

Wortham Jr. High & High School



Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook 2011-2012

(Approved Feb 22, 2011)

Table of Contents

<u>Topic</u>	<u>Page Number</u>
<u>Preamble</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Article I – Purpose</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Article II – Membership</u>	<u>2</u>
<u>Article III – Expectations</u>	<u>3</u>
Section A – School Leadership	
Section B – Physical Functions	
<u>Article IV – Requirements</u>	<u>4</u>
Section A – Participation	
Section B – Academic	
<u>Article V – Qualifications</u>	<u>5</u>
Section A – Mandatory Parent Meeting	
Section B – Candidate Approval	
<u>Article VI – Tryouts</u>	<u>5 -7</u>
Section A – Required Forms	
Section B – Clinic	
Section C – Guidelines	
Section D – Judges	
Section E – Scores	
Section F – Tryout Attire	
<u>Article VII – Procedures</u>	<u>7-8</u>
Section A – Jurisdiction	
Section B – Consequences for Misconduct	
Section C – Conduct Demerits	
<u>Article VIII – Responsibilities of Cheerleaders</u>	<u>8-9</u>
Section A – Leadership Roles	
Section B – Performance Uniforms	
Section C – Personal Presentation	
<u>Article IX – Supplemental Information</u>	<u>9-10</u>
Section A – Financial Expectations	
Section B – Summer Camp	
Section C – Transportation	
<u>Article X – Parent/Coach Communication</u>	<u>10-11</u>
Section A – Communication of the Parent	
Section B – Communication of the Sponsor	
Section C – Appropriate Communication	

Preamble

The Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook guidelines have been developed to outline the expectations and accompanying procedures for the Wortham High School cheerleading program. This handbook was designed and prepared as a basic operating instrument to define and explain qualification and responsibilities of the cheerleading program.

All extracurricular activity participants will be subject to the provisions of the Wortham Independent School District (WISD) Student Code of Conduct, University Interscholastic League (UIL) regulations, and the Side by Side Texas Education Agency's (TEA) guidelines for cheerleading. The TEA and UIL does permit a school district to impose stricter standards than those in the TEA and UIL requirements, but the district shall not impose more lenient standards.

The handbook guidelines and procedures are reviewed annually and revised when warranted by the cheer sponsor(s). The contents of this handbook apply to all cheerleaders and mascots, as the contents currently appear, or may be amended in the future.

Article I - Purpose

The purpose of cheerleading is to create, promote, and uphold school spirit and a positive school environment by participating at athletic events and extracurricular activities as deemed appropriate by the campus administration and sponsor(s). Participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student, while participation in the extracurricular program is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct.

Article II - Membership

Squad membership will exist from tryout date to the last day of the subsequent school year.

Wortham ISD will have two cheerleading squads.

- The Varsity Squad will consist of up to twelve (12) cheerleaders.
 - Tryouts are open to students enrolled in the eighth, ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade during the year of tryouts.
- The Junior High Squad will consist of up to twelve (12) cheerleaders.
 - Tryouts are open to the sixth and seventh grade during the year of tryouts.

Article III - Expectations

Cheerleaders must enjoy learning and performing cheers, chants, and dances. Cheerleaders must promote and maintain relationships with faculty, administration, student body, and work cooperatively with band, athletic teams, and all school organizations.

Section A – School Leadership

1. Cheerleaders are required to abide by rules and follow directions given by school authorities.
2. Cheerleaders will demonstrate determination, hard work, strength, dedication, and self discipline.
3. Cheerleaders will strive to cooperate and be a part of a cohesive unit.
4. Cheerleaders will strive to improve themselves and others through positive interaction and accountability.
5. Cheerleaders will exhibit loyalty to the squad and demonstrate leadership, honor, and integrity.
6. Cheerleaders will demonstrate good sportsmanship and promote school spirit which will be defined by a generosity and genuine concern for others.

Section B – Physical Functions

Cheerleaders must be capable of performing the essential functions for a cheerleader. Functions as listed:

1. Cheerleaders will demonstrate clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm and coordination.
2. Cheerleaders will perform physical moves that may involve jumps, tumbling, dance, balance, agility and upper body strength.
3. Cheerleaders will exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness, and they will be able to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, and in the heat and cold weather.

If, at any time, a cheerleader cannot perform the afore mentioned functions due to medical concerns, written notice from the attending physician outlining limitations is **required** to be turned in to the sponsor to prevent physical harm or injury.

If the cheerleader cannot perform the physical functions for an extended time period, the cheerleader, parents/guardians, sponsor(s), and administration may suggest the participant be placed on the inactive list until released by the attending physician to fully participate.

Article IV – Requirements

Section A – Participation

1. There is a possibility that there will be a cheerleading class (depending upon schedules).
 - The cheerleading activity class credit may serve as a physical education substitute for the state high school graduation plan.
 - The cheerleading class time will allow for rehearsal of routines and planning for future performances.
2. Cheerleaders must attend all scheduled before and after-school practice and performances.
 - Cheerleaders absent from a practice or performance will be subject to discipline, unless extenuating circumstances exist. If a cheerleader fails to attend a game (without a dr.'s note), she will be suspended from participating in the following game.
 - Cheerleaders must attend all summer practices or be subject to discipline.
 - Cheerleaders may be prohibited from activity and may be allowed an excused absence with a doctor's restriction in a written statement submitted to the sponsor.
3. Cheerleaders selected by Wortham High School will cheer at Varsity Football and Basketball games.
 - Cheerleaders are to know all cheers, chants, and routines.
 - Cheerleaders are to remain on the home side for the duration of the game. Cheering will begin at the beginning of the game and continue all the way through, only taking a break at half time. Cheerleaders are expected to be back in their cheerleading position 2 minutes before halftime is over.

Section B – Academic

1. Any cheerleader that receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period or who fails to meet the standards in their Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time set by the WISD UIL Athletic Eligibility.
2. Any cheerleader that becomes ineligible will not be allowed to perform, travel with the squad, or wear his/her uniform for any reason for the term of ineligibility. The sponsor(s) will determine if attendance will be required at an event without participation.
3. Any cheerleader that has been ineligible for more than two six-weeks grading periods during the current school year shall be subject to dismissal from the squad for the remainder of the year.

Article V – Qualifications

Each candidate must be enrolled in and attend school at Wortham High School or Wortham Junior High to be eligible for tryouts.

Section A – Mandatory Parent Meeting

All candidates and their parent/guardian(s) must attend a cheerleader orientation meeting. A sign-in sheet will be used for verification of attendance to this meeting.

1. If a parent is unable to attend the informational meeting due to extenuating circumstances, the parent must name a proxy to take his/her place at the meeting. The parent must make arrangements to obtain all written and verbal information from the cheerleader information meeting.
2. Failure of the parent, guardian or a parent designee to attend will result in the candidate's being ineligible to tryout.

Section B – Candidate Approval

Cheerleader candidates will be limited to those approved by use of the following criteria:

1. Candidates must have passed all classes for the 4th six weeks with a 75 or higher.
2. Candidates must have exhibited appropriate conduct in the classroom and other school and community settings in accordance with the Wortham ISD Student Code of Conduct.
3. Citizenship and discipline records for each candidate will be considered for a measure of the conduct standards. Any student that has been assigned to ISS or AEP, will not be allowed to tryout.
4. Any current cheerleader who has resigned or been removed from the squad the previous year will not be allowed to tryout.

Article VI – Tryouts

Wortham High School and cheerleading sponsors will coordinate, administer, and interpret all aspects of the cheerleading tryouts. All tryout results are declared **final**.

Section A – Required Forms

All candidates must have a current physical form and an emergency card on file to participate in the tryout clinic activities. All required forms must be submitted to the sponsor:

- parent permission form
- handbook acknowledgement form (with student and parent signatures)
- application for tryouts (with all grades and teacher's signatures)

Section B – Clinic

1. A pre-tryout clinic will be conducted during the week preceding the cheerleader tryout.

2. Attendance at the clinic is highly recommended to each candidate for the preparation of tryouts.
3. The pre-tryout clinic will include specific instruction for the routines and skills to be evaluated by judges during the selections process.
4. Any candidate not present at a clinic session is responsible for learning any missed material on his/her own time from other candidates rather than from clinic leaders or the campus coaches.

Section C – Guidelines

1. All candidates must be physically present before the judges and able to compete in order to be eligible.
2. Random numbers will be used to identify candidates during tryouts.
3. Each candidate will perform one group routine and one individual routine. The group routine will consist of one cheer and chant. During the individual routine, the candidate will demonstrate 3 jumps (toe touch, herkie, and a jump of choice), tumbling, spirit, and one cheer and chant of choice. Mascot tryouts will consist of one skit not to exceed 3 minutes.
4. The sponsors will be allowed in the warm-up and holding areas prior to and during the tryout. The sponsor may be present in the tryout session. An appointed staff member from Wortham ISD will tally the scores. The sponsor will not tally scores. The sponsor may tally the teacher evaluation scores.
5. Cheer candidates will be prohibited from using any type of communication device during the designated campus tryout hours. In the event of an emergency situation, staff will be responsible for establishing communication with the parent by use of information provided on the student's emergency card.
6. The tryout will be closed to the public. Parents will be prohibited from having contact with any candidate(s) during designated campus tryout hours with the exception of an emergency situation. Failure to comply may lead to disqualification.

Section D – Judges

Tryouts will be conducted in a closed setting with two judges who will be used for the selection process.

1. The judges for the tryouts will have no affiliation with Wortham ISD.
2. The judges will be briefed about definitions for each of elements in the tryout rubric.
3. All judges' scores and decisions are **FINAL**. NO EXCEPTIONS!

Section E – Scores

1. Cheerleader scores will be a combination of the judges' scores (80%) and teacher evaluations (20%). Cheerleaders will be judged on crowd appeal, tumbling, jumps, an individual routine, and a group cheer.

Section F – Tryout Attire

1. Each cheerleader candidate must provide his/her own shorts, shirt, undergarments, and shoes. Blue shorts and a white shirt (without a design) will be worn for tryouts.
2. Hair must be worn in a pony tail with hair secured away from the face. Hair that is too short to be worn in a pony tail shall be worn “half-up” and away from the face.
3. No glitter make-up/lotions or jewelry.

Article VII – Procedures

The cheer sponsor will manage daily decisions regarding the cheerleader program. Cheer sponsors may develop and enforce standards of behavior that are higher than the district.

Section A - Jurisdiction

1. Cheerleader issues and decisions will be determined by a final resolution made by the sponsor.
2. Cheerleader performances shall be in accordance with the National Federation HS Spirit Handbook.
3. Any conflict between two or more school activities or events will be determined by the sponsor and appropriate campus administrator.

Section B – Consequences for Misconduct

- Cheerleaders are not permitted to use hazing with initiation activities related to any cheerleader function.
- Squad membership may be terminated for unacceptable standards of conduct.
- Dismissal or removal will eliminate membership and the cheerleader will forfeit all privileges of the program. Dismissal from the squad will result in the student being ineligible to tryout for the next year.
- Resignation will be a choice made by the individual member that he/she no longer desires to participate for the duration of the school year. Resignation from the squad will result in ineligibility to tryout for the next year.
- Any member dismissed, removed or resigned of his/her position in the cheerleader program must complete all financial obligations for non-returnable/non-refundable merchandise, and turn in all school-owned uniforms.
- Infractions from the rules at games, practices, and other events will result in demerits, given at the discretion of the sponsor. Five (5) demerits will result in not

performing at a game or scheduled activity; ten (10) will result in a conference between the sponsor(s), cheerleader, and parent/guardian; fifteen (15) will result in automatic dismissal from the squad.

Section C- Conduct Demerits

- Detention/ Office referrals/ Saturday School/ Skipping3 demerits
- Teacher complaints2 demerits
- Insubordination /poor attitude.....4 demerits
- Not properly attired for game/practice.....2 demerits
- Late to game/practice.....2 demerits
- Absence form a game/practice(without excuse).....5 demerits

Article VIII – Responsibilities of Cheerleaders

Being a member of the WHS cheer program is an honor, a responsibility, and a privilege. Due to the level of the visibility of campus cheerleaders, it is imperative that squad members set a good example for peers.

Section A - Leadership Roles

A captain and co-captain will be selected for the squad. They will work closely with the sponsors for the duration of their membership.

1. A squad captain/co-captain will be required to commit time for additional responsibilities of the cheerleading program and will be expected to be a positive role model, serving as a community ambassador of the program. Captains will also be responsible for the planning of pep rallies and events.
2. Captain and co-captain will be selected based on tryout scores (50%) and squad vote (50%).
 - To be selected for Varsity captain or co-captain, the candidate must be a current sophomore or junior.

Section B – Performance Uniforms

1. Uniforms will be considered school property and will be worn only when instructed by the sponsor.
2. Uniforms will be worn by squad members only.
3. Uniforms must be cleaned and turned in by the date set by the sponsors.
4. Cheerleaders will be responsible for any missing or damaged uniform pieces and he/ she will be expected to pay reimbursement or replacement costs.
5. Cheerleaders must ensure the uniform is clean and in good condition before each performance.

Section C – Personal Presentation

1. Cheerleaders will wear hair and fingernails as designated by the sponsor.

2. Cheerleaders will not chew gum or eat during practice, pep rally, game or performance, unless permission is granted by the sponsor.
3. Cheerleaders may not wear jewelry while in uniform, practicing, or performing.
4. Cheerleaders may not wear navel rings, tongue jewelry, and any other type of body piercing.
5. Cheerleaders may not wear bandage coverings, a spacer or retainer inserted into a pierced area.

Article IX – Supplemental Information

Parents or guardians must purchase necessary uniform parts and provide money for other costs involved in being a member.

Section A – Financial Expectations

1. A uniform will be selected by the cheerleaders and approved by the sponsor for the upcoming season. WISD will furnish the uniform for each cheerleader, not including shoes.
2. All cheerleaders will be required to participate in fundraising activities to benefit the squad and alleviate individual costs.
3. There will be an out-of-pocket expense required for cheerleader related activities, clothing, and equipment. All payment on clothing will be due prior to summer camp. Fitting for uniforms and camp clothes will be April 12 at 3:30pm. Each cheerleader is required to be present.

Section B- Summer Camps

1. Summer camps are required for all squad members. Summer camp for 2011 will be July 25-28 at Great Wolf Lodge in Grapevine. The \$325 for camp includes a hotel room, all meals, a water park pass, and coaching by top college cheerleaders. Efforts will be made by the cheerleaders to obtain sponsors for camp.
2. The first deposit of \$100 will be due NO LATER than May 27. The remaining \$225 will be due June 27.
3. All travel and expenses related to attending a summer camp will be paid through fund-raising activities and individual payments.

Section C –Transportation

1. Transportation arrangement to performances will be determined by the sponsor.

2. Cheerleaders will abide by all school transportation rules, procedures and safety guidelines, as outlined in the Wortham ISD Student Handbook.
3. Cheerleaders are required to ride to and from events with the squad, unless written permission from the parent/guardian is received no less than 24 hours prior to departure, and approved by the appropriate administration. The parent must also sign the cheerleader out before the squad leaves the event.

Article X – Communication

Parents have the right to know and understand the expectations placed on them and their children. Sponsors have the right to know if parents have a concern; a parent should discuss concerns with the sponsors **at the appropriate time and place**.

Section A - Communication of the Parent

Communication sponsors should expect from parents:

1. Concerns regarding a son/daughter expressed directly to the sponsor **at the appropriate time and place**.
2. Specific concerns with regard to the sponsor's philosophy and/or expectations.
3. Notification of any schedule conflicts to the sponsor.
4. Issues appropriate for discussion with the sponsor and/or school administrator is encouraged:
 - Mental and physical treatment of a student.
 - Improvements on which a cheerleader/mascot may need to focus.
 - Student behavior.
 - Student safety.
5. Issues **not** appropriate for discussion with a sponsor:
 - Squad selection of cheers, chants, stunts or elements of a performance.
 - Any situation that deals with other student athletes or squad members.

Section B – Communication of the Sponsor

Communication parents should expect from their student's sponsor:

1. Requirements the sponsor has for his/her student and the squad.
2. Locations and times of practices and performances.
3. Squad requirements of fees, special equipment, uniforms, squad rules, travel arrangements and off-season expectations.
4. Procedures in the event his/her student becomes injured during a performance or practice.

Section C – Appropriate Communication Between Parent, School and Sponsor

There are situations that may require a conference to promote resolution of the issue. If a parent has a concern to discuss with the sponsor, the following procedures should be followed:

1. Call the front office to set up an appointment with the sponsor.
2. Outline and define objectives for a meeting and stick to discussing facts only.
3. **Do not confront the sponsor** before, during or after a practice or performance. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalate it.
4. Do not attempt to enter the cheerleading class without prior written permission from the Campus Principal or his/her designee. Parents and guardians are restricted to campus visits under the guidelines for campus visitors.
5. If the meeting with the sponsor did not provide a satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian should call the front office to request a meeting with the sponsor and an administrator.

This handbook is a living document. If an incident should arise that is not specifically addressed in this document, the sponsor and/or school administrator will address the incident on an individual basis. In addition, in order to benefit the cheerleading program, the sponsor and/or administrators reserve the right to revise this handbook at any time.

