

MHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations

This document is designed to serve as a set of general guidelines for administrators, sponsors, parents and student cheerleaders. The purpose of the constitution is to communicate these guidelines in order to help the Marcus High School Cheerleading squads be the best possible representatives for their school. Good judgment and common sense will be used when events are not covered in this document or the LISD Cheer Handbook. The interpretation of this Cheer Handbook is the responsibility of the sponsor and principal. They have the right to add or delete items they feel are necessary for the benefit of the organization. Any changes in these guidelines will be communicated in writing to all cheerleaders and their parents prior to going into effect.

PURPOSE

The purpose of the MHS cheerleading squads is to create, promote, and uphold school spirit in accordance with school rules. Cheerleaders should plan and initiate activities that will promote student body and community support and involvement in the promotion of athletic events and school activities.

MOTTO

Ability gets you to the top, CHARACTER keeps you there!

MEMBERSHIP

- All members of a cheerleading squad must enroll in the required cheerleading class.
- Cheerleaders will be expected to participate in every cheerleading activity. This includes performances, practices, fundraisers, campus, social events, decorating, sign-making, other events assigned by the sponsor.
- Any squad member quitting the team or removed from the team without administrative approval will not be allowed to attend the end of year cheer banquet as a squad member or as a guest of a squad member. Squad members removed due to injuries will still be able to attend with prior approval from the sponsors and administration.

GENERAL OPERATING PHILOSOPHY

A cheerleading team is only as good as its members. Cheerleaders will set a good example for their fellow classmates. Cheerleaders will meet the following expectations on and off the field:

- Work and practice hard
- Be honest and truthful
- Be good role models
- Display positive school spirit
- Show good sportsmanship
- Exhibit positive attitudes toward cheerleading
- Exhibit excellent character, conduct, and citizenship

STUDENT COMMITMENT: THE SEASONS OF CHEERLEADING

- **Spring** – Tryouts, spring practice, conditioning and preparation for camp, Marquette Spring show, baseball and softball games, soccer and other appropriate sports, and fundraising.
- **Summer** – Fundraising, middle school camp, summer practices and summer camp.
- **Fall** – Practices, pep rallies, decorating for Mound and Axe games, football/volleyball/basketball, etc .games; EXCITE gymnastics, Homecoming (carnival, pre-game activities, game, etc.),team fundraising, varsity football program sales, mini-camp, conditioning and fundraising.
- **Winter** – EXCITE gymnastics, practices, pep rallies, cheer at basketball games, support all sports, clubs and academics, conditioning, cheer banquet, fundraising and preparation for tryouts.

MORAL AND ETHICAL EXPECTATIONS

- Cheerleaders should be leaders within their school and set a good example at all times. Cheerleaders are expected to have and maintain a character above reproach and to exhibit personal appearance and habits that will reflect a positive image.
- Cheerleaders are constantly representing Marcus High School, both at and away from school; they are never to smoke, drink, use drugs, or show an inappropriate public display of affection. Cheerleaders must also avoid any postings on any social media sites that include profanity, disparaging/un-sportsman like comments, bullying pictures of drugs, alcohol, tobacco or nudity, or inappropriate behavior.
- All infractions outside of school shall be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Extracurricular Code of Conduct. Infractions that occur at school or school-sponsored events will be subject to disciplinary action as outlined in the Student Code of Conduct
- Cheerleaders must never put themselves in a compromising position. If others around the cheerleader are not acknowledging the proper social or moral standards and values outlined in these expectations, the cheerleader will be expected to remove herself/himself from the situation immediately.
- These expectations apply at all times, not just at school functions.

ACTIVITY/PERFORMANCES/EVENTS

- All cheerleaders will attend every assigned activity whether performing or not unless approved in advance by the coach.
- Transportation will be provided to most activities except home games/practice/events.
- Everyone will ride to and from the activity with his/her team. Only the principal can make exceptions to the transportation requirement. Requests for transportation exceptions must be made in writing at least one week in advance.
- Cheerleaders must never leave the group without permission when cheering at the activity. Cheerleaders must be ready for the game when they get off the bus.
- Cheerleaders must not eat on the field/court/track or use a cell phone on the field/court/track. Cheerleaders must wait until halftime to eat or make a necessary phone call off the field/court/track.
- Cheerleaders must never cheer when any player is injured.
- Each cheerleader is responsible for knowing the departure schedule for each activity.
- Missing the bus is considered an unexcused absence.
- When using a bus for transportation, all communicated rules must be followed.
- Unscheduled practices and events may be called with a 24-hour advance notice.

CAPTAINS

The decision to have a captain/s for each cheer squad is at the sole discretion of the coaches and campus administration. If the decision is made to have captains, the selection process will be communicated to cheerleaders and parents.

MASCOTS

A Mascot may be chosen to perform at the games and various activities as designated by the varsity cheer coach. There may also be a mascot chosen for the JV and freshman squads that will perform at the freshmen and JV games and activities as designated by the cheer coaches. Mascots will be expected to follow all campus and district guidelines for cheerleading.

MANAGERS

A manager/s may be appointed to assist the sponsors. The decision to appoint a manager/s is at the sole discretion of the sponsors and campus administrators. Managers may be removed or replaced at any time that the coach's and campus administration determine it to be in the best interest of the cheer program. In order to be eligible for consideration as a manager, students must have cheered at least one year at Marcus High School and be entering either their junior or senior year. Managers may have chosen not to try out for cheerleading, or may have tried out and not made the squad.

Manager duties include assisting with filing and paperwork, maintaining cheerleading equipment and uniforms, and occasional instruction of chants and game procedures to freshmen and JV squads, and other responsibilities assigned by the sponsors. Managers may not be required to attend all cheerleading events; however, they may often be asked to stay after practices or arrive early to events to provide additional help.

Managers will be asked to participate in all fundraisers, and will be invited to and recognized at the end of the year banquet. Parents of managers are encouraged to join the Booster Club.

COMPETITION TEAM

Marcus High School does not currently offer a competition team. If this changes in the future, written guidelines will be provided for cheerleaders and parents.

SKILLS

- Cheerleaders should always be improving their skills. A decline in skills may result in being benched from games or performances until the skills are improved to at least the level demonstrated at tryouts. This does not include a decline in skills due to a new injury.
- Outside tumbling is highly recommended.

ATTENDANCE/ABSENCES

Absence from practice or events affects not just you, but your entire team. You have a responsibility to be at all practices and events unless illness, injury, or emergency prevents it.

- Excused: illness with parent/doctor's note (absent from school), death in the family, attend funeral
- Unexcused: work/employment, vacations, non-UIL/Marcus events such as competitive cheer practice/competition, doctor or other appointments scheduled during practice or games/events unless the cheerleader is too ill/injured to perform.
- If a cheerleader is absent it is his/her responsibility to find out what was covered, and learn any new material that was missed.
- Any absence could result in being moved to a different position in a routine, game line up, or performance or removed completely from a routine or performance
- You must call or text your coach ahead of time to let them know of any absence prior to the beginning of cheer class. Failure to contact your sponsor prior to the absence will be marked unexcused.
- If you are absent from school or leave school early due to illness on the day of a game/event, then you are

expected to stay home and not attend the game/event. Attending a game/performance the same day you are too sick to attend school, or leave early to go home sick, will result in a benching.

- Any absence from class, excused or unexcused, may require the cheerleader to complete a make-up workout.

Absences from practice/events per the LISD High School Cheerleading Handbook –

- Excused absence w/o prior notice- ½ game benching
- Unexcused Absence-1 game benching
- Missing last practice prior to an event – excused absence = attend, but sit out event
- Missing last practice prior to an event – unexcused absence = attend, sit out event, recorded as 1 game benching

PLANNED ABSENCE

In order to request consideration for use of the two absences (freebies) allowed for personal reasons:

- 1) Students must complete and turn in the Planned Absence form at least 7 days prior to the planned absence;
- 2) Requests may be denied in order to ensure enough cheerleaders will be present at each event;
- 3) Multiple requests to be absent from the same event will be considered on a first come, first serve basis;
- 4) If an absence is denied, the absence will be unexcused and result in a benching in accordance with the MHS Cheer Guidelines & Expectations and the LISD Cheerleading Handbook..

Every effort should be made to schedule absences during times that do not involve practices or performances. Every cheerleader is an integral part of the program and their attendance is necessary for the overall program success.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Citizenship is another requirement of MHS Cheer. Squad Members will be expected to complete at least 10 hours of community service each year and report that service on the appropriate forms. The goal is to help squad members appreciate the importance of contributing to their community and the rewards of giving of their personal time to benefit others. No financial gain may be had by the cheerleader or their families for community service. Community service hours can be done in a variety of ways, but approval should be obtained if questions arise.

SUMMER PRACTICES

Each missed summer practice will result in a full game benching. The benching/s will be served at the beginning of the school year. Absences from summer practices will only be excused for illness with a doctor's note or death in the family. Cheerleaders who are injured are still expected to attend.

SOCIAL & DIGITAL MEDIA EXPECTATIONS

In regards to social and digital media, all cheerleaders are expected to follow the guidelines stated below. These expectations apply to all forms of social and digital media including but not limited to tweeting, posting, liking,

favoriting, retweeting, subtweeting, tagging, texting, or sharing any form of media that violates these expectations.

1. Maintain a positive attitude and image towards all school related functions, teams, team members, administration and staff, and Marcus Cheer.
2. Respect and follow all school, district, and Marcus Cheer policies regarding social media at all times.

If these expectations are not met, all cheerleaders involved will face consequences including but not limited to OFIs, violations, benchings, or dismissal from Marcus Cheer,.

DISCIPLINE

- All discipline/ behavior problems at school or school sponsored events are subject to the expectations and consequences of the LISD Student Code of Conduct, MHS Student Handbook, LISD High School Cheerleading Handbook , and MHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations.
- Behavior outside of school is subject to the LISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, the LISD High School Cheerleading Handbook , and the MHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations.

VIOLATIONS

Violations are a means by which the coach determines which members are not upholding their obligations. Violations are in effect throughout the cheerleading year (March to March). Violations can be given in or out of cheerleading class and by any of the cheer coaches. Inappropriate behavior by cheerleaders may receive benching(s) based on severity. Accrual of violations will result in a benching. Three (3) violations may be worked off per cheer year completing activities designated by the coaching staff. The LISD High School Cheerleading Handbook is the District's governing document for the Marcus cheerleading program. Marcus cheerleaders are also responsible for following the MHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations, and all other expectations communicated by the Marcus cheer coaches. Cheerleaders who fail to meet these expectations may have disciplinary consequences. Cheer coaches will record all violations and unexcused absences, and cheerleaders will be required to sign, acknowledging the violation. Parents will be notified if violations or absences result in a benching. Outside of class conditioning required due to violations must be completed before the cheerleader can participate in any activities or events. Conditioning must be scheduled with appropriate coach and may not be available the same day as the violation.

3 violations = 1/2 game benching, parent contact and you must still attend all activities

4th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

5th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

6 violations = 1 game benching, parent contact and you must still attend all activities,

7th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

8th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

9 violations = 1 game benching, conference with coach and administration and you must attend all activities

10th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

11th violation = thirty minutes of conditioning outside of class

12 violations = 1 game benching, parent conference and possible removal from the cheer program

Violations

- Possession or use of cell phone during practice/performance/event without permission from coach
- Out of proper uniform (this includes but is not limited to wearing cover-ups over uniform) hair not pulled up/wearing jewelry/visible tattoos
- Not having poms/megaphone/other props or equipment
- Not having appropriate shoes
- Not following bus rules
- Not completing or returning items by due date
- Inappropriate talking at practice or event
- Tardy to practice or event
- Public display of affection in uniform
- Inappropriate language at practice or event
- Inappropriate behavior or poor sportsmanship at practice or events
- Disrespectful to coach/captain/staff/officials
- Insubordination
- Failure to meet other communicated expectation

EARNING CREDIT

Opportunities for extra conditioning and service activities will be provided throughout the year. Cheerleaders will be able to earn credit for participating in these opportunities. Each hour of participation can remove one violation. Credits can also be banked. Only 3 total violations can be removed using this credit.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- Be dressed and ready to practice by 2:10
- Hair up, gum out, jewelry off
- Wear correct attire (cheer shorts, Marcus shirt cheer/athletic shoes required)
- Pay attention and only talk at appropriate times
- Follow stretches and do them correctly
- Practice skills
- Concentrate and put in 110% effort!
- Have a positive attitude
- Be willing to try something new
- Encourage your teammates
- Help those that are struggling
- Address coaches and squad members with respect
- Make sure your coaches know if you are sick or injured (it is YOUR job to tell us)
- Remember, ability gets you to the top but character keeps you there. Be your best everyday!

GAME TIME EXPECTATIONS

- Make sure that all items are taken from the bus when we arrive at away games. This includes trash, personal items, signs, flags, megaphones, bags, etc.
- For home games make sure that all of the game time items are on the track at the scheduled time that you are supposed to be there
- Be in your full uniform, all cover-ups removed, with hair up, jewelry off and gum out BEFORE you get off the bus
- If at a home game, no cover-ups should be worn into the stadium
- Make sure that all of the signs are hung and the tape is put back in the supply bag
- Follow the captains as they lead in stretches and flyers make sure to get limber prior to warming up stunts
- Warm up ALL stunts and tumbling
- Twenty minutes prior to kickoff be together on the sidelines waiting for school song and introductions
- STAND CLEAN when on the field at all times. No fidgeting, horseplay, or goofing off will be tolerated.
- Take a knee immediately when a player is injured and do not talk
- Be LOUD and SMILE big!
- **Showcase your skills – including tumbling and jumps during every performance!**
- Pay attention when cheers are called, but also pay attention to what is going on in the game. You should know what is happening on the field/court.
- You will not be allowed to leave between quarters, so make sure to go to the bathroom prior to game time.
- At the conclusion of the game make sure that all of the signs are torn down and thrown away, trash is picked up and thrown away, signs, megs, poms, and bags are collected and nothing is left behind.

Disregard for game time expectations may result in violations/benchings. **Failure to maintain skills equivalent to those performed at tryout may result in benching until skills are regained.** Cheerleading is a privilege you have earned through your ability, dedication, and hard work. Continuing to display those abilities, hard work, and dedication is an expectation that will be maintained throughout the year.

Benchings may result from violations, absences, or other inappropriate behavior. The accumulation of 2 benchings between tryouts will result in a mandatory conference with the parent, cheerleader, coach, and administrator. The accumulation of 3 benchings between tryouts will result in coach/administrator review and possible removal from the squad.

PARENT COMMITMENT

Parent/guardian commitment and involvement are vital to the success of each cheerleader and the cheerleading team. The following is expected:

- Parents will be supportive and positive about all aspects of the program.
- Parents should direct all questions or concerns about the program to the coaches first.
- Parents should be active members of the MHS Cheer Spirit Club and help achieve its fundraising goals.
- One parent per cheerleader must be present at all booster club meetings.
- One parent per cheerleader will volunteer to work all MHS Cheer Spirit Club fundraising activities, the homecoming carnival, Mound Showdown and Battle of the Axe decorating and other functions as needed regardless of availability of slots for fundraising credit..
- Parents must be willing to make the monetary commitment necessary to fulfill obligations related to the duties and responsibilities associated with being a member of the cheerleading squad; certain fees may be waived if a student or the student's parent/guardian is unable to pay due to financial hardship.
- Parents should remember that cheerleading is a team sport. If you take away cheerleading as a punishment to your child, it punishes the entire team. This will not be excused.

- Parents need to schedule all appointments so as to avoid the cheerleader missing cheer class, practices or events as this impacts the entire squad.

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

See the Tryout Information & Schedules document for expected financial costs.

Varsity Only:

Cheerleaders will not get violations/benchings under the following circumstances for missing cheer practice for a college visit:

Students must complete and turn in the Planned Absence form at least 7 days prior to the planned absence;

AND Students must bring documentation on official university/college letterhead verifying the visit;

AND If a school day is missed, the absence must be excused by the school.

Please note that the cheerleader will not get a violation/benching but will not be able to cheer at the next event/game if the cheerleader misses the last practice prior to the event/game. In this case, the cheerleader will be required to attend that game in uniform but will sit on the sideline and support the team. *A freebie must be requested/used when missing an event/game or an all-squad practice.