

**DEER PARK HIGH SCHOOL**

**CHEERLEADER/MASCOT**

**HANDBOOK**

**2024-2025**

## I. Cheerleader/Mascot Selection

### A. Program Organization

1. Varsity Squad—will consist of a combination of sophomores, juniors and seniors with an optional placement of sophomores at coaches' discretion.
2. Junior Varsity Squad—will consist of a combination of sophomores and juniors.
3. Freshmen Squad—will be comprised of freshmen only.
4. Mascot—may be a sophomore, junior, or senior.
5. Competition Team (UIL & NCA)—all grade levels eligible. There is a tryout process for placement on these inner-organization teams and is the coaches' decision.

### 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** nine-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 assignments
3. No more than 3 days of ISS.
4. Students must be enrolled in a Deer Park ISD school at least six weeks prior to the final day of squad selection.
5. Students must be in good standings with any other DPISD school organization/program.

### C. Procedure for selection

1. Cheerleaders/Mascot will be selected from eligible candidates and placed on squads by the high school cheer coaches.
2. The following information will be gathered and evaluated to help determine selection and placement on any Deer Park High School cheer squad.
  - a. Grades/Discipline Record/current cheerleader status
  - b. Skills
  - c. Additional Criteria (character, practice attendance, promptness, etc.)
  - d. Infractions, in or out of school, in discipline and attendance will result in a deduction for each infraction being deducted from total score. This includes infractions accrued while a current member, as well as disciplinary issues dealt with through school administration
    - General Discipline infractions resulting in a warning/detention – 1 point each
    - ISS Assignments – 3 points for each day assigned to ISS (more than 3 total assigned days results in ineligibility to tryout)
    - DAEP Assignment – Ineligible to tryout

### 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. No parents are allowed in the tryout/practice area.

- E. Skills evaluations to be completed throughout the week of the selection process. May include the following:
1. Cheerleader (Each cheerleader candidate will be evaluated by the same criteria)
    - a. Tumbling (running & standing)
    - b. advanced jumps (toe touch required)
    - c. cheer
    - d. Dance (Stunt for male candidates as an option)
    - e. overall impression
    - f. attitude/character
  2. Mascot
    - a. Animation and character development
    - b. Use props and music
    - c. Creativity
    - d. Mascot must score a minimum of 120 to be considered for the position.
  3. Selection practice clothing
    - a. Practice attire for cheerleader/mascot candidates will be as listed below for female and male candidates. No jewelry of any kind and no nail color will be allowed (white or neutral colors are allowed). For safety reasons, nails must not be of excessive length. All tattoos must be covered. For female candidates, hair should be secured away from face in a ponytail with a white bow.
      - **FEMALES**
        - Black sleeveless pullover shirt (no printing allowed)
        - Black athletic shorts
        - White cheer or athletic shoes
        - White crew socks
        - Hair in a secure low ponytail with a white ribbon.
      - **MALES**
        - Black t-shirt (no printing allowed)
        - Black athletic shorts
        - Athletic shoes
        - White socks
    - b. Mascot candidates will spend time during each practice in the mascot costume and will perform his/her skills test in costume.
- A. In the event an injury prohibits a participant from completing all steps to the skills tryout process, the coach will 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 cheer fees paid up to date each year and all uniforms/equipment returned.
  2. No more than 3 total days of ISS
  3. 7<sup>th</sup> period/practice attendance during previous season
  4. Meets all selection criteria requirements and completes all selection procedures.
  5. Attends each of the selection practices.
  6. In good standing within the cheer program.

- B. The term of service shall begin immediately following cheerleader selection and continue *through* the following school year. Therefore, cheerleading terms may 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.
- C. Participation in all cheerleading games, activities, and projects are **MANDATORY** unless otherwise specified by the coach. Repeated failure to participate in assigned activities, duties, or responsibilities will be grounds for disciplinary action.
- D. Practice Responsibilities
1. Practice will be **MANDATORY** each day during a specified class period and after school practice time. 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 **MANDATORY**. Time specifications for these will be given as soon 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.
  4. All performance material must be learned and performed for coaches by given deadline. Failure to comply will result in losing his/her position in routine or game.
- E. Game/Performance Responsibilities
1. Games are **MANDATORY**. Cheerleaders will meet at a designated place and at a designated time for each activity and/or practice.
  2. Cheerleaders must be in assigned uniform (including correct sports bra, spandex & bow)
  3. Cheerleaders must be appearance ready for each game/performance (You may wear more make up than required):
    - Designated Lip Color
    - Mascara/Lashes
    - Blush
    - Hair neatly in designated style. Hair must be secure enough to stunt, tumble, etc without messing up/falling out.
  4. Cheerleaders must remain in the cheering area (on the court or field) unless given permission to leave by the coach. Cheerleaders may not visit the concession stand unless given permission by the coach.
  5. Cheerleaders will sit as a group during half time with no outsiders within the group. JV & Freshman teams will remain on the field during half time and 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter. Water will be provided for each cheerleader during half time of each assigned football game and designated basketball games.
  6. There will be no gum chewing during games.
  7. No cell phones will be allowed for the duration of the games.
  8. Cheerleaders may go to the restroom only during half time but must be on the field or court with two minutes left on the half-time clock (This applies to all sporting events).
  9. 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.
  10. Each member is required to participate in all 3 Hello Texas Performances. (Absences for valid situations will be taken into consideration at the discretion of the coaches.)

## F. Attendance

1. Every cheerleader must be present for all practices, games, pep rallies, performances, etc. Only written requests (submitted by email, text or via Canvas) approved by the coach in advance (3-5 days) will be accepted as excused unless an emergency situation occurs preventing prior notification. **Appointments should NOT be made during scheduled practice times or performances.**
2. If a cheerleader/mascot has more than 1 practice absence the week of a performance/game, they will sit out that week's game/performance.
3. All absences must be communicated to the coach prior to practice/scheduled event.
4. 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.
5. If a cheerleader or mascot misses a game (excused or unexcused) they will be required to complete a 2-mile run the following Tuesday and will sit out the first half of the next scheduled game. (Absences for valid situations will be taken into consideration at the discretion of the coaches.)
6. Work is not legitimate excuses for missing a game, practice, performance, or activity. There will be no excused absences approved for work.
7. Unexcused absences from required cheerleading activities/games in excess of four will be grounds for dismissal.
8. All-Star Cheer: While we want our athletes to be well-rounded and be able to do all-star cheer and school cheer, athletes that participate in both school and all-star cheer should consult with their coach when scheduling conflicts occur. An effort will be made to work with an athlete in all-star cheer. Please send all game, performance, practice, and activity dates to your all-star coach as soon as they are given.

## G. Grading

1. Cheerleaders/mascots will begin each nine weeks with a 100 and will lose points due to not meeting program requirements such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Wearing jewelry of any type to class/practice/game in uniform or practice wear.
  - b. Hair not tied back properly
  - c. Improper practice clothes
  - d. Tardy
  - e. Late with material, money, etc.
  - f. Leaving class/practice area without permission
  - g. Not following directions
  - h. Chewing gum in practice/game
  - i. Not meeting standards set for daily activities in class
  - j. Failure to complete class assignment
  - k. Truancy
  - l. Absence from practice
  - m. Failure to notify coach about an absence

2. Cheerleaders/mascots will be given a grade for each game. Each cheerleader/mascot will begin with a 100 and will lose points due to not meeting program requirements such as, but not limited to, the following:
  - a. Wearing jewelry of any type while in uniform (this includes during school, before, during, and after the game)
  - b. Late arrival
  - c. Not having all the required bag check items
  - d. Excessive talking while on the sidelines
  - e. Failure to follow directives from coaches.

\*\*Cheerleaders/mascot will be given opportunities to run each grading cycle for grades in cheer below a 100

3. Cheerleaders will be placed on three to nine weeks of probation upon becoming academically ineligible by making a grade below 70 in a class for a nine-weeks grade (or 1<sup>st</sup> six-weeks) or having an overall nine-week grade average below 80. A cheerleader who receives a second failing grade or has an overall nine-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.

**\*\*Failure to comply consistently will result in losing his/her position in routine or game\*\***

#### 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 or from the Deer Park High School trainers 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 injured will receive treatment from the Deer Park High School trainers and will be cleared for participation through the training room.
4. Cheerleaders who are excused from a certain activity or exercise will not be allowed to cheer until a physician's release or a release from the Deer Park High School trainers has been turned in to the coach.

#### I. Expenses and Uniform

1. Summer camp & pre-camp practice fees are to be paid by each cheerleader/mascot prior to camp dates, or the cheerleader may not attend camp.
2. The school provides at least three uniforms for each cheerleader (not including shoes, socks, spandex, hair ribbons/bows, and warm-ups). All other attire will be purchased by the individual cheerleader/mascot.
3. Each person will purchase practice outfits to be worn at camp and for the duration of the school year along with a warm-up and any other items deemed necessary for cheer wear.
4. All cheer wear is to be worn as a squad.
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 pink out pom-poms 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 school/cheerleading organization.
8. The care of uniforms and costume will be the responsibility of each cheerleader/mascot. Cheerleaders/mascots are responsible for the cost of replacing any lost or damaged school issued uniforms. This includes stains, discoloration, rips/tears, etc.
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 prior to the start of the school year in order to cheer during football/volleyball season.
11. All cheerleaders must have balances paid in full in order to tryout for the following year cheer squads.
12. Cheerleaders who do not have balances paid in full will not be eligible for a scholarship.

### III. **Cheerleader Captains/Officers**

- A. Each squad will have captain/officer positions as chosen by the coach. The coach will select all captains/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, determine a uniform and game 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.

### IV. **Conduct**

- A. Social Media / Media / Cell Phone
  1. According to the Athletic Code of Conduct, students who participate in extracurricular activities will be suspended or removed from the activity if they engage in inappropriate conduct related to Internet or other public media distribution or exposure.
  2. A student will 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.
  3. A student will be suspended or removed from participation if that student has an Internet site such as, but not limited to, Instagram, Snapchat, Twitter, or Facebook that contains any images or videos that are considered lewd by community standards or that depicts behavior that is sexually explicit or suggestive or illegal as determined by the administration.
  4. A student will be suspended or removed from participation if that student sends any text messages, images, or communication of any inappropriate language that is considered lewd by community standards or that depicts behavior that is sexually explicit, suggestive, or illegal as determined by the administration.

B. 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 benching is at coach's discretion).

- a. Missing a game/activity or practice unexcused
- b. Failure to comply with a coach's directive
- c. Not wearing proper uniform
- d. Appearing in a public place in uniform without permission.
- e. Wearing nail polish when not allowed (anything other than white or neutral)
- f. Wearing uniform in need of cleaning or repair
- g. Profanity (verbal or written, including social media)
- h. Conduct not befitting a lady or gentleman
- i. Unsportsmanlike conduct to other teams or squads
- j. Public display of affection in uniform
- k. Failure to cheer/show spirit at games
- l. Failure to notify coaches of academic progress reports or school discipline
- m. Allowing non-cheer members to wear cheer wear without coaches' permission
- n. ISS assignment (1-2 days)
- o. Truancy
- p. Disrespect towards coaches, faculty, school personnel, or school property

2. Extended probationary status (suspension) will be given for the following reasons.

- a. Any nine-week (or 1<sup>st</sup> 6-weeks) grade below 70 (three to nine weeks probation)
- b. Nine-weeks grade average below 80 (three to nine weeks probation).
- c. Accumulate a loss of 10 points from grades within semester (three weeks probation)
- d. Suspension
- e. ISS assignment (3+ days)
- f. Any action that violates the athletic code of conduct

Length of suspensions will vary and be determined by coaches and/or athletic counsel.

3. Dismissal will occur for the following reasons:

- a. A second nine-week grade below 70 in a single school year
- b. Excessive (more than 4) absences from cheerleading activities or games
- c. Any action that results in a second Athletic Advisory Council decision

C. Tobacco/E-Cigs/Vapes

1. Student athletes are not permitted to use or possess on or off school premises tobacco products, including but not limited to cigarettes, e-cigarettes, vaping, cigars, pipes, snuff, or chewing tobacco. Violations may result in disciplinary action, including without limitation, suspension or removal from athletics. The athlete will receive an automatic one-week suspension for the first violation. The second violation will be taken to the Athletic Advisory Council and the athlete will receive an automatic two-week suspension. The third violation will result in the athlete being suspended from all athletics for the remainder of the school year or for a period not to exceed one calendar year.

D. Drug or Alcohol Violations – Student athletes shall not possess, use, transmit or attempt to possess, use, or transmit, or be under the influence of any of the following substances on or off school premises:

1. Any controlled substance or dangerous drug as defined by the Texas Controlled Substance Act, without regard to the amount including but not limited to marijuana, any narcotic drug, hallucinogen, stimulant, depressant, amphetamine, or barbiturate.



2. Alcohol or any alcoholic beverage
3. Any abusable glue, aerosol paint, or any other chemical substance for inhalation
4. Any other intoxicant or mood-changing, mind-altering, or behavior-altering drug

If the coach, Athletic Director, or administration has reasonable belief that a student athlete is selling, giving, possessing, or under the influence of abusive drugs (marijuana, narcotics, steroids, crack, cocaine, etc.) he/she shall be suspended from the athletic program until guilt or innocence is determined. If the administration determines the student athlete has engaged in prohibited conduct under this section, then the student athlete shall be sanctioned in a manner that includes suspension or removal from the athletic program for one calendar year from the date of the incident. The administration shall make its determination of guilt or innocence in an expeditious manner. Sanctions for the prohibited conduct will be assessed notwithstanding any prosecution under the juvenile/criminal justice systems.

## V. Mascot

- A. The mascot will be expected to follow all rules and conduct guidelines described for cheerleaders. She or 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 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. Deduction of points from nine-week grading periods may be earned back with physical activity, or other duties as assigned by the coach. Loss of points during the week must be earned back by the end of that grading period.
- 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, and athletic code of conduct, she/he will relinquish her/his position on the squad through a written resignation and it should be submitted to the coach.
- C. Deviations from the provisions of the Handbook are allowed only with the approval of the Superintendent or designee and the Director of Athletics.

## VII. Competition Team

It is important to understand that the “competition” aspect of being a member of competitive cheer team should be considered a “performance” opportunity. It is important to keep the competition experience positive. Each cheerleader is uniquely different, each with their own strengths and their own weaknesses and each brings their own talent to the team as a whole. With so many personalities, we realize that conflicts may arise, but we must be respectful to one another. Be kind to one another. There is no room for personal conflicts amongst the team. Do not bring them to the gym. It is hard to stop gossip among students and parents all together, but we do not want it to become destructive. Our goal is to foster a healthy competitive team environment.

### A. Attendance

Attendance is mandatory for all practices starting after tryouts. The organization tries its best to be flexible and accommodating with conflicts. However, by becoming a member of this team, you have agreed that this is a priority in your schedule. Missed practices for any reason other than illness must be approved one week in advance. Student absences will be recorded. If more than 3 unexcused absences have occurred, it is possible the cheerleader may be dismissed from the team. Any time an absence occurs, students are responsible to learn what was missed before the next practice, either with a private lesson or a friend. Being part of a competition team is a team effort and attendance is very important to all. Students must be present. Missed practices will result in dismissal from the team.

### B. Summer Practice

We understand that some of you have vacation planned during the summer. The practices in the summer are optional but HIGHLY encouraged. ALL cheerleaders must be present starting the month of August. ALL CHEERLEADERS MUST ATTEND CHOREOGRAPHY CAMP. (Time subject to change).

### C. Financial Commitment

Being in a program such as this requires a certain financial commitment. There will be fundraising opportunities to assist with competition team costs. Tentatively, the squad will be attending Wednesday practices at All-Star Revolution from 4-6 pm. They will be responsible for finding a ride to and from the facility and must submit a form affirming the information. The squad will leave immediately after 6<sup>th</sup> period on Wednesdays and head to practice at ASR.

(All prices are estimates and are subject to change. Both squads are not guaranteed)

DPHS Cheer trains at All-Star Revolution for competitions (August-January). Tuition is due to ASR at the beginning of each month. If you are on 1 team (NCA or UIL) the monthly tuition will be \$80. If you are on both teams, the monthly tuition will be \$120. (Tuition for summer months will only be for NCA Team candidates/members).

#### NCA Team

Hotel- ~\$150/athlete

Competition Entry Fee- ~\$335/athlete (includes 1 regional & NCA Nationals)

Bow/Hair Accessories- ~\$25-\$40

Team Shirt- ~\$10-\$20

#### UIL Team

Choreography/Music - \$3,000 divided up by number of athletes

Competition Entry Fee- ~\$75/athlete (includes 1 regional competition & State Championship)

Team Shirt- ~\$10-\$20

\*\*Cost of transportation is subject to be added. Cost will be divided by all members of team.

### **Competition Schedule**

~Early November 2024 – UIL Team Regional

~Mid-Late November 2024 – NCA Team Regional

~Early-Mid January 2025 – UIL Team: UIL State Championship

~Mid-End January 2025 – NCA Team: NCA High School Nationals

# 2024-2025 Cheerleader/Mascot Handbook

## Acknowledgement for Cheerleaders and Parents

### **Cheerleader:**

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 as a member of the DPHS Cheer Organization.

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Cheerleader Name (Print)

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Cheerleader 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 will be held accountable and the procedures he/she will be expected to follow as a member of the DPHS Cheer Organization and agree to abide by those rules.

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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 coaches by Friday, February 16<sup>th</sup>.

Thank You,

Cheerleading Staff