

**DEER PARK HIGH SCHOOL**  
**CHEERLEADER/MASCOT**  
**HANDBOOK**  
**2014-2015**

## I. Cheerleader/Mascot Selection

### A. Program Organization

1. Varsity Squad—May consist of a combination of sophomores, juniors and seniors with a maximum placement of two sophomores.
2. Junior Varsity Squad—May consist of a combination of sophomores and juniors
3. Freshmen Squad—Will be comprised of freshmen only
4. Mascot—May be a junior or senior
5. Competition Team—All grade levels eligible. Placement on this inner-organization team is at coach discretion.

### B. Students must meet the following criteria to be considered in the selection process for both cheerleader and mascot:

1. Students may have no more than **one** six-week grade below 70 during the current school year. Any exceptions pertain to advanced (PAP/AP) classes and must follow district policies and UIL guidelines. Students must also have an overall grade average of 75 from the semester grades during the fall semester.
2. No DAEP assignment during the school year.
3. Students must be enrolled in a Deer Park ISD school at least six weeks prior to the final day of squad selection.

### C. Procedure for selection

1. Cheerleaders will be selected from eligible candidates and placed on squads by the high school cheer coaches.
2. The following information may be gathered and evaluated to help determine selection and placement on any Deer Park High School cheer squad
  - a) Discipline Record
  - b) Skills
  - c) Additional Criteria (practice attendance, promptness, etc)

### D. The selection practices are closed. Only coaches and those persons necessary for the smooth running of the practices will be allowed in the practice area.

### E. Skills evaluations to be completed during the last two days of the selection process. May include the following:

1. Cheerleader (Each cheerleader candidate will be evaluated by the same criteria)
  - a) tumbling
  - b) advanced jumps
  - c) cheer
  - d) dance

Changes to tryout procedure and selection is at the coach's discretion.

2. Mascot

- a) Animation and character development
- b) Use props and music
- c) Creativity

3. Selection practice clothing

- a. Practice attire for cheerleader candidates will be coach's selection of black shorts, black pull over shirt (no printing allowed), white no show socks, and white tennis shoes. No jewelry of any kind and no nail color will be allowed. Hair should be secured away from face in a ponytail with a white bow.
- b. Practice attire for mascot candidates will be coach's selection of black shorts, black pull over shirt (no printing allowed), white no show socks, and white tennis shoes. No jewelry of any kind and no nail color will be allowed. Hair should be secured away from face in a ponytail with a white bow. Mascot candidates will spend time during each practice in the mascot costume and will perform his/her skills test in costume.

F. In the event an injury prohibits a participant from completing all steps to the skills tryout process, the coach will have discretion to determine if an alternate evaluation of skills will be used.

## II. Membership

A. Cheerleaders will be evaluated each year for continued placement on squad. All criteria must be met prior to tryouts.

1. All fees paid up to date each year.
2. No probationary actions taken against him/her at any time during his/her term of placement on any Deer Park High School cheer squad.
3. Meets all selection eligibility requirements and completes all selection procedures
4. Attends each of the selection practices and assists senior cheerleaders in teaching/helping new candidates.
5. Receives recommendation of head cheer coach.

B. Cheerleaders will be placed on three to six weeks of probation upon becoming academically ineligible by making a grade below 70 for a six-week grade or having an overall six-week grade average below 80. A cheerleader who receives a second failing grade or has an overall six week grade average below 80 for a second time at any time during his/her term of service will be removed from the squad. Any exceptions pertain to advanced (PAP/AP) classes only, in which case, the coach will evaluate each occurrence separately and follow all district policies and guidelines.

C. The term of service shall begin immediately following cheerleader selection and continue *through* the following school year. Cheerleading terms may, therefore, overlap. Dismissal from a

first term will result in dismissal from the new term as well if this occurs after selection postings, but before the end of the school year.

D. Participation in all cheerleading activities and moneymaking projects is required unless otherwise specified by the coach. Repeated failure to participate in assigned activities, duties, or responsibilities will be grounds for disciplinary action.

#### E. Practice Responsibilities

1. Practice will be required each day during a specified class period. Students in this class must fulfill specific requirements, which will be evaluated by the coach.
2. After-school practices, summer practice sessions, and attendance at summer camp are required. Time specifications for these will be given as school and camp schedules become available to the coach. These are mandatory for all cheerleaders upon notification of these dates and times.
3. Group practices may not be held without the coach's permission and/or presence.

#### F. Attendance

1. Every cheerleader must be present for all practice, games, pep rallies, etc. Only written requests (submitted by absence request form) approved by the coach in advance will be accepted as excused unless an emergency situation occurs preventing prior notification.
2. If a cheerleader misses practice for a pep rally or other activity, she/he may lose his/her position in routine or game.
3. A cheerleader may not be absent from school more than two class periods on the day of a game or activity and still participate. He/she must also be present during 7<sup>th</sup> period athletics on any game day in order to cheer for that contest. The coach must approve any exceptions to this.
4. Work is not a legitimate excuse for missing an activity.
5. Excused or unexcused absences from cheerleading activities/games in excess of four may be grounds for probation or dismissal.

#### G. Grading

1. Cheerleaders will begin each six weeks with a 100 and may lose points due to not meeting class requirements such as but not limited to the following:
  - a) Wearing jewelry
  - b) Hair not tied back
  - c) Improper practice clothes
  - d) Tardy
  - e) Late with material, money, etc.
  - f) Leaving class/practice area without permission
  - g) Disrespect to coach, teacher, other school employees, teammates, other cheerleaders, or students from other schools
  - h) Not following directions

- i) Chewing gum
- j) Not meeting standards set for daily activities in class
- k) Failure to complete class assignment
- l) truancy
- m) missing a game/activity or practice unexcused
- n) not wearing proper uniform
- o) appearing in a public place in uniform without permission
- p) wearing nail polish
- q) wearing uniform in need of cleaning or repair (including socks and shoes)
- r) profanity (verbal or written)
- s) conduct not befitting a lady or gentleman
- t) unsportsmanlike conduct to other teams or squads
- u) Public display of affection in uniform
- v) eating anything in game uniform without permission
- w) failure to cheer/show spirit at games
- x) failure to notify coaches of academic progress reports or school discipline

#### H. Injuries

1. Because the physical demands of cheerleading are great, if participation in normal cheerleading activities might endanger the health or wellness of the individual because of a physical condition or injury, then a physician's release will be required before that individual will be allowed to participate in cheerleading activities.
2. Cheerleaders must have a physician's excuse to be excused from an activity or exercise due to illness or injury. This excuse must specify the extent of the activities to be avoided and the length of time the excuse is in effect.
3. Cheerleaders who are excused from a certain activity or exercise will not be allowed to cheer until a physician's release has been turned in to the coach.
4. Any student who requires the use of a bracing device to participate in any cheerleading activity or practice must have physician instructions for the use of that device on file with the squad cheer coach. Information must include the original injury information that necessitates the use of the brace and directives from the physician as to rehabilitation of the injury and length of time the brace should be worn.

#### I. Expenses and Uniforms

1. Summer camp fees are to be paid by each cheerleader/mascot.
2. The school provides at least three uniforms for each cheerleader (not including shoes, socks, briefs, hair ribbons, and warm-ups). All other attire will be purchased by the individual cheerleader/mascot.
3. Each person will purchase shorts/shirts outfits to be worn at camp and during practice along with a sweatshirt and warm-up. The coach will approve these choices.
4. Each squad will be dressed alike at all public cheerleading appearances and practices. This includes hair, ribbons, socks, etc.
5. Competition expenses will be the responsibility of the cheerleaders/mascot. A coach must supervise cheerleaders in order to enter any competition representing Deer Park High School. Decisions as to entering competitions will be made by the coaches. Certain

demonstrations of ability are required as a prerequisite to placement on this team. Additional practice time will be necessary. Although competition is an optional activity, it is recognized that competition is an opportunity for cheerleaders to receive recognition for their skills.

6. Some cheerleading equipment such as pom-poms, megaphones, rain gear, and various pieces of uniforms will be purchased through the cheerleading account as the balance of that account allows. Each student is responsible for a yearly rental fee for these items and must be returned in good condition each year or a replacement fee will be assessed.

7. The mascot's costume will be provided by the cheerleading organization.

8. The care of uniforms and costume will be the responsibility of each cheerleader/mascot.

9. No items ordered on behalf of a cheerleader will be issued until the student has paid all purchasing expenses.

10. All cheerleaders must have balances paid in full in order to tryout for the following year cheer squads.

### **III. Cheerleader Officers**

A. Each squad will have a captain. Other designated officers are at the discretion of the coach. The coach will select all officers. To apply for Varsity captain, a student must have completed at least one year on the Varsity squad.

B. The captain will act as the leader of the squad. He/She should maintain control of the group while practicing and performing, maintain discipline of the squad by keeping and reporting demerits to the coach, determine a uniform and pole duty schedule to be approved by the coach, decide what cheers and chants to perform, carry out any requests of the coach, and report any rule violations to the coach.

C. The co-captain should assist the captain in her/his duties, carry out any requests of the coach, and act as the leader of the squad in the absence of the captain.

D. Other designated offices will be selected by the coach from the Varsity officer candidates to assist in the activities necessary for the smooth running of the cheerleading organization.

E. Any officer who fails to carry out her/his duties may be relieved of office at the discretion of the coach.

F. An officer who accumulates five demerits will be removed from her/his office.

### **IV. Conduct**

A. Students who participate in extracurricular activities may be suspended or removed from the activity if they engage in inappropriate conduct related to Internet or other public media distribution or exposure.

1. A student may be suspended or removed from participation if that student has knowingly and voluntarily allowed himself or herself to be photographed resulting in an image that is considered lewd by community standards or that depicts behavior that is sexually explicit or suggestive or illegal as determined by the administration and that image becomes accessible to the public irrespective of the means by which it became accessible to the public.

2. A student may be suspended or removed from participation if that student has an Internet site such as, but not limited to, MySpace or FaceBook that contains any images that are considered lewd by community standards or that depicts behavior that is sexually explicit or suggestive or illegal as determined by the administration.
3. A student may be suspended or removed from participation if that student sends any text messages or images that are considered lewd by community standards or that depicts behavior that is sexually explicit or suggestive or illegal as determined by the administration.

## B. Games

1. Cheerleaders will meet at a designated place and at a designated time for each activity and/or practice.
2. Cheerleaders must remain in the cheering area (on the court or field) unless given permission to leave by the coach.
3. Cheerleaders will sit as a group during half time with no outsiders within the group. Water will be provided for each cheerleader during half time of each assigned football game and designated basketball games.
4. There will be no gum chewing or eating in uniform.
5. Cheerleaders may go to the restroom only during half time but must be on the field or court during Escort/Band performance and/or with two minutes left on the half-time clock (This applies to all sporting events).
6. When a van or bus is provided, cheerleaders must ride to the game with the group. If a cheerleader misses the van/bus, she/he will not be allowed to cheer. Cheerleaders must return to the school in the van/bus provided unless prior arrangements are made between the coach and the parents. These arrangements are allowed for special circumstances only.

## C. Conduct in General - Cheerleaders must display appropriate behavior both in and out of school.

1. Probationary status (benching) will be given for the following reasons. (Length of probation will last from one to six weeks.)
  - a) Any six-weeks grade below 70 (three to six weeks probation).
  - b) Overall six-weeks grade average below 80 (three to six weeks probation).
  - c) Accumulation of 10 demerits (three weeks probation)
  - d) Disrespect toward coaches, faculty, school personnel, or school property (length of probation at discretion of the coach).
  - e) Truancy and/or suspension (length of probation at discretion of the coach).
  - f) CIA assignment (length of probation at discretion of the coach).
  - g) Any action that violates the spirit or intent of the cheerleader code of conduct.
2. Dismissal may occur for the following reasons:
  - a) A second six-weeks grade below 70 in a single school year.
  - b) DAEP assignment
  - c) Consuming or possessing alcohol, cigarettes, or any controlled substance
  - d) Disrespect toward coaches, faculty, school personnel, or school property
  - e) Activity or behavior that tarnishes the reputation of the organization.
  - f) Excessive (more than 4) absences from cheerleading activities or games.
  - g) Any action that results in a second three to six weeks of probation



## **V. The Mascot**

A. The mascot will be expected to follow all rules and conduct guidelines described for cheerleaders. She/He must attend all cheerleading practices unless otherwise informed. Participation in class will be determined on an individual basis. Mascots must adhere to the following additional guidelines:

1. Stay in character at all times.
2. Exaggerate motions and stay in constant motion.
3. Be a representative of school spirit not a “show off”
4. Do not talk in costume or break character.
5. Do not dress or undress in front of the audience or remove the mascot head or any other part of the costume (including hooves) in public.
6. Do not permit others to wear the costume.
7. Keep the costume clean at all times; the mascot will be held responsible for the costume’s condition.
8. Breaks will be permitted if desired for ten minutes at the beginning of the second and fourth quarters and during the half. Check with the coach in charge before taking these breaks.
9. Do not use obscene gestures or antagonize the other team/school.
10. Take advantage of every situation to *encourage* the crowd.
11. Do not allow anyone to touch the costume head.
12. Do not congregate with fans or children during any portion of a game. The mascot can engage in public relations only at the beginning or end of game or during half time.
13. The mascot will stay near the squad at all times during the games.

## **VI. General Information**

A. Demerits may be worked off with physical activity assigned by the coach up to five demerits for regular members and three demerits for officers. Demerits must be worked off within one week of date given. If two demerits are given within one week, only one may be worked off and member will still be benched from next scheduled activity.

B. If for any reason it becomes impossible for a cheerleader to live up to the provisions of the code of ethics, or cheerleading handbook, she/he may relinquish her/his position on the squad through a written resignation, which should be submitted to the coach at the earliest opportunity.

C. Should there be any questions regarding the contents of this handbook, please direct it to the attention of the coaches. The interpretation of these rules is the sole right of the coach.

# Handbook Acknowledgement For DPHS Cheerleader Candidates and Parents

## **Candidate:**

I have read the Deer Park High School Cheerleader/Mascot Handbook in its entirety and understand and agree to adhere to the rules under which I will be held accountable and the procedures I will be expected to follow if selected as a member of the DPHS Cheer Organization.

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Candidate Name (Print)

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Candidate Signature

Date

## **Parent(s)**

I (We) have read the Deer Park High School Cheerleader/Mascot Handbook in its entirety and understand the rules under which my (our) child would be held accountable and the procedures he/she would be expected to follow if selected as a member of the DPHS Cheer Organization and agree to abide by those rules.

I (We) agree to make known to the cheer coaches any questions or concerns I (we) have regarding these rules and procedures *prior* to final squad selection knowing that to address procedural concerns *after* selections have been made puts undue stress on both the student and the organization.

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Parent(s) Name(s) (Print)

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Parent(s) Signature(s)

Date

Parents and Cheerleader Candidates,

Please carefully read the Cheerleader/Mascot Handbook in its entirety. Sign and date the acknowledgement page of the handbook and return to cheer sponsors by Wednesday, February 20, 2013.

Thank You,

Cheerleading Staff