perform the physical functions for an extended time period, the cheerleader, parents/guardians, sponsor(s), and administration may suggest the participant be placed on the inactive list until released by the attending physician to fully participate.

Article IV – Requirements

Section A – Participation

1. Cheerleaders must attend all scheduled before and after-school practice and performances.
 - Cheerleaders absent from a practice or performance will be subject to discipline, unless extenuating circumstances exist. If a cheerleader fails to attend a game (without a dr.'s note), she will be suspended from participating in the following game.
 - Cheerleaders **must** attend all summer practices or be subject to discipline.
 - Cheerleaders may be prohibited from activity and may be allowed an excused absence with a doctor's restriction in a written statement submitted to the sponsor.
 - Missing a scheduled practice prior to a game/pep rally may result in the individual not performing in the game/ pep rally.
 - Any absence from school the day of a cheer event (other than routine dental/doctor appointments) will result in the squad member not cheering at that event.
 - Missing practices that have valid excuses can still lead to being removed from a routine position or stunt, due to not physically being available for practice.
2. Cheerleaders selected by Wortham High School will cheer at Varsity Football and Basketball games.
 - Cheerleaders are to know all cheers, chants, and routines.
 - Cheerleaders are to remain on the home side for the duration of the game. Cheering will begin at the beginning of the game and continue all the way through, only taking a break at half time. Cheerleaders are expected to be back in their cheerleading position 2 minutes before halftime is over.

Section B – Academic

1. Any cheerleader that receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period or who fails to meet the standards in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time set by the WISD UIL Athletic Eligibility.
2. Any cheerleader that becomes ineligible will not be allowed to perform, travel with the squad, or wear his/her uniform for any reason for the term of ineligibility. The sponsor(s) will determine if attendance will be required at an event without participation.
3. Any cheerleader that has been ineligible for more than two six-weeks grading periods during the current school year shall be subject to dismissal from the squad for the remainder of the year.

Article V – Qualifications

Each candidate must be enrolled in and attend school at Wortham High School or Wortham Junior High to be eligible for tryouts.

Section A – Mandatory Parent Meeting

All candidates and their parent/guardian(s) must attend a cheerleader orientation meeting. A sign-in sheet will be used for verification of attendance to this meeting.

1. If a parent is unable to attend the informational meeting due to extenuating circumstances, the parent must name a proxy to take his/her place at the meeting. The parent must make arrangements to obtain all written and verbal information from the cheerleader information meeting.
2. Failure of the parent, guardian or a parent designee to attend will result in the candidate's being ineligible to tryout.

Section B – Candidate Approval

Cheerleader candidates will be limited to those approved by use of the following criteria:

1. Candidates must have an overall average of 70 or higher in each class for the 1st through 4th six weeks.
2. Candidates must have exhibited appropriate conduct in the classroom and other school and community settings in accordance with the Wortham ISD Student Code of Conduct.
3. Citizenship and discipline records for each candidate will be considered for a measure of the conduct standards. Any student that has been assigned to AEP will not be allowed to tryout.
4. Any current cheerleader who has resigned or been removed from the squad the previous year will not be allowed to tryout.

Article VI – Tryouts

Wortham High School and cheerleading sponsors will coordinate, administer, and interpret all aspects of the cheerleading tryouts. All tryout results are declared **final**. No exceptions!

Section A – Required Forms

All candidates must have a current physical form and an emergency card on file to participate in the tryout clinic activities. All required forms must be submitted to the sponsor:

- parent permission form
- handbook acknowledgement form (with student and parent signatures)
- application for tryouts (with all grades and teacher's signatures)

Section B – Clinic

1. A pre-tryout clinic will be conducted during the week preceding the cheerleader tryout.
2. Each candidate must attend a minimum of 4 hours of the clinic in order to tryout. Attendance at the clinic is **highly recommended** to each candidate for the preparation of tryouts.
3. The pre-tryout clinic will include specific instruction for the routines and skills to be evaluated by judges during the selections process.

Section C – Guidelines

1. All candidates must be physically present before the judges and able to compete in order to be eligible.
2. Random numbers will be used to identify candidates during tryouts.
3. Each candidate will perform one group routine and one individual routine. The group routine will consist of one cheer, chant, and **dance**. During the individual routine, the candidate will demonstrate 3 jumps (toe touch, herkie, and a jump of choice), tumbling, spirit, and one cheer and chant of choice.
4. Mascot tryouts will consist of one skit not to exceed 3 minutes.
5. The sponsors will be allowed in the warm-up and holding areas prior to and during the tryout. The sponsor may be present in the tryout session. An appointed staff member from Wortham ISD will tally the scores. The sponsor will not tally scores. The sponsor may tally the teacher evaluation scores.
6. Cheer candidates will be prohibited from using any type of communication device during the designated campus tryout hours. In the event of an emergency situation, staff will be responsible for establishing communication with the parent by use of information provided on the student's emergency card.

7. The tryout will be closed to the public. Parents will be prohibited from having contact with any candidate(s) during designated campus tryout hours with the exception of an emergency situation. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification.

Section D – Judges

Tryouts will be conducted in a closed setting with two judges who will be used for the selection process.

1. The judges for the tryouts will have no affiliation with Wortham ISD.
2. The judges will be briefed about definitions for each of elements in the tryout rubric.
3. All judges' scores and decisions are **FINAL**. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Section E – Scores

1. Scores will be determined strictly by the judges. Cheerleaders will be judged on crowd appeal, tumbling, jumps, an individual routine, and a group routine.
2. A minimum score of 84 out of 140 is required to make the varsity squad and a minimum of 70 out of 140 is required to make the junior high squad.

Section F – Tryout Attire

1. Each cheerleader candidate must provide his/her own shorts, shirt, undergarments, and shoes. Blue shorts and a white shirt (without a design) will be worn for tryouts.
2. Hair must be worn in a pony tail with hair secured away from the face. Hair that is too short to be worn in a pony tail shall be worn "half-up" and away from the face.
3. No glitter make-up/lotions or jewelry.

Article VII – Procedures

The cheer sponsor will manage daily decisions regarding the cheerleader program. Cheer sponsors may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the district.

Section A - Jurisdiction

1. Cheerleader issues and decisions will be determined by a final resolution made by the sponsor.
2. Cheerleader performances shall be in accordance with the National Federation HS Spirit Handbook.
3. Any conflict between two or more school activities or events will be determined by the sponsor and appropriate campus administrator.

Section B – Consequences for Misconduct

A WISD cheerleader takes on the role of a respectful and disciplined athlete who should be a model for peers at all times - in school, after school, and in the community. This is a very visual position and your peers are looking at you. Along with this position comes a great deal of responsibility, good work ethics, and a spirit of cooperation with parents, coaches, other cheerleaders, and other students. Each squad member will be held to these high standards in and out of school.

1. Cheerleaders are not permitted to use hazing with initiation activities related to any cheerleader function.
2. Squad membership may be terminated for unacceptable standards of conduct.
3. Dismissal or removal will eliminate membership and the cheerleader will forfeit all privileges of the program. Dismissal from the squad will result in the student being ineligible to tryout for the next year.
4. Resignation will be a choice made by the individual member that he/she no longer desires to participate for the duration of the school year. Resignation from the squad will result in ineligibility to tryout for the next year.
5. Any member dismissed, removed or resigned of his/her position in the cheerleader program must complete all financial obligations for non-returnable/non-refundable merchandise, and turn in all school-owned uniforms.
6. Infractions from the rules at games, practices, and other events will result in demerits, given at the discretion of the sponsor. Five (5) demerits will result in not performing at a game or scheduled activity; ten (10) will result in a conference between the sponsor(s), cheerleader, and parent/guardian; fifteen (15) will result in automatic dismissal from the squad.

Section C- Conduct Demerits

- Detention/ Office referrals/ Saturday School/ Skipping3 demerits
- Teacher complaints2 demerits
- Insubordination /poor attitude.....4 demerits
- Not properly attired for game/practice.....2 demerits
- Late to game/practice.....2 demerits
- Absence form a game/practice(without excuse).....5 demerits
- Horseplay during game or practice.....3 demerits
- Talking or texting on cell phones during a game, practice, or activity...2 demerits
- Failure to complete assigned duties at game or practice.....3 demerits
- Socializing with friends or family without permission.....2 demerits

Article VIII – Responsibilities of Cheerleaders

Being a member of the WHS cheer program is an honor, a responsibility, and a privilege. Due to the level of the visibility of campus cheerleaders, it is imperative that squad members set a good example for peers.

Section A - Leadership Roles

A captain and co-captain will be selected for the squad. They will work closely with the sponsors for the duration of their membership.

1. A squad captain/co-captain will be required to commit time for additional responsibilities of the cheerleading program and will be expected to be a positive role model, serving as a community ambassador of the program. Captains will be responsible for the following:
 - Take attendance at each practice, activity, or game
 - Select uniform for events/activities
 - Communicate pep rally ideas and agenda with the other squad captain
 - Assign game responsibilities to each squad member
 - Organize and distribute all practice schedules and agenda with squad members
 - Comprise a cheer, chant, and incorporate list for games
 - Demonstrate a positive and motivating attitude at all times
 - Be dependable and cooperative with the coaches and all squad members
 - Report ALL problems, conflicts, and concerns to the coach
 - Keep communication open and flowing with all squad members
 - Use authority when necessary, but do not abuse it
2. Varsity captain and co-captain will be selected based on tryout scores(50%) and squad vote(50%).
 - To be selected for Varsity captain or co-captain, the candidate must be a current sophomore or junior.
3. Junior High captain and co-captain will be selected based on tryout scores only. The highest scoring candidate will be captain and the second highest scoring candidate will be co-captain.
 - To be selected for Junior High captain or co-captain, the candidate must be a current seventh grader.

Section B – Performance Uniforms

1. Uniforms will be considered school property and will be worn only when instructed by the sponsor.
2. Uniforms will be worn by squad members only.
3. Uniforms must be cleaned and turned in by the date set by the sponsors.
4. Cheerleaders will be responsible for any missing or damaged uniform pieces and he/ she will be expected to pay reimbursement or replacement costs.
5. Cheerleaders must ensure the uniform is clean and in good condition before each performance.

Section C – Personal Presentation

1. Cheerleaders will wear hair and fingernails as designated by the sponsor.
2. Cheerleaders will not chew gum or eat during practice, pep rally, game or performance, unless permission is granted by the sponsor.
3. Cheerleaders may not wear jewelry while in uniform, practicing, or performing.
4. Cheerleaders may not wear navel rings, tongue jewelry, and any other type of body piercing.
5. Cheerleaders may not wear bandage coverings, a spacer or retainer inserted into a pierced area.

Article IX – Supplemental Information

Parents or guardians must purchase necessary uniform parts and provide money for other costs involved in being a member.

Section A – Financial Expectations

1. WISD will furnish the uniform for each cheerleader, not including shoes.
2. All cheerleaders will be required to participate in fundraising activities to benefit the squad and alleviate individual costs.
3. There will be an out-of-pocket expense required for cheerleader related activities, clothing, and equipment. All payment on clothing will be due prior to summer camp. Fitting for uniforms and camp clothes will be **April 13** at 3:30pm. Each cheerleader is required to be present.
4. **The payment schedule will be as follows:**
 - 1st payment due: March 29, 2013**
 - 2nd payment due: April 26, 2013**
 - Final payment due: May 17, 2013**
5. All payments must be on time in order to attend camp and order necessary items.

Section B- Summer Camps

1. Summer camps are required for all squad members.
 - a. Summer camp for the varsity squad for 2013 will be **June 10-13 at home in the gym.**
 - b. Summer camp for the Junior High squad for 2013 will be **June _____ at home in the new gym.**

Section C –Transportation

1. Transportation arrangement to performances will be determined by the sponsor.
2. Cheerleaders will abide by all school transportation rules, procedures and safety guidelines, as outlined in the Wortham ISD Student Handbook.
3. Cheerleaders are required to ride to and from events with the squad, unless written permission from the parent/guardian is received no less than 24 hours prior to departure, and approved by the appropriate administration. The parent must also sign the cheerleader out before the squad leaves the event. Phone calls are not acceptable. **There will be no exceptions.**
4. Parents are expected to be present to pick their child up upon arrival from a game or after practice. If the parent is late a total of three times, the cheerleader will be suspended from the next pep rally/game.

Article X – Communication

Parents have the right to know and understand the expectations placed on them and their children. Sponsors have the right to know if parents have a concern; a parent should discuss concerns with the sponsors **at the appropriate time and place.**

Section A - Communication of the Parent

Communication sponsors should expect from parents:

1. Concerns regarding a son/daughter expressed directly to the sponsor **at the appropriate time and place.**
2. Specific concerns with regard to the sponsor's philosophy and/or expectations.
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts to the sponsor.
4. Issues appropriate for discussion with the sponsor and/or school administrator is encouraged:
 - Mental and physical treatment of a student.
 - Improvements on which a cheerleader/mascot may need to focus.
 - Student behavior.
 - Student safety.
5. Issues **not** appropriate for discussion with a sponsor:
 - Squad selection of cheers, chants, stunts or elements of a performance.
 - Any situation that deals with other student athletes or squad members.

Section B – Communication of the Sponsor

Communication parents should expect from their student's sponsor:

1. Requirements the sponsor has for his/her student and the squad.
2. Locations and times of practices and performances.
3. Squad requirements of fees, special equipment, uniforms, squad rules, travel arrangements and off-season expectations.
4. Procedures in the event his/her student becomes injured during a performance or practice.

Section C – Appropriate Communication Between Parent, School and Sponsor

There are situations that may require a conference to promote resolution of the issue. If a parent has a concern to discuss with the sponsor, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Call the front office to set up an appointment with the sponsor.
2. Outline and define objectives for a meeting and stick to discussing facts only.
3. **Do not confront the sponsor** before, during or after a practice or performance. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalate it.
4. If the meeting with the sponsor did not provide a satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian should call the front office to request a meeting with the sponsor and an administrator.

Wortham Jr. High and High School
Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook



Acknowledgement Form

****This form must be signed and returned to the sponsor by February 27th****

Student Name (Print): Last: _____ First: _____

Student Section:

I have read and understand the Wortham ISD Jr. High & High School Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook. My signature below signifies that I have read and agree to abide by all published guidelines.

Student Signature Date

Parent/Guardian Section:

I have read and understand the Wortham ISD Jr. High & High School Cheerleader & Mascot Handbook. I agree to abide by all guidelines and dates outlined in the handbook. I have discussed the requirements, responsibilities, and rules with my child. I, the undersigned, do hereby acknowledge that I am the parent or legal guardian of the applicant indicated above.

Parent/Guardian Signature Date