

2022-23
Fruitvale ISD
Cheerleader
Handbook

PARTICIPATION

Because participation in cheerleading is a privilege and not a right, FISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants than for those who choose not to participate. Therefore, the Cheerleader Policy extends beyond the FISD Student Code of Conduct not only on types of behavior prohibited but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline.

*This code applies at all times, on or off campus, while participating in an activity or not, during the school year as well as holidays, weekends, and summer.

**Violations of the Prohibited Conduct Policy may be established by:

1. Student Admission
2. Admission by parent/guardian of student.
3. Violation witnessed by FISD staff member.
4. Issuance of a local agency report or citation.
5. Video or picture evidence reviewed by administration.
6. Failure of school drug test.

Participation by a cheerleader at a social gathering where alcohol or drugs are illegally served will not be tolerated. Participation at these gatherings could lead to consequences for the cheerleader and possible removal from the program. **Note: Attendance at social events (i.e. wedding reception or professional sporting event) where alcohol is legally served to adults is not a violation of this code because alcohol is not being served illegally.

PURPOSE

- To promote school spirit throughout the year.
- To encourage good sportsmanship among the fans.
- To uphold positive relationships between schools during all athletic events.
- To establish the high personal ideals and character expected of a High School Cheerleader in the Fruitvale Independent School District.

TRYOUT QUALIFICATIONS

- **Grade Eligibility:** A candidate must meet UIL requirements for passing, or UIL required improvement to passing at 3 weeks in order to try out.
- Students must meet the 90% attendance rule for all classes, they will not be able to participate until all time is made up to meet this rule. Waivers may apply for school activity absences or medical absences waived by the attendance committee.
- A permission slip explaining estimated expenses and other constitutional requirements must be signed by the parents or legal guardians and returned to the school prior to tryouts.
- Any student from sixth grade through the junior year may be permitted to try out for cheerleader.
- Demonstrate competency of tryout material (at discretion of the sponsor).

TRYOUT PROCEDURES AND JUDGING

- **Junior High:** The number of cheerleaders on a squad will be a maximum of 10 members plus 1

mascot.

- High School: The number of cheerleaders on a squad will be a maximum of 12 members plus 1 mascot.
- Tryouts will be held in the spring.
- Those trying out will perform as a squad and as an individual in front of the judges. Numbers will be drawn so that all participants will have an equal opportunity before the judges.
- Tryout material and specific format will be at the discretion of the sponsor.

POST SELECTION PERIOD PROCEDURES

- The cheerleaders and sponsor must choose all uniforms for cheering and camp.
- A cheerleader is required to abide by the handbook immediately upon selection.
- Cheerleaders should be familiar with the handbook, school song, and fight song.
- All University Interscholastic League (UIL) guidelines will be followed. A nine weeks grade below 70 will result in a suspension from all activities for the given period of time as defined by the "No Pass/No Play" guidelines.
- Cheerleaders will continue to be responsible for all duties for the school year.

SUMMER CAMP

- Summer camp is required for all cheerleaders. Sponsors will notify cheerleaders of camp dates prior to summer.
- Any group attending a cheerleading camp is representing its school and must act accordingly.
- Everyone must attend classes and competitions as a group.
- Summer camps must be within a radius of 200 miles.
- A special day clinic for junior high and high school cheerleaders can be held.
- Sponsors will attend camp and/or clinic.
- Rules not followed at camp--cheerleader will be sent home and dismissed from the squad.
- Hazing will not be tolerated. Hazing will be defined at the sponsor's discretion.

PRACTICE SCHEDULES

- Summer practice is required.
- Only cheerleaders, mascot and sponsor will attend practice sessions. Others may attend at the discretion of the sponsor.
- Summer duties will include preparation for camp and making spirit signs.
- The cheerleading squad will follow established UIL regulations limiting the out-of-school workouts to 8 hours per week during the school year.
- Practice sessions will be called by the sponsor.

PRACTICE GUIDELINES

- Every possible effort will be made to accommodate conflicting schedules.
- Cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices, meetings, and games they are required to attend.

- They are also expected to report on time, and remain for the duration of the event.

TRAVEL

- Cheerleaders traveling to football games must ride the bus to and from the activities or ride home with their legal guardian after being signed out. If there are special arrangements, the sponsor must be notified by the parents or legal guardian prior to the departure of the squad.
- Written permission slips can be used at the games with sponsor/administration approval.

ROLE OF THE MASCOT

- Work with all spirit groups.
- Attend all practice sessions.
- Use game antics and pantomime to increase spirit.
- Be organized at all times.
- Know cheers and chants.
- Wear appropriate uniforms.
- The mascot must never be left alone in the mascot suit.

PEP RALLIES

- Cheerleaders and mascots will wear proper uniforms.
- The purpose of the pep rally is to instill good sportsmanship and to motivate those individuals in attendance.
- Cheerleaders will be expected to give 100% of their energies at all pep rallies.
- Post-season play in all sports - organized pep rallies with the approval of the administration.
- All pep rallies will be pre-approved by the administration.

GAME RESPONSIBILITIES

Pre-Game

- Be on time.
- Be ready to help (hang posters, set up megaphones, etc.).
- Use stretch time wisely (warm-up, tumbling, stunts, jumps, etc.).
- Restrooms and getting dressed for games are not considered pre-game activities. These activities take place before you get to the game.

Game-Time

- Stand at attention (hands behind back or fists on hips as a squad).
- Pay attention to the game (know when we are on offense and defense).
- Know all cheer and chant material.
- Small motion practice cheer/chant on the sidelines.
- Enthusiasm, crowd involvement, and school spirit are a must.
- Spiriting after cheer/chants.
- Basketball players' chant during time outs and in between quarters, must perform during halftime,

and yell and spirit after each point is made.

- Smile and yell loud.

Post-Game

- Clean up area and/or bus.
- Roll up posters, signs, and run-through.
- Team meets with the sponsor before leaving.

At no time is socialization with friends, parents, or boyfriends permitted before, during, or after a game unless dismissed.

UNIFORMS

- Uniforms must be clean and neatly pressed at all times.
- When in uniform or at practice, the sponsor shall establish appearance guidelines and have final say.
- All uniforms at any required function will be exactly alike in its entirety, including, but not limited to: socks, jackets, wind suits, warm-up tights, etc.
- Cheerleaders will be expected to show no affection to friends/boyfriends while in uniform.
- Skirt length will be at the discretion of the sponsor and administration.
- All uniforms will be approved by the administration.
- Uniforms worn during regular class periods will be approved by the sponsor beforehand.

SPONSOR DUTIES

- The cheerleader sponsor is selected by the administration and considered the leader of the cheerleading squad. All decisions made by the sponsor are in the best interest of the squad and shall be considered final. Any suggestions are welcome with the understanding that the sponsor will use that information to make their own decisions.
- Squad members who are having difficulties in school work, problems with other squad members, or any other problems should immediately discuss the matter with the sponsor. The sponsor will offer advice and help in seeking the resources needed to make the squad a success, using all administration services as appropriate, of which to include parents, the Campus Principal, as well as the Counselor.
- Responsibilities include but are not limited to:
 1. Responsible for organizing the cheerleader tryout.
 2. Makes decisions about absences and member removal.
 3. Arranges all transportation according to travel guidelines.
 4. Scheduling and notification of all practice times.
 5. Assigns duties for all activities.
 6. Screens and has veto power on all ideas, cheers, stunts, skits, signs, etc.
 7. Responsible for supervision of all items ordered and for collection of money, to be handed over to administration for accounting and distribution.
 8. The sponsor shall get approval for all fundraisers.
- The sponsor will be in attendance for:

1. Summer Camp
 2. Tryouts
 3. Practice Sessions
 4. Games
 5. All functions that the cheerleaders are responsible for attending.
- The sponsor may have an approved representative fill in her vacancy with approval from the campus principal.
 - The sponsor will be responsible for issuing all cheerleading equipment, mascot uniform, etc.
 - Sponsor will assign demerits for infractions.
 - Recommend to the administration if a cheerleader is to be suspended or dismissed from the squad.
 - Responsible for informing all cheerleaders of changes in schedule, upcoming events, etc.
 - Shall designate the area in which cheerleaders shall stand at basketball, and volleyball games.
 - Administration shall have the final say in all cheerleading activities.

HEAD CHEERLEADER

- The head cheerleader will be chosen during cheerleader tryouts in the spring. A cheerleader must have at least two years of varsity cheer experience before they can try out for head cheerleader.
- Responsibilities:
 1. Plan pep rallies with the help of the squad and approval of the sponsor.
 2. Be responsible for the cheer and chant list at games.
 3. Take charge of all practices, teaching yells, pompom routines, dance routines, and stunts.
 4. Assist sponsors as needed.
 5. Work with sponsors on all major decisions.
 6. Responsible for setting up a schedule for completion of signs and posters.
 7. Show no partiality toward other members of the squad.
 8. A co-captain may be appointed at the discretion of the sponsor.
- If the head cheerleader fails to abide by any of the above rules, the sponsor may appoint a new head cheerleader.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

- Prior to try-outs, parents must attend a general meeting which will outline cheerleading duties and responsibilities. The parents must sign a form accepting financial responsibility for cheerleading expenses.
- Financial Responsibilities:
 1. Purchase uniform, shoes, socks, bloomers, tights, wind suits, pompoms, as deemed for that year.
 2. Camp clothes that have been approved by the sponsor.
 3. Summer Camp.
 4. Cheerleader expenses may be paid by cheerleader fundraisers. All cheerleaders are required to participate in group fundraisers with a minimum number of items sold, since the squad is required to split funds between girls. Cheerleaders are not allowed to have personal go fund me pages set up online, money must be raised for the squad not

individual members online.

5. If there is enough money raised, then all uniform items, camp clothes, as well as summer camp expenses will be paid, or as available toward those items. Each cheerleader is responsible for any remaining balance of cheerleader expenses.
- The cheerleading squad will have all fundraising approved by administration.
 - It is the responsibility of each cheerleader to ensure that all required funds are turned in prior to any deadline. Failure to comply may prevent items from being ordered for that individual.

Cell Phones

No photos/videos are to be taken in the locker rooms. See Demerit Scale

The following constitutes picture/video taking in the locker room.

1. An admission by the student of taking a photo or video in the locker room.
2. The student's parent reports them taking a picture in the locker room.
3. The picture/video is posted by them on their social media site- the district needs to confirm that it was done by the student and not a peer who picked up the phone.
4. Any other evidence that proves the student was responsible for the picture being taken such as holding the phone in the picture of a selfie, or being in the photo and it being posted to social media.

ISS

Students who are assigned ISS will not be eligible to participate in any cheer event or activity that is on the day they are in ISS. Any missed practices will count as an unexcused absence.

Alcohol and Drug Policy

Alcohol and drugs are illegal for student-athletes and detrimental to long term health and athletic success. If it is **proven** that an athlete is using any of these (*on campus or off*) they will face the following disciplinary action in accordance with the Fruitvale Independent School District Student Policy:

First Offense: In order for a student to regain eligibility for extracurricular activities:

1. Parents and students are required to meet with the sponsor and Campus Principal.
2. The student must serve a suspension from all extracurricular activities (tryouts included) for 60 calendar days. The suspension will be reduced to 45 days if the student provides proof of at least 4 sessions **and** 30 days of drug counseling from a certified drug counselor approved by Fruitvale ISD.
3. The student must test at every school-provided opportunity for 1 calendar year. If the student does not test positive for that year, he/she will return to random test status.

Second Offense: In order for a student to regain eligibility for extracurricular activities:

1. Parents and students are required to meet with the sponsor and Campus Principal.
2. The student must serve a suspension from all extracurricular activities (tryouts included) **for 180 days. The suspension will be reduced to 120 days if the student provides proof of drug testing from a certified drug counselor approved by Fruitvale ISD. The student will be required to pass a hair follicle test provided by the district before returning.** The student must test at every school-provided opportunity for the remainder of his education career at Fruitvale ISD.

Third Offense: The student will be suspended from extracurricular activities for the remainder of his/her educational career at Fruitvale ISD.

Cost: The District shall not be responsible for any cost incurred during drug counseling or testing other than that done according to District policy.

Tobacco: *If a cheerleader is caught with or proven to have engaged in the use of tobacco on school premises or at school sponsored activities the student athlete will face the following consequences:*

First Offense: *The cheerleader will face an automatic 1 game suspension.*

Second Offense: *The cheerleader will face an automatic 3 game suspension.*

Third Offense and beyond: *The Cheerleader will face an automatic 5 game suspension.*

Anabolic Steroid Use and Random Steroid Testing: Texas state law prohibits possessing, dispensing, delivering or administering a steroid in a manner not allowed by state law. Texas state law also provides that body building, muscle enhancement or the increase in muscle bulk or strength through the use of a steroid by a person who is in good health is not a valid medical purpose. Texas state law requires that only a licensed practitioner with prescriptive authority may prescribe a steroid for a person. Any violation of state law concerning steroids is a criminal offense punishable by confinement in jail or imprisonment in the Texas Department of Criminal Justice.

Students who participate in UIL athletic activities may be asked to submit to testing for the presence of anabolic steroids in their body by a certified laboratory. The results of the steroid testing may be provided to certain individuals as specified in the UIL Anabolic Steroid Testing Program Protocol which is available on the UIL website at www.uiltexas.org. The results of steroid testing will be held confidential to the extent required by law. Failure to provide accurate and truthful information could subject students to penalties as determined by UIL.

CONDUCT AND DEMERIT SCALE

- The following scale is designed to govern inappropriate behavior for Fruitvale cheerleaders and mascots. This system will be used for the purpose of enforcing cheerleader/mascot policies as well as disciplining a member for infractions. Demerits will affect the member's eligibility to participate in all cheer related activities. The following is a list of infractions and subsequent penalties. While this system does not cover every possible circumstance, it does serve as a strong guideline. The Cheer Sponsor and/or Campus Principal have the responsibility for assigning demerits and have the right to issue demerits for unacceptable situations which are not outlined in the contract. Final decisions regarding demerits will be determined by the Cheer Sponsor and/or Campus Principal.
- From the time of selection until the completion of the following school year, a member will be permitted a maximum of 25 demerits.
- Upon the receipt of 15 demerits, the member will be placed on probation for a three week period. Parents and administrators will be notified. A complete record of demerits, absences, and tardies will be given to both parties.
- Upon receipt of the last 10 demerits (total of 25 or more), the member will be removed from the squad. Parents and administrators will be notified.
- During the probationary period, a member must attend all activities attended by the other cheerleaders and must sit with the sponsor. If the member is not able to make an activity then she will be required to sit out an additional activity or activities depending on the number of absences from assigned cheer activities. She may not participate in any activities but will be required to dress in uniform.

Offense:

Demerits:

Exhibiting conduct unbecoming anywhere	10
Tardiness to practice/game (no call/text)	1
Not dressing out for practice	1
Chewing gum at any cheerleading function	1
Unexcused absence from practice/meeting	3
Unexcused absence from game	5
Unexcused absence from fundraiser	5
Disrespect to sponsor or other staff members	5
Violation of PDA rule at school events	1
Refusal to comply with rules/directions	3
Lack of attention/participation at games and practice	3
Inappropriate media	3
Using cell phone during practice, performance, or game	1
Talking to others on sidelines during games	1
Arguing/inciting conflict within the squad	1
Failure to return to field/court on time	1
Out of school or In school suspension	5
DAEP	15
Wearing jewelry/hair not up at practice/stunts	1
Wearing jewelry/hair not up at game/stunts	1
Wrong uniform/shoes/socks/bow	1
Not having cheer folder at practice	2

Appeal of Dismissal: If a cheerleader is dismissed from the cheer program she has the right to appeal. Written notice of the cheerleader's desire to appeal the decision must be given to the cheer sponsor. The appeal will be heard and decided on by a panel consisting of the Cheer Sponsor, Superintendent, and the campus principal. The cheerleader, and/or their parent/guardian, will be allowed to state his/her case in the hearing.

LETTER JACKETS AND LETTERS

Letter jackets can be earned by serving as a varsity cheerleader for two full years provided no previous letter jacket has been awarded for other activities. The final decision on awarding a letter jacket and/or letter will be made by the sponsor with the approval of the administration.

LENGTH OF DISCIPLINE/PUNISHMENT

Any student removed from cheer will be eligible to apply for reinstatement into the program the following year. Each case will be reviewed by the Sponsor, Campus Principal, and Superintendent.

**Cheerleader/Mascot
Demerit/Merit Agreement
2022 – 2023**

I, _____, have received a copy of the 2021 – 2022 squad rules, late penalties, and demerit system for the Fruitvale JH/HS Cheerleading squads. I have gone over each section with my parents and/or official guardians.

I understand it is my responsibility to attend all squad practices, fundraisers, public appearances, and games. If I cannot attend a practice or squad event, I agree to call my sponsor.

I understand that if I am gone for a school related activity, I will not be penalized as long as I notify my sponsor ahead of time.

I have read the demerit system and understand the penalties involved. I also understand that if I accumulate 25 demerits or more, I will be removed from the squad. I also understand that I will not be refunded any money that I paid to be a cheerleader. If I have questions about the demerits, I understand that I may talk to my sponsor to discuss the situation in question.

The purpose of the demerit system is to maintain a well-disciplined squad. Cheerleaders/Mascots are constantly in the eye of the public and need to present a professional and good sportsmanlike attitude at all times. With both parent and member cooperation, we can make this cheerleading squad the best in the area.

Member Signature

Date

Parent Signature

Date

