

**FLOWER MOUND HIGH SCHOOL
CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK
2024-2025
LEWISVILLE INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT**

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 Flower Mound 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.

Statement of Purpose:

Being an FMHS Cheer program member is an honor and special privilege. Cheerleaders and spirit groups exist to promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, wholesome enthusiastic school spirit and are first and foremost representatives of the school. Cheerleaders should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position and in accordance with the rules as stated in the LISD Code of Conduct.

Members of these groups have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior and academic achievement both on and off campus than that of their peers. Cheerleaders are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and remembering cheers/routines. They are also expected to be able to publicly demonstrate a skill level suitable for the team position and the timing necessary for group performance. Off the field, they are to enthusiastically support all athletic teams through advertisement, personal attitude and attendance at events chosen by the coach and approved by the principal.

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 coaches 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, baseball and softball games, soccer and other appropriate sports, and fundraising.
- **Summer** – Fundraising, summer practices, summer camp and summer scrimmage.
- **Fall** – Practices, pep rallies, decorating for Mound Showdown and Homecoming, football/volleyball/basketball, etc. games; preparation for UIL State Competition, Homecoming (carnival, pre-game activities, game, etc.), team fundraising, varsity football program sales, Jr. Jags, conditioning, fundraising and community service.
- **Winter** – UIL State Competition, Regionals and Nationals, 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 Flower Mound 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/unsportsmanlike 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.
- In the event that a cheerleader is benched from an event due to demerits, the cheerleader must arrive in full uniform and sit on the sidelines and support the team.
- In the event that a cheerleader is benched due to being UIL ineligible, the cheerleader may not attend that event at all.
- In the event that a cheerleader is injured, the cheerleader must still attend the event but sit on the sidelines unless there is specific protocol set by the trainers.

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. Captains will undergo a captain tryout process including creating a cheer and sideline dance. Captains will be voted on by the team and then final captain decisions will be made by the coaches.

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 coaches and campus administrators. Managers may be removed or replaced at any time that the coaches and campus administration determine it to be in the best interest of the cheer program. 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

Flower Mound High School Cheer will compete in the UIL Spirit Competition being held January 2025 and competing at UCA or NCA Regionals and potentially Nationals in December or January.

Tryouts for this team will be held in May of 2024 for the upcoming year. Cheerleaders MUST keep skills over the summer. Coaches reserve the right to make any changes to the competition team at any time due to behavior issues, attendance, attitude, schedule, loss of skills. You will only have 2 unexcused absences for UIL practices for the season. If you are sick or injured, a doctor's note will need to be provided. After 2, coaches reserve the right to replace the athlete with an alternate.

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.

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/FMHS 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 EMAIL your coach ahead of time to let them know of any absence prior to the beginning of cheer class. Failure to contact your coach 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:

- Students must make every effort to complete and turn in the Planned Absence form at least 7 days prior to the planned absence;
- Requests may be denied in order to ensure enough cheerleaders will be present at each event;
- Multiple requests to be absent from the same event will be considered on a first come, first serve basis;
- If an absence is denied, the absence will be unexcused and result in a benching in accordance with the FMHS Cheer Guidelines & Expectations and the LISD Cheerleading Handbook.
- Leaving early or arriving late to a preplanned event will result in 1 demerit. If over 40% of the event is being missed, it will be noted as a missed event entirely
 - Exceptions to this: If it is a school sponsored event pending coaches approval (ex. SAT Test, etc.)
- If you are absent for a game or event due to being sick, you will need a doctors note or parent phone call. (without a note or parent phone call, it is considered a missed event resulting in 3 demerits)
- Due to preparation practices, a cheerleader may not miss the day before a pep rally or the cheerleader will be taken out of that performance

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 for college 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. Two freebies will be issued at the beginning of the year. Freebies will not result in any demerit and can be used on events or games. We will only allow a certain amount of freebies to be used so it will be on a first come first serve basis.

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 his or her attendance is necessary for the overall program success.

COMMUNITY SERVICE

Citizenship is another requirement of FMHS Cheer. Squad Members will be expected to participate in all scheduled community service events each year. 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.

SUMMER PRACTICES/CAMP

Each missed summer practice without approval from Coach Tritton 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 Flower Mound Cheer.
2. Respect and follow all school, district, and Flower Mound 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 benchings or dismissal from Flower Mound 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, FMHS Student Handbook, LISD High School Cheerleading Handbook, and FMHS 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 FMHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations.
- No jewelry of any kind may be worn at a cheer event and/or practice in which you are identifiable as an FMHS Cheerleader by wearing outer-wear/uniform/Flower Mound cheer shirt. This includes, but is not limited to: jewelry, spacers (clear or otherwise), and/or Band-Aids used to cover piercings. Exception: Necklaces, rings, and traditional earrings may be worn in the earlobe or ear cartilage when not practicing or performing.

PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

- Be dressed and ready to practice by 2:10 (M,W,F) or 2:20 (T,TH)
- Hair up, gum out, jewelry off
- Wear correct attire (cheer shorts, correct shirt cheer/cheer 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 trash is picked up and thrown away, signs, megs, poms, and bags are collected and nothing is left behind.

- The gameday uniform will consist of the following items: assigned uniform, assigned bow, game day shoes, approved socks, approved spandex, poms, megaphones (varsity only).

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 demerits, 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:

1. Parents will encourage their athletes to follow and abide by the rules set forth by the handbook, coaches, and administrators.
2. Parents are encouraged to attend the monthly booster club meetings.
3. Parents will pay all dues on time.
4. Parents will refrain from using cheerleading as a punishment for your athlete. This does not just punish one cheerleader, but the entire squad.
5. Parents will oversee the time management of your cheerleader (ex: practice and game schedules, community service, team building, sign paintings, etc.)
6. Parents will provide punctual transportation if needed.
7. Parents will direct concerns about your cheerleader on an individual basis directly to the appropriate coach, first. (Freshman will contact the freshman coach, and so on)
8. Parents will follow the LISD Chain of Command. (See FMHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines and Expectations Handbook).
9. Parents will strive to speak positively to other parents, community members, athletes, etc., about the team, program, coaches, and other athletes involved in the FMHS Cheerleading Program. This is the only way to maintain a strong program.
10. Parents will provide the encouragement your cheerleader needs in his/her pursuit of Excellence.
11. Parents need to schedule all appointments so as to avoid the cheerleader missing cheer class, practices or events as this impacts the entire squad.
12. Parents will check emails and calendars for updates.
13. Parents are encouraged to assist with volunteer and fundraising activities.
14. Parents will follow all forms of proper communication when addressing/speaking with the coach. (See FMHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines and Expectations Handbook).

15. Parents will understand and support that the coaches are responsible for instructing the practices and performances, creating and enforcing cheerleading rules and consequences, and making decisions for the team as a whole. Please respect decisions made by the coach and contact them directly with any questions and/or concerns.

Please understand that unforeseen circumstances do occur; interim changes may be made at the discretion of the coaches and administrators. All decisions made by the coaches and/or administration are final. Thank you for all of your support. We truly could not be successful without the support of our parents!

FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

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

DEMERITS/MERITS

- Demerits are a means by which the coach determines which members are not upholding their obligations. Demerits are in effect throughout the cheerleading year (March to March).
- Cheerleaders will have the opportunity to receive “merits” by attending an volunteering at certain events throughout the year
- Demerits 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 demerits will result in a benching.
- Flower Mound cheerleaders are also responsible for following the FMHS Campus Cheerleading Guidelines & Expectations, and all other expectations communicated by the Flower Mound 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 demerit. Parents will be notified if violations or absences result in a benching. (see additional sheet for demerit specification)

Per the LISD Cheerleading Handbook, coaches reserve the right to upgrade any penalty (immediate benching, office referral) depending on the severity of the situation.

****3 demerits = 1 benching from the next event/performance (games)**

****3 benchings = removal from squad**

****9 demerits = removal from squad**

Below is a list of offenses that warrant demerits.

½ Demerit Infractions conditioning will be done as well:

- ❖ Wrong attire during **class** (i.e., shirt, spanx, shoes, etc)
- ❖ Jewelry at any time
- ❖ Late pick up from any cheer activity by parent (**more than 10 minutes**)

1 Demerit infractions:

- ❖ Incorrect hairstyle (**depends on the squad**)
- ❖ Uniform/Spirit day missing item
- ❖ Late to practice or performance (**including game halftimes, cheerleader must be present ½ a game to leave early**)
- ❖ Leaving practice/performance with an unexcused reason (**work, all-stars, etc.**)
- ❖ Game behavior (**not meeting game day expectations after being warned**)
- ❖ Possession or use of cell phone during practice/performance/event without permission from coach
- ❖ Not having poms/megaphone/other props or equipment
- ❖ Not completing or returning items by due date
- ❖ Allowing a non cheerleader to wear or use any of your cheer program wear (**this includes uniforms, practice shirts, fleece, warm-ups etc**)

2 Demerit Infractions:

- ❖ Assigned to Wednesday/Saturday School
- ❖ Insubordination/Attitude
 - **Respect towards coaches, captains and teammates in/out of school**
 - **Emails/notifications from teachers**
 - **Inappropriate language at practice or event**
- ❖ Skill consistency (**cheerleaders are expected to maintain and build off of the tumbling skills performed at tryouts. Failure to do so will result in 2 demerits and removal from performance until skill can be performed**)
- ❖ Travel Guidelines
 - **Room checks**
 - **No one of opposite sex in rooms**

- ***Cheerleader responsible for any additional damages***
- ***Representation of FMHS***

Immediate Benching Infractions: (which includes 3 demerits)

- ❖ Missing ANY Scheduled Event
- ❖ ***In ANY situation***
- ❖ Lying/Stealing
 - ***In ANY situation***
- ❖ Hazing/Bullying
 - ***The act of or threat of hazing in any form within/between squads, (verbally or physically)***
- ❖ Social Media
 - ***Inappropriate comments and images on any social media sites (Twitter – even retweets, Likes/Favorite, Instagram, and/or Facebook, Snapchat etc.)***
 - ***Including but not limited to pictures with/around alcohol, drugs, nudity, profanity, or negative portrayal of the school or program (depending on severity, coaches reserve the right to remove from team)***

*****If the cheerleader reaches 9 demerits, the cheerleader will be released from the team.***

ISS/OSS
see handbook

Automatic Removal From Team:

- ❖ ***Any discipline given inside or outside of school regarding illegal activities. This includes, but is not limited to, alcohol, tobacco, drugs, being arrested etc.***
- ❖ ***This will also include breaking rules on trips or at any school sponsored event, game, competition, etc. at coach and/or administration discretion.***

*****Pre-planned Unexcused Absences***

** You will receive 2 FREE Unexcused Absences in class per year. These can not be used for summer camp.*

**These MUST be turned in on the absence request form and approved by the coach 1 week (7 days) before the event.*

**Please note that per the LISD Handbook pg 12, failure to notify a coach of missing a practice (which includes class) will result in a benching.*

Any member failing to abide by published school rules relating to conduct, use of drugs, alcoholic beverages, or other illegal activities will be subject to review by the coach and principal. Dismissal from the group may result from that review. Any drug/alcohol violations will be disciplined in accordance with the LISD Student Code of Conduct at school or for any school sponsored activities. The LISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct will be implemented if not at school or school sponsored activities.

Should any eligibility situation not be covered by the above policy, the UIL eligibility standards will apply.

***Any other major discipline/behavior problems at any cheerleading school sponsored event or practice will follow the FMHS school guidelines and be dealt with by office referrals.

Merit System

Only ½ and 1 demerit infractions can be replaced. You must earn 1 merit to replace a ½ demerit infraction and 2 merits to replace 1 demerit infraction. Benching's will not be removed by merits. Once you have received a benching whether it be an automatic benching or 3 demerits added together you **MAY NOT** go back and use merits to remove those demerits. You may only receive a max of 6 merits for the year.

Acceptable Merit Opportunities:

- The top seller from each team in any fundraiser – 2 merits
- Volunteering to cheer for unscheduled/not mandatory events (i.e. last minute playoff games not covered by Varsity, etc.) – 1 merit
- Straight A's on 9 weeks report cards – 1 merit
- Receiving a Jammin Jag or Character Counts Award – 1 merit

Pre-Planned Absence Form

Cheerleader Name: _____ Today's Date _____

Team: _____

Date(s) missed: _____

Reason: _____

Cheerleader Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Approved _____

Unapproved _____

Coach's Signature _____