



**Standard Operating
Procedures**

**High School
Cheerleader Handbook**

APPROVED: 10-21-2024

High School Cheerleader Handbook

Policy Cross Reference Sheet

This handbook is an administrative procedure of Fort Bend ISD and is subject to policies adopted by the Board of Trustees. In case of conflict between administrative procedures and Board policy, policy shall prevail.

Date of Superintendent Approval: 10-21-24

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The contents of this handbook relate to the following Board policies:

Policy	Title	Page(s)
FM (Legal)	STUDENT ACTIVITIES	*
FM (Local)	STUDENT ACTIVITIES	*
FO (Legal)	Student Discipline	6-8, 19
	Student Code of Conduct	6-8, 19
FNG (Local)	Student Rights and Responsibilities - Student and Parent Complaints/Grievances	9

* The above listed policies relate to areas in which Student Activities are necessary. This handbook speaks directly to High School Cheer.

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Part I: Team Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy:

The Board believes that student activities provide opportunities for students to practice and demonstrate the attributes of the Profile of a Graduate. As such, the District shall encourage participation in student activities, engage students through inclusive and collaborative experiences, and allow students the opportunity to create and participate in student organizations and student groups.

This handbook becomes effective immediately for the tryout process in the current school year and remains in effect for successful candidates throughout the period until tryouts the following calendar year.

Fort Bend ISD Athletics Mission/Profile of a Graduate:

FBISD Athletics exists to inspire and equip student athletes with responsibility, values, sportsmanship, and teamwork through participation in sports so they can pursue futures beyond what they can imagine.

Cheerleaders will exhibit the FBISD Profile of a Graduate, including being a collaborative team member.

Fort Bend ISD prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. No qualified disabled student shall, on the basis of disability, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or otherwise be subjected to discrimination under any Fort Bend ISD service, program, or activity.

Fort Bend ISD takes steps, including the provision of supplementary aids and services determined appropriate and necessary, to provide nonacademic and extracurricular services and activities in the manner necessary to afford children with disabilities an equal opportunity for participation in those services and activities. Any student with a disability requiring reasonable accommodations for participation in any Fort Bend ISD service, program, or activity should contact their campus to request a meeting of their student's Section 504 committee or ARD Committee.

Questions regarding Fort Bend ISD policies and procedures can be addressed to the FBISD Executive Director of Student Support Services.

GENERAL SAFETY GUIDELINES

Basic Safety Guidelines:

1. Coaches will coach in accordance with USA Cheer and NFHS safety standards.
2. The coach or other knowledgeable designated school representative (with principal approval) shall attend all practices and functions. No coach, no practice.
3. An emergency plan must be in place and practiced in case of an emergency.
4. All athletes shall receive proper training before attempting any form of gymnastics (i.e., tumbling, stunts, “pyramids” and so on).
5. All partner stunts shall be mastered according to the “partner stunt progressions” before attempting a new level of difficulty. For more information, consult “Stunt Progressions” on the NFHS website.
6. All practice sessions shall be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders with the use of tumbling mats and away from excessive noise, distractions, etc.
7. Training in proper spotting techniques shall be required for all squads attempting gymnastics.
8. Accessories and apparel should be conducive to safe performance.
9. Warm-up exercises and stretching shall precede all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions and other physical activity.
10. All squads shall develop and practice a conditioning and strength-building program.
11. The practice/performance surface, location, lighting and weather conditions shall be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity.
12. The coach may limit the squad’s activities based upon the squad’s ability level.
13. The athletes shall not stunt while the football team or other sport team is in play, no matter what part of the field they are on.

COMPETITION GUIDELINES

1. **Designation as Competition Squad:** Campus administration will collaborate with the coach to determine if the squad will participate competitively. All member athletes are expected to prepare for and attend competitions.
2. **Safety:** According to University Interscholastic League Constitution and Contest Rules, Subchapter E: Spirit, Section 1503: “All cheer and spirit performances at any UIL activity shall be in accordance with safety standards as prescribed by the National Federation High School Spirit Handbook.”
3. **Attending Competitions:**
 - a. The coach or campus-approved designee must accompany the squad to any competition.
 - b. Transportation will be available for competitions at sites outside of Fort Bend ISD. The campus will be responsible for providing a certified driver for district-provided transportation.
4. **Hired Choreographers/Coaches:** All choreographers or coaches must be familiar with UIL competition and FBISD guidelines.
5. **Competition Guidelines:** Competition guidelines shall comply with the regulations outlined in the NFHS Spirit website (See safety guidelines and reference material in this handbook.)

COACH DUTIES

Coaches' responsibilities and duties include but are not limited to the following:

1. Make schedules for games, uniforms, practices, etc.
2. Assign duties in all activities.
3. Inform all athletes of changes in schedule, upcoming events, etc.
4. Provide announcements to campus administration.
5. Make the final decision on choice of uniforms for games and pep rallies and communicate proactively to team members.
6. Screen and have veto power on all cheers, stunts, skits, signs, other ideas, etc.
7. Recommend to administration if a team member should be suspended or removed from the squad.
8. Follow all district procedures related to procurement, fundraising and collection of money.
9. Be responsible for current inventory of all items ordered.
10. Establish a system and complete a grade, tardy, absence and conduct check with teachers and discipline action taken by grade level/alpha split principal.
11. Attend or secure a principal-approved designee for all the following:
 - i. Summer camp and competition
 - ii. Tryouts
 - iii. Games when athletes are officially cheering
 - iv. Outside training for squad (gym, clinics, etc.)
12. Create a safe environment so that a routine does not pose an undue risk of serious injury.
13. Ensure that the equipment is maintained for athletes as outlined in the district's equipment policy. The coach is responsible for issuing and collecting school-purchased equipment and uniforms.
14. Monitor all activities for compliance with the National Federation Spirit Handbook and the USA Cheer Cheerleading Safety Manual guidelines.
15. Organize and practice an emergency plan that is approved by the campus Head Athletic Trainer.

EXPECTATIONS

Cheerleading is a team sport. All team members are expected to be present for all team activities. Additionally, all athletes will be expected to follow the rules of conduct as outlined in the *FBISD Student Code of Conduct*. Athletes will be expected to display positive leadership qualities regarding behavior, sportsmanship and school spirit in alignment with the *FBISD Profile of a Graduate*.

1. **Smoking/Vaping:** The use or possession of any tobacco or vaping product is prohibited and warrants a consequence as outlined to the *FBISD Student Code of Conduct*.
2. **Unexcused Absence:** An unexcused absence is defined as the failure to attend any scheduled cheer activity (sample listing below) as determined by the coach without prior permission from the coach. Any outside activity - including a job and/or participation on another cheer squad - is an invalid reason for missing a scheduled cheer activity. Vacations should be scheduled around summer practices and camps. Examples of cheer activities are:
 - After-school practices
 - Saturday practices

- Evening practices
 - Summer practices
 - Games
 - Pep rallies
 - Cheer fundraisers
 - Cheer community projects
 - Leaving or arriving halfway through practice
 - Any other activity scheduled by the coach
3. **Excused Absence:** Each team member will be permitted five (5) excused absences from cheer activities during the tryout year. Any team member who has six (6) or more excused absences will be considered to have excessive absences and will face disciplinary action beginning with the sixth absence. Excused absences are defined as:
- School-Related Activity – A written notification signed by the school official and received by the coach at least 48 hours prior to the event.
 - Family Death – Verbal communication to the coach by parent/guardian followed by written notification.
 - Illness – Verbal communication to the coach from the parent followed by written notification (even if the child was not in school). If a cheerleader does not feel well enough to participate, the coach has the discretion to send them home as an excused absence.
 - Doctor Appointments – With written 48-hour notification to the coach signed by a parent/guardian.

Note: Verbal communication may consist of personal communications, voicemail or notice to the coach’s mailbox by school attendants.

Absences for Religious Holidays will be excluded from any count. Verbal communication to the Coach by the parent is required.

4. **Tardies:** Any team member 5 minutes late to any cheer activity will be considered tardy. Three tardies will be considered an unexcused absence.
5. **Appropriate Dress:** All team members shall abide by the proper dress code when at practices, games, school-related events or any other team activity. The coach will determine specific dress. See *FBISD Student Code of Conduct* for compliance.
6. **Uniforms:** All team members are expected to maintain their uniforms with care and are only to perform in a clean uniform. See USA Cheer and NFHS safety rules for compliance. When in uniform, athletes should refrain from the following:
- a. Chewing gum
 - b. Wearing nail polish
 - c. Long fingernails
 - d. Wearing jewelry
 - e. Wrong socks
 - f. Missing hair bow
7. **Stunting without Approval:** For safety purposes, all stunting must be approved in advance by the coach. Stunting is not permitted without coach approval. A coach must be in attendance if any stunting is taking place.
8. **Inappropriate Behavior/Disrespect:** Team members are expected to be role models

and ambassadors of goodwill for their school and should follow the FBISD *Profile of a Graduate*. As such, all athletes are expected to exhibit exemplary behavior. The following shall be considered inappropriate behavior and may be subject to discipline:

- Public display of affection
- Misconduct documented by other teachers, administrators and/or parents
- Distractions during practice/games/pep rallies
- Non-spirited/bad attitude
- Unsportsmanlike conduct/derogatory statements
- Disobedient behavior/non-compliance
- Bullying/harassing behavior (including sexual harassment)
- Cyberbullying
- Fighting or threatening to fight (a teammate or any other student)
- Disruptive behavior that substantially impacts the educational environment
- Intentionally causing harm to another team member through unsafe behavior during Cheer events; causing (or potentially causing) harm through negligence, inattentiveness or inaction.
- Any of the above behaviors, if deemed severe enough by coaches or school administration, will be grounds for disciplinary action up to and including suspension and/or removal from the Cheer team. Repeated behaviors above (even over the span of more than one Cheer season) may be grounds for permanent removal from the team.

9. **Deadlines/Responsibilities:** Team members are expected to fulfill all responsibilities and meet all deadlines as established by the coach.

10. **Camp Requirement:** All team members are required to attend a professionally run cheerleading camp.

- The only exception to this rule is a tryout alternate who is added to the team after their team's camp due to extenuating circumstances. This addition must be approved by coaches, campus administration and the FBISD Athletic Director/Assistant Director who supervises district Cheer programming.
- If this roster change is approved, then the coach must arrange for safety training for the added student(s). Training must be performed by an NCA- or UCA-certified trainer. A coach must also be in attendance at the entirety of this training. Until the student has received this training, s/he may not participate in any stunting or tumbling activities during team practices.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITIES

No student will be denied the opportunity of trying out for a cheerleading squad when the cost of required expenses and fees is a financial barrier. Parents shall be informed about cost of participation prior to tryouts. Parents should contact the coach to discuss available options to meet financial obligations before orders are placed.

1. **School Provides:** Items determined by the coach with approval from the district Athletic Office to include but not be limited to cheer uniform, equipment and supplies.

2. **Individual Provides:**
 - Camp expenses (including travel)
 - Clothing and accessories not purchased with district funds. Itemized estimate(s) will be provided by the coach at the pre-tryout meeting.
 - Gym rentals/Choreography determined by the coach.

3. **Fundraisers:** Team members will have opportunities to participate in program fundraisers to offset additional costs not covered by district funding. Parents should contact the coach prior to tryouts with any additional questions regarding financial responsibilities.

CHEERLEADER DISCIPLINE

All athletes are expected to follow all the rules of conduct as outlined in the *Fort Bend ISD Student Code of Conduct*, the *Fort Bend ISD Student/Parent Handbook - Extracurricular Section* and other rules developed by the coach. These rules apply to all team members during their term of selection to the team.

1. **Loss of Privilege – Deferred Adjudication, Probation, Felony or Class A Misdemeanor:**
A student may lose the privilege of participation in extracurricular activities during any period of deferred adjudication or probation. School counselors will assist coaches in obtaining a release of related documentation.

A student shall lose the privilege of participation in extracurricular activities during any period:

- While under indictment for a felony; or
 - While awaiting a final determination of guilt or innocence in connection with either a felony or any offense punishable as a Class A Misdemeanor, whether the felony or offense was committed on or off campus.
2. **Loss of Privilege – Possession, Under the Influence, or Intent to Distribute:**
Possessing, selling, or distributing marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, a dangerous drug, abuseable glue, aerosol paint, or any other mood-changing, mind-altering or behavior-affecting drug such as vape devices containing THC is strictly prohibited and will result in elimination from further participation in all extracurricular activities for:
 - **First Offense:** one calendar year.
 - **Second Offense:** for the remainder of the student’s school career.

 3. **Loss of Privilege – Suspension, DAEP, Expulsion:**
A student shall lose the privilege of participation in extracurricular activities during any period of suspension, placement in Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) or expulsion.

DAEP Placement: Any athlete receiving placement in DAEP will be suspended from the team for the remainder of the cheer season.

4. **FORR Program Placement:** Any athlete receiving a placement in the FORR Program will lose privileges in extracurricular activities and will be ineligible to cheer for the duration of the placement in FORR. For FORR placements that occur during off-peak portions of the season: suspension from the next two Cheer events. For safety purposes, summer

Cheer camp does not count towards event suspension (ex.: student placed in FORR in early April would miss the next spring event (if there are any) – spring pep rally or Spring Football Game – and then the first Cheer event of the fall semester).

5. ISS/OSS Placement:

Any athlete receiving a placement in ISS or OSS will lose privileges in extracurricular activities and will be ineligible to participate in team activities for the duration of the placement in ISS/OSS. Suspensions listed below are to be enforced AFTER the student has completed their ISS/OSS placement. Games missed while suspended do not count towards event suspensions listed below:

- 1st Offense – Minimum 1 event suspension
- 2nd Offense – Minimum 2 event suspension
- 3rd Offense – Removal from the program

6. Disciplinary Recourse:

Upon a student's removal from participation in school-related extracurricular activities, the following will occur:

- The coach will communicate to the student and the student's parents the terms of the removal.
- The coach will notify the campus principal and the district athletic director in writing the terms of the removal.
- The student may be referred to counselors and/or drug and alcohol education programs as appropriate.
- The student or parent may appeal the student's loss of extracurricular privileges through District Board Policy FNG (LOCAL).
- If a member of the current squad is removed from the team after tryouts, s/he will forfeit their position for the following year as well. If a candidate makes the squad and later chooses not to be on the squad, he/she also forfeits tryouts for the following year. S/he will only be able to try out in subsequent years after the forfeited year has been served.

7. Additional Rules of Conduct:

In addition to the rules of conduct specified in this section, students who participate in extracurricular activities shall comply with the following rules:

- Comply with rules and expectations outlined by district officials and staff.
- Participate in every practice, competition/performance and event required by the coach unless the coach has granted an excused absence.
- Perform to their fullest ability at all practices, games, competitions and other events. Athletes should be ready and willing to perform any skill that they have established themselves to be capable of. For example: if the athlete performs a tuck or a technically elevated tumbling run at tryouts, they are expected to perform this skill at any subsequent event in the coming year if required by the coach.
- Arrive promptly - properly attired - for every practice, competition, etc., unless the coach has granted an excused absence.
- Adhere to the grooming standards provided by the coach.
- Demonstrate sportsmanlike behavior and a positive attitude.
- Be courteous and polite to others.

Failure to meet these and other expectations may result in disciplinary action at the coach's discretion.

8. Recommended Disciplinary Measures:

In the event that a team member violates any team, campus or district rule(s) that do/does not rise to the severity of the disciplinary consequences listed above, the following are recommended disciplinary responses that can be taken (more than one of these may be used for a single team member offense):

- Additional conditioning during practice
- Written letter of apology to the student/staffulty member affected
- School disciplinary measures as outlined in the *FBISD Student Code of Conduct*
- Suspension from one or more Cheer events (coaches' discretion with regard to the length of suspension – suspensions longer than two events should be approved by Cheer supervising administrator or campus athletic director)
- Dismissal from practice or the remainder of practice for a given day if an offense happens during practice (excluding the Cheer class period during the school day)
- Sitting out all or a portion of practice
- Monetary restitution for any lost/stolen/damaged property
- Student Athlete Behavior Contract (See Exhibit A)

RESOLUTION PROCESS

Concerns should always be addressed first with the coach. If no resolution can be reached, other campus staff may need to be involved. The proper chain of command when addressing a concern is:

1. Coach
2. Campus Athletic Coordinator over Cheer
3. Campus Administrator supervising Cheer OR other Principal Designee
4. Campus Principal
5. District Athletic Office

EXCLUSIONS/OMISSIONS

The contents of this manual are intended to dictate policies and procedures for typical, ongoing maintenance of a successful Cheer program. Any questions, scenarios or rules violations not specifically mentioned in the preceding pages will be addressed/governed by campus administration. Campus and district administrative personnel reserve the right to make these decisions relative to overall team/campus/district safety and fairness.

Part II: Tryout Guidelines

COMPOSITION OF THE SQUAD

Cheer candidates must reside within the attendance boundaries of the campus for which they are trying out. Residency and student transfer information will be confirmed at the campus prior to tryouts to determine eligibility.

The cheerleading team will be composed of up to 32 cheerleaders selected from current freshmen, sophomores, juniors and eighth graders currently enrolled in the schools' feeder pattern or approved transfers such as academies, PTECH, and ECHS. Coaches may take a full squad or choose their team number based on the first natural break in scores that approximates a full team.

1. Varsity:
 - a. Squad not to exceed 16 cheerleaders
 - b. Comprised of current freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and eighth graders currently enrolled in the school's feeder pattern or approved transfers such as academies, PTECH and ECHS
2. Junior Varsity:
 - a. Squad not to exceed 16 cheerleaders
 - b. Comprised of current freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and eighth graders currently enrolled in the school's feeder pattern or approved transfers such as academies, PTECH and ECHS
3. Competition Squad:
 - a. All athletes at competing schools will prepare for and attend competition.
 - b. A maximum of 30 athletes will perform at each competition.
 - c. Performing athletes will be selected and notified by the coach.
 - d. The competition squad will be decided on a per-competition basis. Ex: an athlete might be selected to compete at a regional competition but not at state. Changes in squad composition are made at the coaches' discretion.
 - e. All athletes participating on the competition squad must be fully safety certified by an approved UIL/NCA/UCA staff member.

REQUIREMENTS TO TRY OUT

Eligible candidates for cheerleading and mascot must meet the following qualifications:

1. Academic Standing:
 - a. Meet and maintain UIL and District academic eligibility standards.
 - b. Be on schedule to meet graduation requirements (2 1/2 - Freshman, 7 1/2 - Sophomore, 12 1/2 - Junior).
 - c. Must not have received more than two total failing grades on the first (T1) and second (T2) nine weeks' grading reports for the current school year. Failing semester grades and failing grades in approved advanced placement classes for eligibility do not count against the allotted two failing grades. Current eighth graders must be academically eligible at the time of tryouts.
 - d. Students must have good attendance (See Exhibit F – Administrative Seal of Approval).

2. **School Behavior** - Candidates may not have received any of the following during the tryout school year:
 - a. Placement in OSS or ISS (coaches/campus administration can use discretion here)
 - b. Any disciplinary infraction that requires or results in CAEP or DAEP
 - c. Any disciplinary infraction that requires or results in expulsion
 - d. More than two Level II/Level III disciplinary infractions or a combination thereof

***NOTE:** for the purposes of this criteria only, the campus high school principal may identify specific Level II behaviors which will be excluded from determining eligibility for tryouts.*

3. **Participation in Pre-Tryout Clinic:** Candidates should attend each day of the pre-tryout clinic to help them prepare for tryouts. Clinic details will be established by the campus. During the clinic, coach(es) will specify the activities to be performed at the tryouts. All required skills for the tryout must be divulged to candidates during the clinic.
4. **Parent Meeting and Forms:** To be eligible for tryouts, each candidate and their parent/guardian must attend the mandatory orientation meeting to discuss the selection process and cheerleader responsibilities. Any parent/guardian who is unable to attend this meeting must contact the coach prior to the date of the meeting to receive the information for their student to be allowed to participate in the tryouts.
 - a. Candidates must receive and sign for tryout packets at this meeting. If other arrangements have been made, then the parent must arrange to get the packet from the coach.
 - b. Each senior candidate is required to submit the Senior Intent Form (Exhibit E).
 - c. Each candidate will be required to have the Administrative Seal of Approval (Exhibit F) signed prior to the tryout clinic.
 - d. Further qualifications involving tryout procedures, standards of conduct, participation and uniforms may be required by the coach(es), with the prior written approval of the principal. These qualifications will be communicated with candidates and parent/guardian prior to tryouts.
5. **Physical Examination:** All candidates must submit a current pre-participation physical examination form signed and stamped by a medical doctor before the tryout clinic. Fort Bend ISD reserves the right to require a new physical examination when deemed necessary.
6. **No Outstanding Fines/Fees:** All candidates must not have any outstanding fines or fees. After the deadline to submit tryout packets, the list of candidate names will be sent to the campus financial clerk. If a candidate is found to have any outstanding fines/fees, they must resolve them by the first day of Cheer Clinic or be removed from the candidate list. Fees will not be considered resolved without written confirmation from the campus financial clerk to the Cheer coach or supervising administrator.
7. **Special Circumstance for out-of-district students:** If a student lives in another school district at the time of the tryout parent meeting/clinic/mock tryout/official tryout, the following criteria must be met:
 - a. They must provide proof of residence within the school zone.
 - b. They must initiate enrollment in FBISD before the tryout.
 - c. They must attend the initial tryout parent meeting.
 - d. They may attend some portion of the tryout clinic.
 - e. They may attend and participate in mock tryouts, but it is not a requirement for participation in official tryouts.
 - f. Candidate must be physically present to participate fully in the official tryout on the day of tryouts.

- g. They must attend all team events following tryouts deemed mandatory by the coach(es).
 - h. Athletes must be fully enrolled as a student prior to attending summer Cheer camp. If not enrolled by this point, they will be removed from the team.
8. **“Administrative Seal of Approval”:**
- a. See Exhibit F for specifics regarding candidate approval criteria.
 - b. If a paper form is used, the form does not need to be distributed to candidates. The coach can print and provide to the supervising administrator or that administrator can produce them and sign them.
 - c. Each candidate must be approved to participate in tryouts by the administrator who supervises the Cheer program on their current campus (8th grade candidates’ approval must be rendered by their middle school’s supervising administrator).
 - d. The supervising administrator may elect to utilize an electronic version (e-form) of the Administrative Seal of Approval. Contact the designated FBISD Athletic Office administrator for more information on the e-form.

METHOD OF SELECTION

High school cheerleader selection is performed by impartial judges who observe the candidates in a series of activities performed in a single session. Students must be present at the cheer tryouts to be eligible for selection.

IMPORTANT:

Failure to strictly adhere to the protocol below could result in invalidation of tryout results. If the principal and/or the FBISD Athletic Office deem that significant aberrations from the prescribed tryout process have occurred, initial tryout results will be voided and the clinic and tryout portions of the process must be repeated. In the event of a repeat tryout, the campus principal must be in attendance for both the clinic and the tryout.

1. **Tryout Format:** The tryout process is organized and facilitated by the coach(es). See Exhibit G for required/recommended tryout personnel.
 - a. Tryouts will take place on each high school campus.
 - b. Each school’s tryout is closed to the public. Only candidates, judges and designated school personnel may be in the warm-up area(s) and tryout room/gym during tryouts.
 - c. At least one campus administrator must be present to observe the selection process. See Exhibit G for specifics on personnel to be present at tryout along with duties.
 - d. The committee will consist of at least three impartial professional judges selected by the FBISD Director of Athletics from outside Fort Bend ISD. Coaches are not to interact with the judges at any point prior to the final submission of ballots to the tabulator.
 - e. All candidates will appear before the judges in the designated uniform. If a student needs assistance with acquiring the uniform, they should notify the coach prior to tryouts.
 - f. Candidates who are current cheerleaders will not demonstrate or be recognized in any fashion as current campus cheerleaders.
 - g. Cheerleader candidates will perform a specified sequence consisting of items listed on the tryout scoresheet. Each judge will assign points based on candidate demonstration of cheerleader skills (See Exhibits A and B)

- h. Cheerleader candidates will be allowed to provide video for committee evaluation if they are unable to perform all required activities due to injury or illness. The candidate must provide a physician's letter explaining the specific injury/illness and restrictions prior to beginning the try out. They must complete all aspects of the program not restricted by the injury and identified in the physician's letter. The video must not show candidates as current cheerleaders in any way. The video must have been created within the past twelve months.

2. Facilities for Tryout

- a. An enclosed gymnasium should be utilized for the tryout (not the school cafeteria or other open space).
- b. A large area must be provided to hold candidates as a pre-tryout area. This area may be used by candidates to stretch and practice, but no stunting is allowed. Candidates may practice cheers, dance, jumps and tumbling in this space only if a designated adult is present in the room.
- c. A large area must be provided to hold candidates as a post-tryout holding area. Candidates are to remain in this space until all candidates have tried out and callbacks have been held (if necessary). Candidates should not be allowed to leave until released by a coach or other adult designee.
- d. Certified cheer safety mats must be in place in both the tryout gym and the pre-tryout holding area.
- e. The gym being used for the tryout must be prepped to prevent anyone outside of the gym from observing the tryout (doors/windows should be covered).
- f. Parents/relatives/friends/private coaches are not allowed to be inside the building at any point during the tryout process.
- g. Adult supervision must be in place in all holding areas.

3. Results

- a. Each judge will score candidates' performances using a numeric scale (see Exhibit B). The judge must initial any change to a rating or sum of ratings.
- b. Scores from each judge are tabulated to yield one total score for each candidate. All three judges' compiled scores will be combined to determine the candidate's total tryout score.
- c. Candidates' total scores are ranked in numerical order from highest to lowest.
- d. Candidates with the highest rankings are selected as cheerleader.
- e. A tiebreaker system will be utilized when necessary to break ties when it involves making the team or determining alternates.
 - i. The tiebreaker will consist of taking the scores from the candidate's first tryout, specifically scores from: entrance, voice projection, jumps, motions, and overall impression.
 - ii. After tabulating the scores, the candidate with the higher score will be named to the team (or named as the higher-ranking alternate if the candidates are both alternates to the team).
 - iii. If after the tiebreaker scores are still tied, the candidates will then be brought back out to perform for the judges again and will be scored on entrance, voice projection, jumps, motions, and overall impression (see Exhibit D).
- f. The coaches and a principal designee will decide upon varsity/junior varsity team placement of candidates. Candidates chosen for each team must come from the top point-earners from tryouts, but selection to varsity or junior varsity is done

- irrespective of how candidates scored at tryouts. Important: it is not a requirement that scores be included as a factor when deciding varsity/junior varsity placement.
- g. If the coach chooses to take the maximum numbers for each team (16/16), then the coach(es) will assign teams from the top 32 point-earners from tryouts.
 - h. If the coach chooses to use the natural break - which could be less than the district maximum of 32 (16/16) - the coach(es) will assign teams according to those candidates who finished above the natural break that approximates a full team.
 - i. There is no prescribed team size for schools who have fewer than the maximum 32 (ex.: a team could have 10 varsity members and 12 junior varsity or 16 varsity and 8 junior varsity members and so on).
 - j. Results will be released after the completion of tryouts on a date and time determined by the campus. Results are NOT to be made public until the end of the following school day and after an administrator has verified them.
 - k. Once results have been made public, no alterations may be made to the Cheer roster.
Exceptions:
 - i. Replacement of a cheerleader who has left or is removed from the team
 - ii. Successful appeal mandated by district personnel
 - l. Due to federal privacy laws protecting student records, a student or parent may not view the evaluation forms of any candidate other than their student.
 - m. Appeals of the cheerleading tryout process, including final results, must take place at the campus level. Grounds for appeal may be made in reference to mathematical calculations or procedural impropriety only. Appeals must occur within five (5) school days, and during school business hours once final results have been announced.
 - n. Tryout results are specific to the campus and are not transferrable to another campus.
 - o. The judges' score sheets should be received by the supervising administrator after tryouts have concluded. Once results have been posted, the supervising administrator should store the results for the next four school years (until all candidates have graduated).
4. **Mascot Selection:** Mascot selection will take place during the fourth nine weeks after finalization of cheerleader tryouts. A second tryout may occur in the fall semester if no mascot is found in the spring. Tryouts will be held on campus and will be judged by a panel of no fewer than three adult designees selected by the coach(es). Mascot candidates will perform a maximum of a two-minute routine consisting of skits, mime, pantomime, and dance. No routine may be more than one-half dance. All routines must be within school standards.
 5. **Team Leadership Selection:** The process for selection of student leadership (captains) on the Cheer team(s) is done strictly at the discretion of the coaches. The coaches may elect to include other personnel (co-Athletic Director, campus administrator, etc.) to assist in the selection process. The process for leader/captain selection is a campus-based decision that is not appealable above the campus level.

Exhibit A – Student Athlete Behavior Contract

Cheerleader’s Name: _____

It has been determined by school administration and/or the Cheer coaches that you have had one or more incidents in which you did not live up to campus Cheer behavior standards. As a result, this behavior contract will serve as your final opportunity to maintain your membership on the team.

As a cheerleader, you are bound by a stricter behavioral code than non-student-athletes. As such, you will be responsible for conducting yourself in a manner above and beyond non-student-athletes. Every member of the campus Cheer Program has a duty to represent themselves, the team and the school in the best manner possible. This applies to your behavior both in school and out of school. You are expected to avoid situations where you might be accused of wrongdoing. Being in the “wrong place at the wrong time” is not an excuse if you chose to be there in the first place.

Henceforth, in-school discipline problems resulting in an office referral will result in your dismissal from the Cheer Program. The following violations may also result in your dismissal from the Cheer Program:

- Allowing yourself to be in a situation - in school or away from school - where you are accused of/arrested for an illegal activity
- Missing practice (unless excused by the coach)
- Skipping class or school
- Harassment (verbal, physical, sexual, etc.) of another student or team member
- Any act - in school or away from school – which, in the opinion of the coaching and/or school administration, reflects in a negative manner on the Cheer Program
- Texts, comments, posts or any other social media interactions directed at a specific person (student, parent, employee) or group of people that are negative, demeaning or hurtful in nature
- Poor sportsmanship

Additionally, if your behavior prompts a teacher or other school employee to seek the Cheer coaches’ assistance in redirecting your behavior, you will be dismissed from the program.

By signing below, you affirm that you have read and fully understand the rules set forth by this contract. Further, you acknowledge that further violations of campus Cheer Program rules could result in dismissal from the Cheer Program.

Student Signature: _____

Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Date: _____

Cheer Coach Signature: _____

Date: _____

Administrator Signature: _____

Date: _____

EXHIBIT B – Cheer Rubric

This rubric is to be used for all Cheer tryouts.

Scoresheet Categories

Scoring Criteria

<p>Spirited Entrance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: highly enthusiastic entrance, crowd interaction, eye contact (4-5 pts) •Good: enthusiastic entrance, crowd interaction, eye contact (2-3 pts) •Fair: minimally enthusiastic entrance, crowd interaction, eye contact (0-1 pts)
<p>Voice Projection</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: loud voice projection/showmanship (4-5 points) •Good: medium voice projection/showmanship (2-3 points) •Fair: low voice projection/showmanship (0-1 points)
<p>Jumps (toe-touch, hurdler and pike in any order)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: hyperextended (4-5 points) •Good: level (2-3 points) •Fair: below level (0-1 points)
<p>Motions (sharpness & motion placement)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: great technique (4-5 points) •Good: solid technique (2-3 points) •Fair: average/below average technique (0-1 points)
<p>Tumbling (execution of skill/clean technique)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: execution of a tuck or more technical skill (4-5 points) •Good: execution of a back handspring series (3 points) •Fair: execution of a single back handspring (2 points) •Execution of a roundoff, cartwheel, front walkover (0-1 points)
<p>Memory</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: great execution, no mistakes or memory lapses (4-5 points) •Good: solid execution, few mistakes (2-3 points) •Fair: sub-standard execution, multiple mistakes (0-1 points)
<p>Dance</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Excellent: great technique, motion placement (4-5 points) •Good: solid technique, motion placement (2-3 points) •Fair: sub-standard execution, motion placement (0-1 points)

EXHIBIT C – Tryout Judges’ Score Sheet

High School Cheerleader Tryout Judges' Score Sheet

Candidate Number: _____

In each category, circle the score that best reflects the performance for the candidate using the rating scale provided below.

If you make a mistake on the score sheet, please cross out the incorrect mark, make your correction and initial in the same manner as the bottom of this sheet.

							<u>Comments</u>
Entrance	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Voice Projection	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Jumps	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Motions	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Tumbling	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Memory	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Dance	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Impression	0	1	2	3	4	5	

Total Score _____

Judge Number _____

Judge's Initials _____



EXHIBIT D – Tryout Judges’ 1st Tiebreaker Score Sheet

High School Cheerleader Tryout Judges' Tiebreaker Score Sheet - 1st Round

Candidate Number: _____

The first tiebreaker sheet is completed by the tabulator only. In each category, place the scores as awarded by each judge from the initial tryout in these select categories.

	<u>Judge 1</u>	<u>Judge 2</u>	<u>Judge 3</u>
Entrance			
Voice Projection			
Jumps			
Motions			
Overall Impression			
Judge Total			

Tiebreaker Total Score _____



EXHIBIT E – Tryout Judges’ 2nd Tiebreaker Score Sheet

High School Cheerleader Tryout Judges' Tiebreaker Score Sheet - 2nd Round

Candidate Number: _____

The second tiebreaker sheet is used to score candidates in a tiebreaker/callback tryout. This form should only be used for candidates who remain. Judges should complete one score sheet for each candidate called back.

Comments

Entrance	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Voice Projection	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Jumps	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Motions	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Tumbling	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Memory	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Dance	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Impression	0	1	2	3	4	5	

2nd Tiebreaker Total Score _____

Judge Number _____

Judge's Initials _____



EXHIBIT F - Tryout Judges' Score Sheet - MASCOT

High School Mascot Tryout Judges' Score Sheet

Candidate Number: _____

In each category, circle the score that best reflects the performance of the candidate using the rating scale below.

							<u>Comments</u>
Technique	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Stage Presence	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Creativity	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Spirit/ Enthusiasm	0	1	2	3	4	5	
Overall Impression	0	1	2	3	4	5	

Total Score _____

Judge Number _____

Judge's Initials _____



EXHIBIT G – Senior Intent

SENIOR INTENT

Student Name _____

School _____

I am trying out for (check one):

Varsity Only

Either Team

Student Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date



EXHIBIT H – Administrative Seal of Approval (ASA)

Administrative Seal of Approval

- *The contents of this document should be carefully considered prior to approving a student for participation in campus Cheerleading tryouts.*
- *The Administrative Seal of Approval (ASA) should be completed by the student’s assigned alpha split/grade level administrator OR by the supervising administrator over the Cheerleading program.*
- *ASAs should NOT be given to the student to submit to her/his administrator.*
- *In the interest of expediency, it is permissible for the Coach to provide input to the administrator on any areas of concern with a given candidate prior to approval/denial.*

Student Name _____

School _____

Below are the key indicators for administrator approval of a student’s participation in Cheerleading tryouts:

- The candidate is on schedule to graduate (has the credits to meet graduation requirements on time with their graduation year cohort).
- The candidate has not received more than two failing grades for T1 and T2. Failing grades in approved AP classes do not count against the student’s allotted two failing grades.
- The candidate is in compliance with compulsory attendance laws (they have been in attendance for at least 90% of all classes at the time of the signing of this document). If a candidate has experienced excessive absences due to extenuating circumstances, it is at the discretion of the coaches and/or campus administration to allow leniency in this area.
- All cheerleaders are expected to follow all the rules of conduct as outlined in the “Fort Bend ISD Student/Parent Handbook”, “Fort Bend ISD Student Code of Conduct” and other rules specific to that campus’s cheer program that may be developed by the campus Coaches with the approval of the campus principal.
- The candidate has not received excessive discipline referrals for the previous Cheer year (ex.: for March 2022 tryouts, student should not have excessive discipline referrals for the 2021-22 school year).

Grounds for NOT signing this document MAY INCLUDE but are not limited to:

- Student has excessive documented discipline referrals in violation of the “FBISD Student Code of Conduct”.
- Student has been absent for more than 10% of any of her/his classes.
- Student has failed more than two classes for the T1 or T2 grading periods.
- Misconduct on the Cheer squad that was not a violation of the “FBISD Student Code of Conduct” (ex.: excessive missed practices, missing major Cheer event(s) with little/no notice, consistent disrespectful behavior with teammates or coaches, persistent violations of other team rules, etc.). The campus coach(es) should be consulted in this area.
- Student has unresolved fines/fees as of the first day of Cheer clinic.
- Student was selected for Cheer squad in a previous school year and quit the team at any point after the teams were named.
- Student was removed from the Cheer squad during the current school year for any reason (ex.: student made the team in the spring of 2022, was removed in the fall of 2022 – s/he cannot try out for Cheer in the spring of 2023).

*****Any other rule violation or potential obstacle to a student successfully participating in the campus Cheer program for the upcoming school year not listed above may be used as grounds for not signing the Administrative Seal of Approval. The student/parent will be notified by the coach if she/he did not receive the Administrative Seal of Approval. If a student/parent wishes to receive clarification or further information on why approval was not given, they may contact the campus Cheer supervising administrator.**

Administrator: _____

Date: _____



Exhibit I – Tryout Personnel and Responsibilities

Below are listed the personnel to be in attendance for the entirety of the Cheer tryout. Mandatory personnel (results are not to be considered official if any of mandatory/required personnel are not in attendance for the duration of the tryout):

1. Impartial judges (acquired and assigned to the campus by the FBISD Athletic Office).
2. Campus principal or principal designee
3. Co-Athletic Director or designee
4. Cheer Coach(es)

Tryout duty descriptions:

1. Judging – impartial judges
2. Tabulator – must be either principal designee or co-athletic director designee; may not be coach(es).
 - a. Check judges' manual calculations and seek correction from judges if a discrepancy is found.
 - b. Input each candidates' scores into tabulation spreadsheet.
 - c. Rank final candidate scores from highest to lowest.
3. Music – must be an adult employee.
 - a. Test sound system in the gym prior to tryout.
 - b. Cue music for each tryout group for the dance portion of each group.

Optional (Suggested) personnel and duty descriptions:

1. Registration – check in candidates prior to tryout and direct them to the pre-tryout gym/holding area.
2. Crowd control (in pre-tryout and post-tryout candidate holding areas) – adults to oversee safety and noise level of candidates as they await tryout or wait to be released.
3. Runners (can be outgoing senior cheerleaders or other current students) – direct traffic of candidates between various tryout areas as directed by coach(es) or other tryout personnel.

IMPORTANT:

Cheer coaches are allowed/encouraged to be in the tryout area for the duration of the tryout but should be positioned away from the judges and the tabulator. Coaches should not interact with the judges until tabulation has been completed by the tabulator.

Aside from the candidate(s) trying out, no student is allowed to be inside the tryout area while a tryout is taking place.