

MOUNTLAKE TERRACE HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADER'S HANDBOOK

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Membership on a cheer squad offers a unique opportunity for personal growth, leadership, and involvement in diverse activities. Members of the cheer squad are committed to the highest level of athleticism, performance, self-discipline, respect for the school and others, personal exemplary conduct and the performance of all responsibilities related to the pursuit of school spirit and pride. Cheerleader's model continued ability to balance academic requirements with extra-curricular and personal activities.

**THIS HANDBOOK IS INTENDED AS A GUIDE AND SHOULD
NOT BE CONSIDERED ALL INCLUSIVE. THE COACH
RESERVES THE DISCRETION TO ADDRESS ANY
RELEVANT CONCERNS AS IT ARISES.**

A CHEER SEASON RUNS FROM APRIL THROUGH
THE SPRING SPORTS ASSEMBLY THE FOLLOWING YEAR.

MTHS CHEERLEADING GOALS:

- Encourage school spirit, unity, and pride at MTHS
- Develop lifelong athletic and leadership skills
- Promote physical and mental development
- Cheer at varsity volleyball, football, wrestling, girls basketball and boys basketball games
- Provide continued and varied supports for all athletic programs
- Compete at the WIAA State Cheerleading Championship
- Participate in, support, and encourage ASB events
- Uphold MTHS ASB program expectations
- Support and perform at pep and recognition assemblies
- Set an example of good behavior and sportsmanship at all times (WHETHER IN UNIFORM OR NOT)
- Perform service to MTHS and the surrounding community

MTHS CHEER PROGRAM BEHAVIOR STANDARDS

- All members must sign and adhere to the activity/athletic code of MTHS and the Edmonds School district. This is a year-round contract. Violation of this may result in immediate removal from the squad.
- Be committed to the highest level of athleticism, performance, self-discipline, respect for the school and others and personal responsibility.
- Always promote good sportsmanship by way of example.
- Adhere to all school, district, league, and state rules.
- Show courtesy and respect to all faculty members, squad members, visiting teams, competitors, coaches, and officials
- Members must cooperate with all faculty members, squad members, game official and coaches.
- While in uniform public displays of affection are never considered appropriate, especially at games or in school.
- Proper appearances always required, with clothing appropriate to the occasion.
- Cheerleaders must display appropriate behavior in class, including being on time, not skipping, disrespectful, not being defiant, or cheating.

NOTE:

Cheerleaders must be dedicated to promoting spirit, enthusiasm, and positive attitude through example. All members must realize that the manner in which they conduct themselves, in or out of uniform, directly reflects on the entire team and the school. Consistent enforcement of rules and regulations is necessary to ensure the safety and general well-being of each cheerleader. Participation in spirit leading is voluntary and is a privilege, not a right. This may be revoked by the coach or school personnel when a cheerleader violates the rules and regulations. While every attempt will be made to make consequences for rule violations fair and consistent, each case of discipline is reviewed individually. The coach, with the assistance of the administration if necessary, has the final decision in any discipline situation.

1. Uniforms:

- Cheerleaders are not allowed to make any individual deviations (alterations, embroidery, etc.) to team apparel without prior approval from coach.
- A cheerleader may not wear a uniform to a non-cheer sanctioned event.
- Cheerleaders will not loan out any piece of their uniform (including camp wear) to anyone.
- Cheerleaders are required to wear their uniforms or team designed outfits to school on game days.
- Cheerleaders are responsible to know which uniforms are worn to which event, which accessories are added to the uniform, and what the coach supports for dress up days.

Consequences- *If a cheerleader does not have a part of the uniform/accessories that are required to be worn at a game/event, they will sit with the coach for the remainder of the game/event and will not be able to cheer.*

2. Selection of captains:

Captains are rotated at the coach's discretion and traditionally surrounding athletic seasons (fall/winter). Consideration to become a Captain requires the highest display of character, commitment and responsibility. Candidates for the captains promote positive and healthy lifestyles through day and evening, week and weekend choices. It is the coach's discretion through on-going observation if a rotation of captains is best practice for the squad. Candidates for serious consideration will be reviewed by peers for character, strong morals, trustworthiness and persistence to sustain a dynamic high-energy program.

- Captains must have served a minimum of one year on the squad
- Captains are nominated by the squad and selected by the Coach.

3. Injuries/illnesses

- Any illness or injury shall be immediately reported to the coach and/or school athletic trainer.
- If an injury or illness incapacitates a squad member, she will be allowed to return to participation only after showing written clearance from a doctor, as well as being cleared from the school's athletic trainer.

4. Healthy Lifestyle Policy:

- The Mountlake Terrace High School Cheerleading program is committed to promoting and fostering healthy lifestyles and eating habits for the squad members.
- Cheerleaders must be skilled in several athletic abilities, such as balance, strength, stamina, power and flexibility. Therefore, the standards of the MTHS cheerleading program are comparable to those that any other sports team would adopt in order to protect the health and safety of its participants.
- The most important part of this policy is the goal of teaching squad members nutritious eating habits. "Crash" diets will not be tolerated, and persons engaging in such conduct will be subject to disciplinary action. Squad members must realize the effect that their nutritional habits have on their performance and energy, and that their health is ultimately more important than attaining an unrealistic body shape or size.

DRUG, ALCOHOL AND TOBACCO POLICY

As stated earlier, cheerleaders are expected to promote a positive image and example to the student body at MTHS. This expectation is foremost when it comes to tobacco, drug, and/or alcohol use. Cheerleaders are highly visible members of the Mountlake Terrace High School community and individual member actions and behaviors are under constant observation. Absolutely while in uniform, but also while not in uniform, MTHS cheerleaders are known, subject to scrutiny, and can easily be the object of criticism for their behavior or actions, in particular, for participating in inappropriate activities. Regardless of parental beliefs or student policies, each cheerleader must comply 100% to remain active and eligible on the squad. Therefore, members of the squad shall adhere to the following rules:

- Cheerleaders shall not possess or use tobacco products, alcoholic beverages and/or controlled substances.
- Cheerleaders must leave immediately from a party, function, location (parking lots, etc.) or events where the aforementioned items are present and noticed by a squad member.

Consequences- Cheerleaders who violate these rules shall be subject to serious disciplinary measures up to and including immediate dismissal from the squad. Any photos or video displaying cheerleaders in inappropriate locations, etc. shall warrant progressive discipline measures as this activity is 100% unbecoming of an MTHS Cheerleader and is not condoned by the coach and the ideals of our program. Please be mindful- you damage your own standing on the squad, impact the work load of the remaining group, the reputation of the entire group, and potentially place your parent(s) to purchase 100% of your uniform cost if you are removed from the squad at any time for D&A infractions.

ACADEMIC ELEGIBILITY

- Candidates must be attending a minimum of 5 classes.
- Cheerleaders are expected to be passing all classes with a C- or higher. Grades will be checked once a week by the coach, in addition to formal grading periods every 3 weeks by the Athletics Department.
- If a cheerleader has below a C- in any class she is academically ineligible for participation, and the following guidelines will be implemented:

Consequences- A cheerleader has one week from the date grade reports are received to bring one or more of her failing grades up to C- and have her grade report cleared by the Athletics office. During this time, the cheerleader will spend extra time in each class they are failing. If he/she is not eligible after one week, he/she is suspended from cheering at events until grades are brought up to C- or higher and he/she is cleared by the Athletics office. He/she will be responsible for finding a replacement for all events she is scheduled to cheer at during this time. If a cheerleader has not improved his/her grades within 5 weeks of grade report date, he/she will be removed from the squad.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

1. **School Absences.** According to MTHS athletic code, students who are absent in ANY of their classes during the school day are automatically ineligible to participate in any/all practices and performances that day (This includes parent excused absences (i.e., sleeping in, sick part of the day, etc.)).
 - If you have an emergency doctor appointment or court-date on a practice/game/event day, you are required to bring a note from the doctor to the MTHS Athletics Coordinator immediately upon return to school. This will clear the athlete for practice/game/event. Parent note alone cannot clear a cheerleader to perform (this must go through Activities Coordinator during the regular school day before an evening event.)
 - Please remember- classroom absences and tardies are determined by MTHS teachers and it is the obligation of each cheerleader to know teacher classroom policies.
2. **Practice Absences.** All absences from cheer practice must be cleared through the coach prior to practice. Regardless of age, a parent approval (note, email) is required for excused practice absence consideration—and should be submitted 24 hours in advance of the absence.
 - Absences due to work schedules are NOT excused. Jobs must work around the cheer squad schedule. The role of a cheerleader requires flexibility as events arise and cannot always be anticipated 2-4 weeks in advance. Please understand that missing any coach-scheduled practice for work is unexcused.

- Absences due to other lessons, other teams, other MTHS Activity groups, etc. are NOT excused. It is your responsibility to learn any missed material prior to your return. Failure may warrant removal from relevant event/game/performance.
- Summer practices allow for 2 unexcused absences, once exceeded the cheerleader is ineligible to participate in fall games at coach's discretion.

Consequences- *An unexcused absence from practice the week before a game/event/performance will result in non-participation in that scheduled game, event or performance. You must still attend, but will sit with the coach.*

A missed excused practice where new material is taught will warrant, at coach's discretion, a cheerleader's suspension from the next event where the new material is performed (i.e., learned dance for half time, etc.)

*You may only miss THREE PRACTICES PER SEASON, **excused or unexcused**. Only under extenuating circumstances will expectations be made to this policy- at the discretion of the coach. They may include illness, family emergency, exceptional school function, etc.*

Exceeding the limit of practice absences (3) may result in suspension from the squad for the remainder of the season- including any performances or events that would take place during that time. Suspension from the squad requires the cheerleader to still attend but remain on close proximity of the coach. Suspension from the season may make the cheerleader ineligible for lettering at the conclusion of the year.

3. **Game Absences**

- You may miss no more than 2 games/events per season. It is the responsibility of each cheerleader to let coach know BEFORE the day of the game that you will not be able to attend. Absences from the event also must include parent note sent to the coach via email or note.
- If you arrive at a game or event and are too ill to cheer, this will not count towards your three allowed absences.

Consequences- *An unexcused absence from a game will result in non-participation from the next scheduled event or performance (still attend, but sit with coach). Exceeding the limit of game absences (2) will result in suspension from the squad for the remainder of the season- including any performances or events that would take place during the season. Suspension from the season may affect cheerleader's ability to letter at the conclusion of the year.*

INVOLVEMENT AT FUNCTIONS/EVENTS

In addition to games, practices, and pep assemblies/rallies, the coach may choose to have the cheer squad at a number of public relations and /or fundraising events each year to support and build relationships within our MTHS community. Cheerleaders are required to EQUALLY participate in all MTHS, Coach approved, fundraisers/events.

- As members of MTHS ASB, cheerleaders are required to participate in ASB activities such as Link Crew Training and Orientation Day, ASB fall retreat, ASB committees, community outreach, lunch activities and ASB meetings.

Consequence- *Failure to attend an ASB event (ASB meetings, retreat, etc.), or any other cheer related event makes the individual cheerleader responsible suspended from participating in the next game/event/assembly.*

SOCIAL MEDIA

Playing, competing, and representing Mountlake Terrace High School (MTHS) is a privilege. Student leaders and student-athletes at MTHS are held in the highest regard and are seen as role models in the community. Student leaders and athletes have the responsibility to portray their team, their school and themselves in a positive manner at all times.

Similar to comments made in person, Coaches of the MTHS Cheer Squad will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online, such as:

- Derogatory language or remarks that may harm my teammates or coaches; other student athletes, teachers, or coaches; and student-athletes, coaches, or representatives of other schools, including comments that may disrespect my opponents.
- Incriminating photos or statements depicting violence; hazing; sexual harassment; full or partial nudity; inappropriate gestures; vandalism, stalking; underage drinking, selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors.
- Creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person.

- o Indicating knowledge of an unreported school or team violation—regardless if the violation was unintentional or intentional

GENERAL RULES

Practices:

1. Cheerleaders are required at all regular practices scheduled by the coach
2. Cheerleaders must arrive to practice on time having already changed, gone to the bathroom, etc.
3. Hair should be completely up prior to beginning of practice.
4. Dress appropriately for practice; shorts, shirts, cheer shoes, poms (NO SLIPPERS!)
5. Jewelry is not to be worn during practice- this includes any and all piercing.
6. No gum allowed at any practice.
7. You must come with a water bottle to every practice.
8. Practices are closed to others.
9. Positive attitudes are required at all times! You must be willing to work and cooperate. Do not bring your problems with you to practice. Be willing to do what is necessary- no moaning, complaining or whining. Be an active listener and accept constructive criticism.
 - a. Bad attitudes and/or low effort can result in being sent home, and will count as a missed practice.
10. COMMUNICATION WITH THE COACH IS KEY!
11. Cell phones are not allowed to be on or answered during practices.
12. An MTHS Cheer coach must be present any time a cheerleader is stunting.
13. No cheerleader will be allowed to participate in any aspect of stunting with long natural nails or artificial nails.

Games:

1. Practice rules apply.
2. Cheerleaders arrive at the game site ready and prepared in complete uniform. This includes wearing spandex, white socks, cheer shoes, poms, warm-ups, hair in a ponytail or braid and bow in hair.
3. All cheerleaders must wear the same things during an event. If cheerleaders decide to take off warmups, etc, they must do it all together at a quarter, off to the side not in front of people.
4. Only natural colored nail polish is permitted.
5. Only natural colored hair is permitted.
6. Cheerleaders are required to arrive at the time specified by the coach.
 - a. If a cheerleader is late to warmups, it is at the coach's discretion if and when they participate.
 - b. If a cheerleader missed warmups, they will not participate.
7. Cheerleaders must know all cheers and routines for the game and be familiar with the game plan.
 - a. A cheerleader will be pulled if they are not prepared.
8. Socializing with friends, players, or other cheerleaders while the game is in progress is not allowed!
9. Cheerleaders do not engage negatively with fans, challenge, or argue. Cheerleaders who respond to fan critique may warrant removal from the game.
10. Cheers must be performed on an ongoing basis with energy and personality.
11. Stunting, if applicable, must occur at least 4 times per half in a cheer, chant or on own.
12. Cheerleaders should not check or use individual cell phones at any time once arrived at site or event. If there is an emergency, parents should contact coach.
13. Please be mindful- people are watching you. Cheerleaders must not do anything that would distract from the game.

***More specific rules may apply. We also follow WIAA and NFHS Rules ***