



MESQUITE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Cheer Handbook

2022-2023

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PURPOSE

Participation in extracurricular activities contributes to the development of well-rounded citizens. Mesquite ISD encourages all students to be involved and engaged in extracurricular activities, although they are optional. Since they are optional, those who elect to participate will be held to higher standards of behavior on and off campus. Participation in cheer is a privilege, not a right.

Cheerleaders, mascots, cheer managers, and auxiliary cheer organization members are student leaders who exemplify and promote school spirit, pride, and sportsmanship. They are representatives of their school. For purposes of this Handbook, cheerleaders, mascots, cheer managers, and auxiliary cheer organization members will be referred to as “cheer members.” All rules apply to all cheer members. The rules and procedures outlined in these guidelines are in effect throughout cheer season. Cheer season begins upon the announcement of a new squad and continues until the following year when a new squad is named.

QUALIFICATIONS

The qualifications in this section apply to cheerleaders, mascots, cheer managers, and auxiliary cheer organization members at both the high school and middle school levels.

Grades for Eligibility

1. Cheer members must pass each subject each six weeks. A student shall be suspended, as per UIL/TEA guidelines, from participating during the following six weeks in which the student receives a grade lower than 70 (except for state-approved honors courses). Additional information can be found on the UIL website at <https://www.uil-texas.org/policy/tea-uil-side-by-side/academic-requirements>.
2. Once a cheer member has been declared academically ineligible, the following will apply:
 - a. The cheer member will not wear his/her uniform during the suspension period.
 - b. He/she will attend practice with the squad, but will not participate in activities, events or games.
 - c. When a cheer member is ineligible for two six weeks periods, an academic evaluation will be made and a parent conference will be convened to discuss what is in the best interest of the cheer member’s academic success. Students who are academically ineligible for three six weeks periods, consecutive or nonconsecutive, will be removed from the squad for the remainder of the year to focus on their academics.
3. A cheer member will maintain an “A” or “B” in conduct. Failure to meet this requirement will cause a cheer member to be placed on a three-week suspension from participation.

Attitude & Leadership

1. Cheer members must maintain desirable attitudes and a spirit of cooperation in all classes.
2. Cheer members must cooperate fully with the head cheerleaders, the sponsor(s), and other members of the squad.
3. Cheer members will not take advantage of their position by using it to miss classes, etc.

EXTRACURRICULAR STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR

Student participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged. Mesquite ISD makes extracurricular activities available as an extension of the regular school program, with an important difference: 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.

Behavior must be exemplary and reflect the finest attributes of the Mesquite ISD student body at all times and in all places. Cheer members should be aware that in or out of uniform they are representatives of the cheer squad and the school they attend and should act accordingly.

Cheer members will adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and also to these Extracurricular Standards of Behavior. Students shall not participate in cheer until the acknowledgement form is signed by the student and the parent, indicating that they understand the expectations and consequences outlined herein.

Since participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, Mesquite ISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than for students who choose not to participate in extracurricular activities. Therefore, this Extracurricular Standards of Behavior extends beyond the Mesquite ISD Student Code of Conduct, not only in types of behavior prohibited but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline. This Extracurricular Standards of Behavior will be enforced with all cheer members:

- Regardless of whether school is in session;
- Regardless of whether the offense occurs on or off school property;
- Regardless of whether the offense occurs at a school-related or non-school-related event;
- Regardless of whether the student is directly involved with the extracurricular activity at the time the prohibited conduct occurs;
- Regardless of whether the extracurricular activity is in-season; and
- Regardless of where or when the conduct occurs.

It is possible that a student who violates the MISD Student Code of Conduct will incur consequences from both the appropriate school administrator and from his/her sponsor for the same particular violation. It is also possible that a student participating in cheer could violate the Extracurricular Standards of Behavior and be subject to discipline by a sponsor without having violated the MISD Student Code of Conduct.

The Internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include cheer members being responsible for any social media communication, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, that appears on the Internet – even if it is marked private. Cheer members are responsible for their personal social media and postings, as well as their postings to other persons' social media. The areas of appropriateness will include but are not limited to language, pictures, suggestive poses, clothing, reference or depicting the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

Any cheer member who represents themselves, or their organization, in an unfavorable, questionable or illegal manner, including electronic media will be subject to the disciplinary actions determined by appropriate school officials and/or sponsors, including probation or dismissal from the organization.

In addition to all rules, regulations and schedule commitments required by the cheer sponsor, students shall adhere to the following guidelines in order to continue participation:

1. Maintain passing grades;
2. Give their best effort and exhibit good conduct at all times;
3. Demonstrate respect for sponsors, teammates, faculty and students;
4. Refrain from hazing; and
5. Exhibit positive leadership traits and represent their school in a positive manner.

Consequences for behavior infractions covered in the Student Code of Conduct and in the Cheer Handbook will be assigned at the discretion and determination of the campus administrator and cheer sponsor and may include disciplinary consequences, probation, suspension, removal from squad, and/or prohibition from future participation in all extracurricular activities.

General Conduct Rules

Cheer members are expected to set a good example by conducting themselves individually and collectively in an orderly manner before classmates, visitors, and school personnel. There is to be no quarreling between any of the cheer members in public. Conduct during games and pep rallies are as follows:

- No gum chewing.
- Hair is to be worn away from the face.

- Group and private discussions must be avoided as they reflect upon the squad.
- All cheer members must focus their attention on the game at all times.
- Excessive makeup and/or hairstyles will not be permitted.

Prohibited Conduct

In addition to the aforementioned behavior expectations, MISD cheer members are prohibited at all times from:

- Possessing, smoking, selling, or using tobacco products;
- Possessing or using drug paraphernalia;
- Possessing, selling, or delivering to another person look-alike drugs or items represented to be drugs or contraband of any kind;
- Possessing, selling, giving, delivering to another person, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, or any dangerous drug;
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to glue, aerosol paint, or volatile, mood-altering chemicals;
- Attending any event at which underage drinking or smoking is occurring (students will be allowed a slight concession for an amount of time long enough to determine that a violation is occurring and to leave the premises);
- Riding in a vehicle containing alcohol unless a parent or guardian is present and aware of the presence of the alcohol;
- Stealing;
- Conduct that causes injury or harm to persons or property;
- Using profanity, lewd or vulgar language, or obscene gestures;
- Fighting;
- Any conduct resulting in arrest and/or citations from law enforcement;
- Inappropriate touching including “making out” in public places, sexual gestures, or exposing parts of the body that are ordinarily covered up in public; and
- Inappropriate behavior in public places.

Sponsors will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Sponsors will strive for consistency in issuing consequences for Extracurricular Standards of Behavior violations but will also exercise sound professional discretion. Violation of any of the rules outlined here will be subject to probation, suspension, and possible removal. The principal will not ordinarily interfere in a sponsor’s judgment regarding appropriate discipline but has the authority to increase or decrease the punishment based on his or her assessment of the situation. All decisions of the principal are final.

Campus Guidelines

Individual campuses have additional guidelines to accompany these Standards and assign points in a demerit system. Campus guidelines will be aligned to district guidelines. Failure to abide by these Extracurricular Standards of Behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including probation, suspension, and removal from the program. The student's disciplinary history will be taken into account when consequences are issued. Sponsors will be in communication with parents regarding discipline infractions and consequences.

Based on demerit systems and discipline infractions, cheer sponsors may remove a cheer member after two periods of probation or suspension have been served, and infractions continue. Some infractions; however; are so egregious they may result in immediate removal. Any cheer member given sent to DAEP or expelled from school for any reason will be removed from the squad for the remainder of the school year.

Prior to being dismissed, the student and parent will be notified of the reason for the action. Student and parent will be afforded the opportunity of a conference with the sponsor and principal. Students do not possess a constitutionally protected interest in cheer participation, and therefore decisions of the sponsor and principal are final. Students removed from the cheer squad must also have a schedule change and be removed from the class. The student will not be eligible for any individual or team recognitions or awards that occur after the date of dismissal. Money will not be refunded to cheer members who quit or are removed from the squad.

RULES & REGULATIONS

The rules and regulations in this section apply to cheerleaders, mascots, cheer managers, and auxiliary cheer organization members at every grade level. It should be noted that a cheer member must be present at least one-half of the day of an activity in order to participate in the activity.

Home Games

1. Each cheer member is expected to attend assigned home sports activities designated by the sponsor or principal. Any absence must have prior approval of sponsor. Failure to follow this rule will result in a one-week suspension from cheer activities.
2. The sponsor is responsible for providing cheer members with a schedule of all activities at which cheering is to take place.
3. Cheering will take place in areas designated by sponsor. Location of cheer members at basketball games must be within UIL guidelines.
4. Junior Varsity squads will participate with the cheering section at home Varsity football games. (Exceptions to participation must be approved by the sponsor or principal.)

5. All cheer members must be prepared to attend playoff games.
6. All cheer members will stand at attention during the National Anthem and school songs. Whispering, talking, laughing, etc., during these times will not be tolerated.
7. Cheer members must be at assigned games one-half hour before they begin or a time designated by sponsor. If a cheer member is late, he/she may not be allowed to perform until after the halftime activities are complete.
8. It is the responsibility of the cheer members to make all visiting cheer members welcome. It is not necessary to exchange cheers or gifts.

Out-of-Town Games (high school only)

1. Varsity
 - a. Varsity cheer members are to cheer at out-of-town football games as a squad.
 - b. Varsity cheer members are to ride the school-provided transportation to and from out-of-town football games as required by sponsor.
 - c. The penalty for missing transportation is suspension from that night's game and the following game.
2. Junior Varsity (JV)
 - a. JV cheer members are only permitted to cheer at out-of-town games with sponsor and principal approval.
 - b. If JV cheer members are required to attend a Varsity out-of-town game, they will ride school-provided transportation.

Practice

1. Cheer members will be enrolled in cheerleading as a class at the high school level. This will be their regular practice session.
2. Middle school cheer practices will be determined by the sponsor.
3. Special practices may be called by the sponsor as necessary. Cheer members will attend practices during the summer and outside of the school day to prepare for camp, games, pep rallies, etc. Attendance is mandatory.
4. Failure to attend practice without sponsor approval will result in suspension from the next game.
5. High school cheer members who choose to participate in both cheer and athletics may be enrolled in these programs on alternating days. Conflicts must be worked out between coaches, sponsors, and administrators. Administrative decisions are final.
6. Outside activities will not interfere with practice during the school year and during the summer. Conflicts will be worked out in advance with sponsors and administrators. Work is not an excused absence.
7. Cheer members will dress out as the sponsor designates. Failure to follow these guidelines will be reflected in the student's grade.

Expenses

The cost to each cheerleader or mascot may not exceed \$700 at the high school level; \$450 at the 8th grade level; and \$325 at the 7th grade level.

- Varsity Cheer: \$700 paid by cheer member; \$450 paid by MISD
- Junior Varsity Cheer: \$700 paid by cheer member; \$100 paid by MISD
- 8th Grade Cheer: \$450 paid by cheer member; \$0 paid by MISD
- 7th Grade Cheer: \$325 paid by cheer member; \$0 paid by MISD

This money is spent on uniforms, camp, practice uniforms, and other cheer-related items. This money is paid by cash, money order, or cashier's check by each cheer member and must be paid in full prior to cheer camp. Money that has already been spent cannot be refunded to cheer members who quit or are removed from the squad. At the discretion of the campus principal, uniforms may be purchased, owned by the school, and issued to cheer members utilizing cheer funds.

Mesquite ISD has adopted reasonable procedures for waiving deposits and fees if a student is unable to pay. If a student qualifies and receives free or reduced lunch, he/she may be eligible for scholarships, outside fundraising, and/or a payment plan, provided the final payment is made prior to cheer camp [TEC§ 11.158(a)(9) and TEC§ 11.158(f)].

All purchases connected to cheerleading in any way must be approved by the sponsor and principal. Items used in association with cheer members without prior approval are strictly prohibited and punishable up to the consequence of permanent removal.

Uniforms

Uniforms shall be approved by the sponsor, the principal, and the assistant superintendent of Administrative Services, and purchased through the MISD business office, and in keeping with school colors. The following guidelines apply:

- Cheer members are responsible for taking excellent care of their uniforms at all times.
- Cheer members are responsible for mending or altering their uniforms should they become damaged or ill-fitting. Sponsors will determine if uniforms are presentable for performance.
- Uniforms for different events are chosen by the sponsor and will only be worn when specified by the sponsor.
- Failure to wear the uniform at assigned times may result in being suspended from participation for one week.
- No jewelry during game, performances, or practices, for safety reasons.

- Uniforms shall not be worn by cheer members who quit or are removed from the squad.
- Award jackets (or blankets) for Varsity cheer members are purchased by the school; only one letter award may be given [see FM(REGULATION)].
- Cheer managers may not purchase or wear a cheer uniform; however, cheer sponsors may require cheer managers to wear a school-specific shirt or other appropriate article of clothing.

Class Grades (high school only)

Grades for cheer class will be contingent upon the following: full participation at all events; full participation in all activities sponsored by the cheerleaders for the student body; full participation in group discussions; and adherence to uniform guidelines during games and practices.

Additional Duties

Cheer members will teach cheers to the student body and encourage good sportsmanship. Cheer members are responsible for making game posters, meeting at designated times to place posters, and removing posters in a timely manner. Cheer members are also responsible for planning and conducting pep rallies (JV cheer members will participate in at least one pep rally).

Head Cheerleaders

Head cheerleaders may be chosen by majority vote of the squad or by appointment by the sponsor. The head cheerleader may be removed by the sponsor or principal for conduct occurring on or off campus, including disrespect for authority, fighting, alcohol use, and other code of conduct infractions.

Cheer Camp

Cheer members are required to attend a summer cheerleading camp with the squad.

Fundraising

High school cheer members may have two fundraising activities per school year to cover the costs of color yearbook photos, football program photos, and banquet expenses. Middle school cheer members may have one fundraiser per school year to offset expenses. Reimbursements from fundraising are not permitted.

Banquets

High school cheer banquets require the approval of the principal and must conform to district guidelines related to banquets. Cheer banquets are not allowed at the middle school level.

Guidelines for Competitions (high school only)

Cheer squads (including mascots) in Mesquite ISD are allowed to compete in two outside competitions per year. Cheer managers are not qualified to participate in these competitions. These competitions are for competition purposes only; they are not to be considered a school trip. These outside competitions are not required but are allowed under the following guidelines:

1. Any student involved in the cheer program who is interested in being on a competition squad can represent the school in this way as long as he/she meets the requirements of the group as set by the sponsor.
2. The competitions have to be within 70 miles of Mesquite. Any exceptions will be approved by the Assistant Superintendent of Administrative Services.
3. Cheer sponsors will be in charge of this effort.
4. The competitions are to be voluntary in nature.
5. All District "stunting guidelines" shall be followed in these events.
6. Costs for competitions is the responsibility of the students performing.
7. If two competitions are attended, no more than one total day of school may be missed. The other competition must be scheduled as to not conflict with a school day.
8. If two competitions are attended, the same uniform and props must be used for both competitions; no additional items are to be purchased for the second competition. The only additional costs should be applicable entry fees and meals.

Big Sis/Little Sis

Big Sis/Little Sis customs are not allowed due to the added expense of obligatory gifts.

Hazing & Bullying

Hazing and bullying are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Cheer members are subject to immediate removal if they engage in, encourage, aid, assist, or have knowledge of and fail to report a hazing or bullying incident [see FNCC(LEGAL)]. It is a criminal offense to engage in, encourage, recklessly permit, or fail to report hazing of a student, regardless if the person being hazed gave consent (TEC 37.152).

CHEERLEADER SELECTION PROCESS

Tryouts

Students must be enrolled in Mesquite ISD at the time of cheer tryouts. Students attending a school outside of their feeder pattern must have an approved transfer prior to cheer tryouts. The cheer sponsor must receive the Cheer Handbook Acknowledgement Form with parent signature by the designated deadline in order for the student to try out. The cheer clinic that precedes the cheer tryout is mandatory and includes all candidates. Tryout apparel is determined by cheer sponsors.

Current 9th, 10th, and 11th grade students may try out for Varsity cheer. The 16 candidates with the highest scores will be selected for the Varsity squad. Eighth graders may try out for the Junior Varsity squad only. The 14 candidates with the highest scores, amongst the 8th graders and 9th, 10th, and 11th graders who did not make the Varsity squad, will be selected for the Junior Varsity squad. Students must specify in advance of tryouts in writing to the cheer sponsor if they do not wish to be considered for the Junior Varsity squad in the event that they do not make the Varsity squad.

If money is still owed for cheer fees from a prior school year, the student will not be allowed to try out.

High School Judging Procedures

Cheer candidates will be evaluated in three areas: Performance (65%); Academics (10%); and Citizenship (25%). The following guidelines apply:

1. Performance (65%)
 - a. Performance evaluation will be made by a panel of three adult judges chosen from outside the school by the cheer sponsor. The judges will not have provided cheer instruction to any of the cheer candidates. Candidates will be assigned numbers for tryout purposes and will not be referred to by name. Tabulation of scores will be made by the principal or designee.
 - b. Cheerleader candidates will be evaluated in the following seven areas:
 - i. Jumps – 15 points
 - ii. Motion/technique – 15 points
 - iii. Pom dance – 15 points
 - iv. Crowd appeal/smile – 5 points
 - v. Entrance/smile – 5 points
 - vi. Memory/recall – 5 points
 - vii. Voice projection – 5 points
 - c. Mascot candidates will be evaluated in the following five areas:
 - i. Creativity – 15 points
 - ii. Crowd appeal – 15 points
 - iii. Originality – 15 points
 - iv. Prop usage – 10 points
 - v. Spirit/smile/improvisation – 10 points
 - d. Tryouts are only open to candidates, judges, and school-approved personnel.
 - e. Senior cheerleaders are not allowed to coach cheer candidates at their school outside of the cheer clinic.

- f. Candidates who are injured or ill will receive a maximum score of one (1) in any category in which they cannot participate.
2. Academics (10%)
 - a. Candidates with a grade average of less than 70 in any subject in the preceding semester (except for state-approved honors classes) will receive no score in this area.
 - b. The following formula will be used in determining the candidate's score in this area: Semester Average \times .10 = Academic Score. Local credit courses, such as office aide, will not be used in calculating the semester average.
 - c. The maximum number of points a candidate can earn in this area is 10 points.
 3. Citizenship (25%), includes citizenship grade, attendance & discipline referrals:
 - a. Citizenship Grade (5 points): Candidates may receive a total of five points for having all "A's" in citizenship through the latest grading period. For each "B", one point will be deducted from this score. For each "C", two points will be deducted. Candidates who receive more than two "C's" or a "D" or "F" in citizenship through the latest grading period will receive no points in this area.
 - b. Attendance (5 points): Candidates may receive a total of five points for having no unexcused absences through the latest grading period. One point will be deducted for one unexcused absence. Three points will be deducted for two unexcused absences. No score will be assessed for attendance if the candidate has more than two unexcused absences. Partial day absences will be assessed as follows: Five missed periods (unexcused)=one unexcused absence.
 - c. Discipline Referrals (15 points): Candidates may receive a total of 15 points if they have no discipline referrals documented by administration in the current school year. Three points will be deducted for one discipline referral. Six points will be deducted for two discipline referrals. No points will be assessed for candidates with more than two discipline referrals, ISS, ISIP, OSS, or DAEP.

Middle School Judging Procedures

Cheer candidates will be evaluated in three areas: Performance (60%); Academics (10%); and Citizenship (30%). The following guidelines apply:

1. Performance (60%)
 - a. Performance will be evaluated by a panel of three adult judges chosen from outside the school by the cheer sponsor. The judges will not have provided cheer instruction to any of the cheer candidates. Candidates will be assigned numbers for tryout purposes and will not be referred to by name. Tabulation of scores will be made by the principal or designee.
 - b. Cheerleader candidates will be evaluated in the following seven areas:
 - i. Jumps – 15 points
 - ii. Motion/technique – 15 points

- iii. Pom dance – 10 points
 - iv. Crowd appeal/smile – 5 points
 - v. Entrance/smile – 5 points
 - vi. Memory/recall – 5 points
 - vii. Voice projection – 5 points
 - c. Mascot candidates will be evaluated in the following five areas:
 - i. Creativity – 15 points
 - ii. Crowd appeal – 15 points
 - iii. Originality – 10 points
 - iv. Prop usage – 10 points
 - v. Spirit/smile/improvisation – 10 points
 - d. Tryouts are only open to candidates, judges, and school-approved personnel.
 - e. Candidates who are injured or ill will receive a maximum score of one (1) in any category in which they cannot participate.
- 2. Academics (10%)
 - a. Candidates with a grade average of less than 70 in any subject in the preceding semester (except for state-approved honors classes) will receive no score in this area.
 - b. The following formula will be used in determining the candidate's score in this area: Semester Average x .10 = Academic Score. Local credit courses, such as office aide, will not be used in calculating the semester average.
 - c. The maximum number of points a candidate can earn in this area is 10 points.
- 3. Citizenship (30%), includes citizenship grade, attendance & discipline referrals:
 - a. Citizenship Grade (10 points): Candidates may receive a total of 10 points for having all "A's" in citizenship through the latest grading period. For each "B", one point will be deducted from this score. For each "C", two points will be deducted. Candidates who receive more than two "C's" or a "D" or "F" in citizenship through the latest grading period will receive no points in this area.
 - b. Attendance (5 points): Candidates may receive a total of five points for having no unexcused absences through the latest grading period. One point will be deducted for one unexcused absence. Three points will be deducted for two unexcused absences. No score will be assessed for attendance if the candidate has more than two unexcused absences. Partial day absences will be assessed as follows: Five missed periods (unexcused)=one unexcused absence.
 - c. Discipline Referrals (15 points): Candidates may receive a total of 15 points if they have no discipline referrals documented by administration prior to tryouts. Three points will be deducted for one discipline referral. Six points will be deducted for two discipline referrals. No points will be given to candidates with more than two discipline referrals, ISS, OSS, or DAEP.

Final Determination

The sum of the Performance, Academics, and Citizenship scores will be tabulated by the principal or designee. The final determination of cheer members will be based on the composite score.

There are no provisions for the selection of alternates. Score sheets are kept on file for two years per CPC(REGULATION): Texas State Library and Archives Commission retention schedule for Texas public schools.

Ties

In the event of a tie on the overall/final tabulation, the tie will go to the candidate with the higher Performance score.

Squad Membership

The number of cheer members for each squad is as follows:

High School	
Varsity Squad	16 cheerleaders max
Junior Varsity Squad	14 cheerleaders max
	1 mascot
Middle School	
8 th Grade Squad	14 cheerleaders
7 th Grade Squad	14 cheerleaders
	1 mascot

Cheer Managers

Cheer managers are considered cheer members for all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; however, the managers do not attend cheer camp and are not allowed to participate in competitions. Managers are selected by the cheer sponsor. There is no tryout, and the sponsor's decision is final.

PYRAMID & STUNTING GUIDELINES

Basic-Level Stunting

At both high school and middle school levels, the following basic-level stunting guidelines will apply:

- Stunts will be no more than two people high.
- Any member of the stunt group who does not maintain surface contact with the ground must be in physical contact with a person who is in control from the time they leave the ground until they return to the ground (dismount to cradle or basket toss is the only exception).
- Jumps or flips from a stunt or pyramid are not allowed.
- All stunts shall have sufficient spotters and bases as recommended by NCA, UCA, or ACA guidelines.
- A cradle may be used to exit a stunt. During a cradle, the two side bases must be prepared to catch the stunter in the underneath position. The third spotter catches the stunter underneath the arms.
- Double twists from an elevated position are prohibited.

Additional High School Guidelines

- Basket tosses, toe pitch tosses, elevator/sponge tosses, or similar tosses are limited to no more than four tossers and must be dismounted to a cradle position by two of the original bases, plus an additional spotter at the head and shoulder area.
- Basket tosses are limited to toe touch, tuck arch, pike arch, bottle rockets, pretty girls, or any combination of these.

Additional 8th Grade Guidelines

- Building may include a full press, also known as a full-extension, with two bases and a third base in the back spot position. The base's arms are fully extended in this stunt, and all bases must be touching the flyer.
- Cheer members may perform a full-liberty with at least two bases and one back spotter. Heel stretch and arabesque are allowed.
- Twists from a shoulder/prep level are allowed.
- No basket tosses are allowed.

Additional 7th Grade Guidelines

- Building may include no more than a half-extension or half-press with two bases and a third base in the spotter position. This position is held in front of the chest/shoulder level.

- Cheer members may perform a half-liberty, which is based from the chest/shoulder level. This stunt must have at least three bases, including a main, side, and back spotter. Heel stretch and arabesque are allowed.
- No basket tosses are allowed.
- No sponge tosses are allowed.

Advanced-Level Stunting (high school only)

In order to participate in advanced-level stunting, cheer members and sponsors must attend additional training at the school's expense. The training must be conducted by a certified NCA, UCA, ACA, or USASF staff member or coach. This training is in addition to cheer camp. The following guidelines also apply:

- Proof of certification of sponsors must be on file with the campus principal.
- Proof of certification for cheer members must be on file with the cheer sponsor.
- Stunting guidelines cannot exceed those that are acceptable to the American Association of Cheer Coaches and Administrators.
- Advanced-level stunting requires an additional parent permission form to be signed by parent and returned to the cheer sponsor.

INHERENT RISK & CONCUSSIONS

Inherent Risks of Cheerleading

Cheerleading is reasonably safe as long as certain guidelines are followed, but there is the inherent risk of injury as in any athletic activity. Cheerleading is an anaerobic/aerobic activity that includes jumping, stunting, motions, and tumbling. All physicals must be on file in the school office before students may participate in practices and games. Students must keep the sponsor informed of all injuries and/or chronic conditions.

The probability of injury is minimized when cheer members take certain precautions. Cheer members will be expected to consistently abide by the following guidelines:

1. Always warm-up appropriately before cheering (practice and games).
2. Do not attempt a stunt that cannot be performed safely and that has not been checked off by the sponsor.
3. Always use attentive spotters when stunting.
4. Always cheer in an area free from obstruction.
5. Always use mats or a grassy area when stunting during practice.
6. Do not stunt on uneven ground, wet surfaces or concrete, and do not stunt in cold or rainy weather.
7. Never talk, laugh, or play around when performing a stunt.
8. Report all injuries to the sponsor as soon as they occur.

9. Follow all trainer and doctor recommendations.
10. Lift weights to increase strength and guard against injuries.
11. Always wear shoes and clothing appropriate for cheerleading.
12. Never wear jewelry of any kind or chew gum when cheering.
13. Always have hair pulled back from the face and shoulders.
14. Eat nutritious meals and get plenty of rest.
15. Ask for assistance or advice at any time.

Concussions

A concussion is an injury to the brain. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to either the head or the body that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. The resulting injury to the brain changes how the brain functions in a normal manner. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up immediately after the injury or may not appear for hours or days after the injury. Concussions can have serious long-term health effects, and even a seemingly mild injury can be serious. A major concern with any concussion is returning to play too soon. Having a second concussion before healing can take place from the initial or previous concussion can lead to serious and potentially fatal health conditions.

If a concussion is suspected, the following guidelines apply:

1. Immediately remove student from practice or game.
2. Seek medical attention right away.
3. Do not allow the student to return to play until proper medical clearance and return-to-play guidelines have been followed. The permission for return to play will come from the appropriate health care professional.

Any questions concerning concussions or the return-to-play protocol should be directed to the athletic trainers at the high schools.

AUXILIARY CHEER ORGANIZATIONS

Each school is allowed to have a school organization that assists the Varsity cheerleaders in game activities and stunting. Each school can identify this group by the name they wish; name must be approved by principal. This organization must have a sponsor who is separate from the cheer sponsor. All organization members will attend practice at least once a week with the Varsity cheer members. Other practices will be designated by the sponsor as the sponsor feels necessary.

Selection Process

This organization is open to all students. The following guidelines apply:

- Candidates for this organization will be interviewed by the organization and cheer sponsor.

- Candidates will submit an application, photo, and recent report card for review.
- Discipline records will be reviewed and taken into consideration before selection.
- Interviews will be conducted to determine the student's level of interest, time commitment, and overall enthusiasm for the organization.

Uniform

This organization will wear a school-approved polo or button shirt in school colors to all school events. The sponsor of the organization will designate school-approved khakis or jeans to be worn with the shirt based on weather.

Stunt Clinic

Each member will be required to attend a one-day stunt clinic (with a certified instructor) that will be scheduled by the sponsor before any stunting with cheer members occurs.

Cost

The students will pay for the polo or button shirt and the one-day stunt clinic set by the sponsor. The out-of-pocket cost for each student may not exceed \$100.



Mesquite ISD Cheer Handbook Acknowledgement Form

We have read and understand the policies, procedures, practices, financial requirements, and behavior expectations outlined in the *Mesquite ISD Cheer Handbook* and the *Mesquite ISD Student Code of Conduct* and give consent for our child to try out for the cheer program.

Should our child make the cheer squad, we agree to adhere to these guidelines as a condition of voluntary participation in the cheer program. We understand that cheerleading is a privilege, not a right, and that failure to abide by these guidelines may result in disciplinary measures and removal from the program.

We certify that our child is physically able to fulfill the physical requirements needed to be a cheer squad member. We understand that the school is not liable for any injury incurred during cheerleading. Furthermore, we grant consent to the school and its employees to administer medical treatment to our child in the event of an emergency.

By signing this form, we acknowledge that we understand the inherent risks of cheerleading and the dangers of returning to play too soon after a concussion outlined in this handbook. In the event of a concussion, we agree to comply with the MISD return-to-play protocol.

Student name (print) _____ Date _____

Student signature _____

Parent signature _____ Date _____

The MISD Cheer Handbook Acknowledgement form was submitted to my office:

Sponsor Signature

Date



Mesquite ISD Cheer Squad Probation/Suspension Notice

This letter serves as written notice that _____
has received probation or suspension from the cheer squad for the following reason:

Terms of the probation or suspension are as follows:

This notice is for the cheer team members:

- First probation/suspension (sponsor contacts parent; parent & student sign & return this notice next school day)
- Second probation/suspension (sponsor meets with student & parent)
- Third probation/suspension (removal meeting with sponsor & principal)

Member Signature _____ Date _____

Parent Signature _____ Date _____

Sponsor Signature _____ Date _____