



***CHEER PROGRAM & MASCOT  
HANDBOOK, HIGH SCHOOL***

***2020-2021***

## ★OUR PURPOSE★

Cheerleading is a vibrant part of the Klein ISD community. For campuses and the community, cheerleading exists in order to promote tradition, spirit, ambassadorship, sportsmanship, and leadership.

For participants, cheerleading exists to provide students multiple leadership opportunities, a sense of family, participation in athletics for students with a particular skill set, opportunities to learn and exhibit sportsmanship and citizenship, and support in achieving academic excellence.

These multiple opportunities help students grow and mature, both physically and emotionally, resulting in citizens who embody the KISD high personal ideals and good character.

## ★PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP★

Each high school will have a Varsity and Junior Varsity (JV) Squad with the option to carry a freshman squad. The decision to carry a freshman squad will be based on the data presented on the day of tryouts.

Each cheer team will be made up of the following:

- **Varsity:** The varsity squad will consist of juniors and seniors. The squad will not exceed **24** cheerleaders.
- **Junior Varsity:** The junior varsity squad will consist of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. Squads will not exceed **16** cheerleaders.
- **Freshman:** The freshman squad will consist of only freshman and will not exceed **14** cheerleaders.

The Mascot will be one or two students who are classified as a freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior. The mascot will be a member of the Varsity squad and held to the same standards as a cheerleader.

Managers may be freshmen, sophomores, juniors, or seniors. They will submit an application to the specified cheer coach for consideration. Each campus coach will determine their needs for a manager, and the criteria to be used for selection.

In addition:

- Cheerleader openings that occur after camp will not be filled.
- Cheerleaders who move to KISD or transfer after the tryout process has been finalized must wait until the following year to try out for KISD squads.
- In the event that a current cheer student transfers to another campus after tryouts, the student will not be eligible to cheer on the squad at the transfer campus.

## ★COMMITMENT★

Members of the cheer program will devote and pledge to abide by the components outlined in the cheer handbook. A cheer member will serve from tryout to tryout.

- Each cheer member should be aware of the amount of time cheerleading requires. It is an honor that requires not only commitment, but also hard work and dedication. Being part of the cheer program is a year round commitment.
- Each cheer member must enroll in the cheer class at their respective campus for the entire academic year. Classes will consist of physical conditioning, prep for games/events, sign painting, tumbling, jump technique, and stunting. Physical conditioning may include, but is not limited to, running, weight training, push-ups, crunches, etc. Managers and mascots will participate with physical conditioning, but may also be given separate expectations per each campus cheer coach.
- Cheerleaders are expected to maintain, improve, and perform any skills demonstrated at tryouts.
- Non-returning members will be removed from the cheer class after tryouts are complete. You will have an option for early release, office aide, and/or another class based upon student situation.

- Cheer members need to be aware that their KISD cheer commitments will come first. Jobs, driver education, outside cheer teams, etc. need to be considered before trying out for cheer squads.
- If at any time a cheerleader has received three strikes, is removed, or resigns they will be removed from the cheer program and class for the remainder of the year and moved to a parallel physical education class in order to earn the P.E. credit for that semester.
- They will not be eligible for "lettering" status, or the Cheer Banquet at the end of the season.
- Any cheerleader who is removed or resigns from the program is expected to return all KISD issued uniform and property within two weeks of their departure.

## ★ DUTIES & RESPONSIBILITIES ★

### LEADERSHIP

- A cheer member is one who is willing to set aside his/her own personal agenda for the whole program's pursuit of excellence. This is done by living the KISD high personal ideals and good character, as well as through hard work, dedication, and self-discipline.
- Members will demonstrate good sportsmanship, promote school spirit, and display genuine enthusiasm.

### GRADE REQUIREMENTS

- Cheerleaders should maintain a grade of 70 or above in all level classes or (per KISD policy) a 60 or above in any UIL exempt courses. Eligibility will be determined in accordance with the district UIL calendar.
- Any cheerleader who becomes ineligible will not be allowed to perform, travel with the squad, or wear their uniform for any reason for the term of ineligibility.
- Any ineligible cheerleader **is** required to attend practices unless exceptions are made by the cheer coach.
- Any cheerleader who receives two or more "F's" as a semester grade during the cheerleading year will be permanently removed from the squad.

### ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

- It is important that KISD cheer members realize the level of commitment that is necessary to make a team successful. Attendance at all games and cheer events is not only crucial, but also mandatory. Absences jeopardize the entire squad and hinder success.
- Attending all practices, games, events, and pep rallies is mandatory.
- If a cheer member is going to be absent from a practice, class, and/or scheduled event, the parent must notify the cheer coach in writing at least 24 hours prior. A strike may still be applicable (see KISD Cheer Discipline Process). Absence from any cheerleading activity is unexcused, except in these circumstances:
  - Personal illness or accident - note/email required
  - Funeral or death in the family
  - Competing in a UIL event or a school-related performance
- Cheer members will cheer at all games and events assigned by the coach.
- Each cheerleader will receive **two Game/Event Passes** to use throughout the year. These passes are to be used only in the event a cheer member is unable to attend a game/event. These must be approved at least a week in advance by the cheer coach. Should a cheer member's pass request be approved, it is with the understanding that said cheer member will not be present at the requested game/event as a participant or spectator. Only a team total of three passes may be redeemed per game/event. Passes will be honored on a first come, first served basis. Passes may not be used to remove a consequence for a discipline infraction. .
- A cheerleader who is absent for more than one-third of any grading period must have a doctor's written statement. After one month of extended illness or injury, the cheerleader may be removed.
- Managers for squads will need to attend events at the coach's discretion.
- Mascots are responsible for attending all events decided upon by the campus cheer coach. Mascots are responsible for the care and upkeep of their mascot uniform.
- All cheer members are required to attend the coach designated summer camp and summer practices. All members of the cheer team are required to attend summer cheer camp at which time there are entire sessions

presented on proper cheer safety. Cheer members who do not attend camp are subject to being dismissed from the squad.

- A cheerleader who does not participate in cheerleading class and/or practice after school will not be allowed to participate in the associated performance/event unless the absence is approved by one of the coaches. However, the cheerleader must attend the event in uniform and sit with the coach. Non-participation includes absences, early dismissals, and sitting out.

## **SAFETY**

The safety of all of our cheer members is of utmost importance. We do a number of things which we believe will stress the importance of using safety strategies and encourage the members of the team and coaches to practice good safety skills. Proper cheer safety is one reason why summer cheer camp is so important.

- All participants must have a current physical form on file to participate.
- All participants must be trained and qualified for proper landing and spotting techniques before they are allowed to stunt.
- All participants and coaches must go through appropriate stunt progressions, qualifications, and follow NFHS/AACCA safety standards at all times.
- All Klein ISD Cheerleading activities must be in compliance with the guidelines delineated in the NFHS/AACCA Cheerleading Safety Manual.
- No playing around, laughing, or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt/practice session.
- Absolutely no jewelry or spacers will be worn during practices, games, or events. Jewelry includes all body piercings.
- Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate for safe participation. The appropriate length means fingernails are not visible beyond the end of the fingers when viewed from the palm side of the hands.
- No tumbling or building of any stunts is permitted unless a cheer coach is present.
- Use of mats - cheer members use mats for practice and for some performances.
- Each campus athletic training department presents the following topics to cheer programs: concussion training, safety training, injury prevention, how to handle injuries, rehabilitation of personal injury, and the importance of working out, stretching, and staying in good physical condition.

## **UNIFORM AND GROOMING**

- The coach will establish appearance and uniform guidelines for cheerleaders.
- Uniforms must be clean and neatly pressed at all times.
- Shoes must be clean and in good condition at all times.
- Uniforms should be worn only at scheduled events (games, appearances, etc.).
- No display of affection in uniform.
- If a uniform needs to be modified, it must be done so in a professional and non-permanent method. The coach's written permission must be obtained and the expense of modifying the uniform is that of the cheerleader(s).
- It is the cheerleader's responsibility to care for his/her uniform.
- If assigned detention or suspension, a uniform may not be worn while serving that time.
- It is the responsibility of the member to return any borrowed item in the condition that it was received. Any item, uniform or costume (mascot) must be repaired or replaced at the member's expense if it is lost, stolen or destroyed due to negligence.

## **SPORTING EVENT EXPECTATIONS**

The main focus for KISD Cheerleaders is to support our school and teams in any way possible. All assigned games are required.

- Reporting time to games/events will be established by the cheer coaches.
- Permission must be obtained before leaving sidelines.
- While performing, there will be no socializing with spectators or fellow cheerleaders.

To allow our members to be involved in other organizations and/or jobs and to be able to succeed academically, we will follow the schedule of games below:

- Football: Varsity - all home and away games; JV- all home games (alternating A/B games); Freshmen - all home games (alternating A/B games).
  - Cheerleaders are solely responsible for whatever equipment is needed at the game.
- Volleyball: a minimum of four home games.
- Basketball: a minimum of one game per week.
- For the following sports, cheerleaders will attend per the coaches' discretion: Baseball, Wrestling, Soccer, Softball, Swim, Tennis, Golf, Track, Cross Country.

**Playoffs: Squads will make every attempt to attend playoff games.**

## **FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS**

- A payment schedule may be set for all payments due.
- All cheer members must be current with their payment schedule. Not being current may result in missing cheer events or games. In the event that a cheer account is not current, permanent suspension may result at the discretion of the administration. In that case, the cheer member will still be responsible for the amount due to their program.
- Cheer members who owe a balance on their account or fail to return school issued property will not be eligible to try out the following year unless the amount is paid in full or items are returned.
- All fundraising money earned will be contributed to the general cheer activity fund.
- See tryout packet for questions or explanation of cheer expenses.
- Cheer members who quit, resign, or are dismissed from a team will be responsible for unpaid balances (including KISD issued uniform and property). Refunds will be issued only at the principal's discretion.
- Personal mandatory cost to cheerleaders should not exceed a cost of \$550 in addition to the cost of camp.

## **TRANSPORTATION**

Traveling cheer squads must ride together as a group to and from all away games or activities with coaches. All varsity cheerleaders and necessary equipment must be ready to load the bus 15 minutes before designated departure time. Failure to ride approved transportation will be considered an unexcused absence. Requests to return home by any other means must be submitted in writing or via email to the coach prior to departure. The cheer coach will decide if the request is reasonable. If no request is made, the member will return on the bus with the coach. Phone calls and/or text messages are not acceptable.

## **LEADERSHIP POSITIONS**

Elections and responsibilities of leadership positions will be determined by campus coaches. Each campus coach will determine the selection criteria and date for which leadership positions are selected.

## **★TRYOUT QUALIFICATIONS & INFORMATION★**

- At the time of tryouts, a cheerleader candidate must be a resident of the attendance zone in which the school for which the student is trying out is located, or have an approved transfer from the Department of Campus Safety and Support to attend that school for the next school year.
- A permission slip explaining estimated expenses and the KISD Cheer Handbook must be signed by the parents and returned to the school before tryouts.
- A physical waiver form signed by a parent or guardian is necessary prior to student's participation in clinic and tryouts.
- At the beginning of tryouts, the students running for varsity cheerleader must be a sophomore or junior; for junior varsity, they may be either a freshman, sophomore or junior; for freshman cheerleader, they must be an eighth grade student.
- A candidate's course schedule must allow them to complete the entire term of the cheerleader year.
- Cheerleader tryouts will be held during the second semester of the school year and no later than April 30.

- The KISD standardized tryout guidelines will be used. The candidates scoring the highest skill set score at tryouts will comprise the members of the teams below.
- All candidates will be screened by professional judges who are not employees of KISD.
- Any student who is currently ineligible as per the “no pass-no play” rule will be considered eligible to attend the judging or election activities and the clinic prior to the judging activities, provided that all other tryout qualifications are met.
- All candidates must attend the tryout meeting with an adult representative. Candidates must also attend cheerleader clinic, mock tryouts, and tryouts.
- Candidates with a medical excuse should consult the coach and school administration if they are physically disabled at the time of tryouts.

## ★CODE OF CONDUCT★

### KISD CHEER PROGRAM DISCIPLINE PROCESS

A KISD cheer member takes on the role of a respectful and disciplined athlete who should be a model for her/his peers at all times - in school, after school, and in the community. The coaches of each campus program will determine all consequences based on the following prescribed discipline process and the KISD Student Code of Conduct.

There are two types of permanent infractions for the cheer program:

- **Reminders:** A reminder is a minor infraction. Any given combination of **five** reminders and/or **three** reminders for the same offense, will result in 1 strike.
- **Strikes:** A strike is a major infraction which results in an immediate consequence. The following will occur when a strike has been issued:
  - **Strike One:** Parent notification (phone call with follow-up email) may include conference with student and an assistant principal, and consequences as determined by coaches.
  - **Strike Two:** Parent notification (phone call with follow-up email), conference with parent, student, and an assistant principal, and consequences as determined by coaches.
  - **Strike Three:** Parent notification (phone call with follow-up email), conference with parent, student and an assistant principal, and immediate removal from the team.

The following are the levels at which behaviors will be handled. This discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the KISD Cheer program.

**Reminders** – The list below includes, but is not limited to, behaviors (either on district property, at a school sponsored event, and/or while in cheer uniform) which would require reminders:

- Tardiness (based on stated arrival time) to practice, game, or non-school hour activity/event up to 15 minutes
- Leaving a performance, game, practice, or activity/event early without prior approval
- Wearing jewelry in any practice, game, non-school hour activity/event, or performance
- Wearing uniform outside of a non-scheduled event
- Chewing gum, eating candy, or snacking during a game, practice, or activity/event without permission
- Being disruptive, horsing around, talking excessively during a game, practice, or activity
- Socializing with friends or family without permission
- Using a cell phone during practices, games, or activities/events
- An excused absence (see attendance/participation above) to a game/practice/event without advance written parent notification
- Failure to bring and/or clean up game and/or event materials
- Failure to bring designated materials when required
- Failure to help hang/remove signs when assigned
- Failure to paint signs when assigned
- Failure to turn in any paperwork or project money
- Failure to adhere to grooming and uniform expectations for a game, practice, or activity/event
- Failure to cover tattoos for a game, practice, or activity/event

- Assignment to detention
- Having unnatural hair color (per coach's discretion) at a game, practice, or activity/event
- Inappropriate language

**Strikes:** The list below includes, but is not limited to, behaviors (either on district property, at a school sponsored event, and/or while in cheer uniform) which would warrant a strike infraction:

- Tardiness (based on stated arrival time) to practice, game, or non-school hour activity/event after 15 minutes
- Insubordination or disrespect toward the cheer program, cheer coaches, teacher, or administrator
- Failure to regain eligibility at progress report time
- Undignified behavior of a cheer member as determined by the cheer coach
- Any unexcused absence (see attendance/participation above)
- Refusing to work or pay attention at practice
- Unsportsmanlike conduct at a game or performance
- Assignment to ISS
- Receiving a P or U on any nine-week grading period
- Receiving 5 "Reminders" for any combination of reminders
- On the third "Reminder" received for the same offense, cheerleader will receive a strike for insubordination.

The coaches will document each behavioral infraction. If at any time a cheerleader has received three strikes, resigns, or withdraws from the school, he/she will be removed from the cheer program for the remainder of the year. They will not be eligible for "lettering" status or attend the Cheer Banquet at the end of the season. Any cheer member who is removed or has resigned from the cheer program, for any reason, will be moved from the cheer class. Any student who is removed from the program, for any reason, is eligible to try out for the cheer program the following year.

**Immediate Removal:** The list below includes, but is not limited to, behaviors (either on district property, at a school sponsored event, and/or while in cheer uniform) which would warrant immediate removal from the cheer program:

- Any assignment to OSS or DAEP
- Failing any two classes at the end of a semester
- Possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco, vape, and/or any drug while on campus, at a school sponsored event, and/or while in cheer uniform
- Destruction or vandalism of school property
- Stealing
- Gross, serious, or persistent misconduct
- Misrepresentation of the school or KISD
- Receiving three strikes (or 15 reminders) which results in 3 strikes

Consequences for being removed or resigning from a squad will be enforced at any KISD campus should the removed/resigning cheerleader transfer to another KISD campus.

Violations of the student code of conduct may also be handled by campus administration in conjunction with the KISD Cheer Discipline Process.

## ★ GENERAL INFORMATION ★

### COMPETITION

- A squad may compete in no more than four contests during the school year, should they receive an invitation and provided there are no scheduling conflicts. Financial arrangements should be at the discretion of the squad and the coach.
- Participating cheerleaders should attend tournaments as a group with the coach.
- Participating preliminary competitions must be limited to within the state. All KISD requirements must be met before out-of-state contests are planned.

- A competitive team may be selected from current freshman, JV, and Varsity cheerleading squads at coaches' discretion. A separate tryout may be held to select this team.
- Since the competition squad is optional and its own entity, each school program will govern the tryout process and expectations for these teams. They will be held to this handbook and the rules/regulations set for them by the respective campus' cheer coach.

## **DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP**

Cheerleaders are expected to represent themselves and KISD with honor, dignity and integrity at all times –including when interacting on social networking websites and in other online environments.

## **BEST PRACTICES & EXPECTATIONS REGARDING SOCIAL MEDIA SITES**

As a condition of being a cheerleader in KISD, cheerleaders must abide by the following expectations related to the use of the internet and social networking sites. All cheer members are expected to:

- positively represent their high school and its cheer program in the school and in the community.
- not post any content online that would constitute a violation of the KISD Student Code of Conduct.
- not post pictures, statuses, nor be involved in any social networking conversations that negatively represent themselves, their high school, or its cheer program.
- not post or be associated with postings involved with smoking, vaping, inappropriate gestures, drugs, alcohol, or sexual content.
- not post or be associated with postings/conversations that are negative in regards to their school, the cheer program, its members, or its coaches.
- not engage in any ambiguous association such as re-tweeting, subtweeting, favoriting, liking, re-posting, etc. of inappropriate material in regards to this code of conduct and the social media contract.
- not engage in cyberbullying, slander, or harassing behavior.

**Consequences may be issued for members who do not follow the above standards.**

## **LETTERING**

- Students may only receive one (1) school-purchased award jacket during their high school career at the same school
- Only members of the Varsity squad are eligible for a letter jacket
- Jackets will be ordered in the February timeframe
- Athletes shall participate the entire season, finish in good standing, and be recommended by their head coach
- Managers shall complete the entire cheer year; managers will receive a certificate award the first year and a jacket for a subsequent year of participation

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This handbook is a living document. If an incident should arise that is not specifically addressed in this document, the coach and/or school administration will address the incident on an individual basis. The resolution of this incident may not be addressed team wide especially when privacy issues are involved. In addition, in order to benefit the cheer program, the coach and/or administration reserves the right to revise this handbook at any time. (Last revised 2-2-2020).

Klein ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disabilities in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the American With Disabilities Act. For information on compliance with these, contact KISD Administration representative. Each parent and cheer member/candidate will be provided a current copy of the KISD Cheer Program Constitution/Handbook. An electronic copy of the current handbook will be accessible on the KISD webpage and a copy will be filed with each campus principal, each campus cheer coach, the Athletic Director(s) and the KISD Central Administration Office.