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**Dillard Drive Middle**

**CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK**

**2016-2017 SEASON**

**Philosophy and Purpose**

The purpose of the DDMS Cheer team shall be to boost school spirit, to promote good sportsmanship, and to develop good positive crowd involvement. We support the football and basketball teams by cheering at regularly scheduled home games. We strive to represent the school and community through high standards of conduct including public performances of quality cheerleading, squad cohesiveness, and positive personal behavior.

**Importance of Procedure**

Policies and procedures are outlined in this handbook to ensure that all aspects of the cheerleading program run smoothly, and that each cheerleader has a safe, positive and successful experience here. **Please do not ask for exceptions to rules.** At times, unforeseen circumstances may warrant the modification of a policy. When these situations occur, modifications will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of the coaches.

Cheerleading is considered an extracurricular activity and is subject to all the rules and regulations stated in the Wake County Athletic Activities Handbook. Students and parents must sign all appropriate contracts and consent forms prior to the student participating in the cheerleading program.

**Demerit System Information**

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| **Demerit / Violation** | **Points** |
| Late for Practice or Games | 1 |
| Early Dismissal from Practice or Games | 2 |
| Late Pickup from Practice or Games (10 Minute Intervals) | 1 |
| Unexcused Absence from Practice or Games | 5 |
| Uniform Violation (Not Properly Dressed) | 1 |
| Poor Conduct at Practice or Games | 3 |
| School Violation (Lunch Detention) | 1 |
| School Violation (ISS) | 5 |
| Grade Violation (Below a 75 at Interim Check) | 2 |
| Other (Coach’s Discretion) |  |

**The DDMS Cheerleading sponsors/coaches reserve the right to remove any team member, at any time, who consistently violates established rules and regulations.**

**Consequences of Demerits**

* 5 Points = Sit Out 1 Game
* 10 Points = Sit Out a 2nd Game and/or Special Activities
* 15 Points = Sit Out a 3rd Game and/or Special Activities AND Parent Conference
* 20 Points = Removal From the Squad

**Demerit System Tracking**

A record of demerits will be kept by the coach throughout the year. When a demerit is assigned the cheerleader will sign off on the demerit, verifying she has been made aware of the violation. These records will include detailed information of why a demerit was received. Once a demerit point is received it cannot be removed from the record.

**Explanation of Demerits**

**Absences**

* Cheerleaders must attend a full day of school on game days or they will not be eligible to cheer at that game. Cheerleaders must attend a half day of school (arrive by noon) in order to practice.
* Coaches should be made aware of absences as soon as possible, but especially before the absence occurs to possibly avoid an unexcused absence.
* If a cheerleader misses a practice or game, she will need an excuse (preferably a doctor’s note).
* Absences from school still require documentation that the absence was excused.
* School absences that have been excused will verify an excused practice/game, like wise for unexcused.
* Excused absences include family emergencies, illness (with a doctor’s note),

 Grades

* Any cheerleader who has a grade lower than a 75 at the time of grade check will not be permitted to cheer until that grade is brought up to at least a 75.
* Cheerleaders who have grades that are unsatisfactory will be placed on academic probation for one week. After the period of one week, grades will be checked again. If at this time the grade has not been brought up to at least a C, two demerits will be given to that cheerleader. This cheerleader will be permitted to participate in practice, but must sit on the sidelines with the coach during all ballgames until the grade is acceptable.
* Tutoring and additional services will be required for cheerleaders who cannot maintain acceptable grades.

Late Arrival

* In the event of an emergency that may cause any cheerleader to be late, please contact your coach and inform her of your emergency and expected time of arrival.
* Tardy cheerleaders will be required to make up any missed warm-up or stretching exercises prior to participation.

Early Dismissal

* Early dismissal from practice sessions or games is not permitted.
* We appeal to all participants to consider the negative impact the early dismissal of one individual has on the entire team.

Uniforms and Attire

* Official uniforms must be worn for games. This consists of two-piece DDMS skirt and shell, official cheerleading sneakers, briefs, crop top, white socks, and hair bow.
* Cheerleaders are responsible for maintaining their uniforms and keeping them in good condition.
* Cheerleaders are REQUIRED to wear the appropriate cheerleading shoes at practices and games. For safety reasons, appropriate footwear is mandatory.
* Tank Tops and tops with spaghetti straps are NOT permitted at practice. T-shirts must be worn to practice.

Personal Violations

* To ensure safety while performing, hair must be neat, out of face, and off the shoulders. For games, a ribbon/bow must be secured in hair.
* Only soft hairbands may be used – No hard barrettes.
* Bobby pins may be used but must be securely fastened.
* No glitter is to be worn on face, body, hair or uniform at any time.
* No buttons, corsages or any other accessory is to be worn during performances.
* Gum chewing is not allowed during any practice or performance.
* If you require any type of wrap or brace, please plan on wearing these items to practice.
* The appropriate fingernail length for safe participation means that the nails are not visible beyond the fingertip when viewed from the palm side of the hands.
* Artificial nails are not recommended.
* Nail polish is not permitted for game days or competitions.
* Jewelry of any kind cannot be worn during practices or games.
* Medical medals must be taped to the body, under apparel.

**Time Commitment and Cheerleader Responsibilities**

Being a member of the DDMS Cheerleading team requires a major commitment from athletes and their families. Successful cheerleading teams require many hours of work from each athlete. Our goals include developing as an individual and as a team. These goals take no less than 100% effort from each individual. Therefore, it is important for athletes to understand the necessity of time management. Calendars are essential. Each cheerleader will be given a calendar in advance. Though it is admirable for athletes to become involved and well rounded, athletes should take caution when becoming involved in multiple organizations and activities. Do not overbook yourself. *All-star squads are allowed, but they DO NOT come before DDMS Cheerleading. Absences due to All-Star events will NOT be deemed excused.* Making wise choices based on your time, talents and interests is a vital part of becoming an adult. Budget your time wisely!

**Time Obligations**

**Games:**

* Basketball (girls and boys games) –2 games per night; 1-2 games per week. Game nights vary.

**Practices:**

* Approximately 3 days per week; times will vary.

**Competitions:**

* Usually on Saturdays. Chosen by coach and approved by Athletic Director. Approximately 1-2 competitions.

**Fundraising:**

* ALL cheerleaders are expected to help promote and participate team fundraising events.

\*\* Cheerleaders who have been selected for the 2016 - 2017 DDMS Cheerleading Team will be required to cheer for both competition and basketball seasons. The season will begin in May (2016) and will end in February of the following year (2017).

**Practice Schedule and Information**

* The first day of practice will be on September 7th.
* Calendars will be distributed; however dates and times are subject to change.
* Transportation to practice is the responsibility of the parent or guardian.
* A late pick up from practice will result in a demerit.
* No cell phones at practice. Phones must be turned off or on silent.
* Cheerleaders must be ready at the designated practice time.
* All mats must be unrolled and placed on the practice floor before practice begins. Wasting time putting mats out will result in laps by the entire team.
* No guests/parents are permitted at practice, unless permission by the coach is granted.
* Cheerleaders are required to bring their DDMS Cheer Handbook to every practice.
* Coaches must be informed in advance if a cheerleader will miss practice.
* Excused absences are only an excused absence from school, illness, or a death in the family.
* Doctor’s appointments, other cheer obligations, etc. must be scheduled around our practices and games.
* If the coach feels that excessive absences, even for excused reasons, prevent a cheerleader from performing effectively with the team, the cheerleader may be removed from the team.
* The coach can remove a member of the team at anytime at the coaches’ discretion.
* Once the squad is selected, if additional squad rules are decided then cheerleaders and parents will be made aware of the rules in writing.

**Games Schedule**

* Cheerleaders are required to be at the field at least 30 minutes prior to game time, unless the coach decides otherwise. This time will be utilized for check in, practice/warm-up, and any last minute changes due to an unexpected absence.
* Cheerleaders will not be permitted to sit with parents/friends before or during any ball games.
* All cheerleaders must remain in attendance for the duration of the ball games.

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| **Personal Conduct**Cheerleaders who get in trouble at school will be reprimanded through demerits. Any cheerleader who is a behavior problem at school will be removed from the squad for misrepresenting DDMS and the DDMS Cheerleaders/Coaches.**Fundraisers** All cheerleaders/parents will participate in fundraising activities throughout the year. Cheerleaders need to be present at fundraiser events dressed in appropriate attire. All money must be turned in when designed by the coach; cheerleaders will be responsible for lost or stolen items.**Transportation**All cheerleaders must be on time for all activities. Transportation is the responsibility of the parent. Please make arrangements if you cannot bring or pick up your child from practices or games. All cheerleaders will be required to ride the bus to any competitions.

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| **Injuries** * If a cheerleader becomes injured, it is the responsibility of the cheerleader and parents to notify the coach immediately.
* Doctor’s excuses and explanations for injuries are required; a copy must be submitted to the coach.
* If a cheerleader becomes injured during the season they are still held to the same rules and the same demerit system as all other team members.
* Injured team members are expected to attend all practices and games for the remainder of the season, or until they have been released.
* Injured cheerleaders are required to attend all practices and games on time, and dressed in the appropriate DDMS attire. They will sit with other cheerleaders and coach in order to participate in cheers.

**Social Media*** Pictures and/or photographs of cheerleaders while in uniform are not to be posted on/to any internet website, unless they have been screened and approved by parents/coaches.
* Any picture of any cheerleader while in uniform that is in bad taste, exhibits bad behavior, demonstrates poor judgment, is disrespectful towards school, squad, coach, etc. should not be posted to any website. Photos that are questionable should be removed immediately to prevent punishment through demerits and dismissal from the squad.

**Competition** Attending and going to competition will be at the discretion of the squad coach. Cheerleaders will be allowed to compete only if the squad has fulfilled its regular year-long responsibilities. Cheerleaders are expected to display good sportsmanship at all times during any competition.**Safety**No playing around, laughing, or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt/practice session. Cheerleaders should never stunt, warm-up, or practice unsupervised.**Paper Work** All paperwork must be signed and turned in to coach. This includes consent forms, physical forms personal information, signed contract sheet, and any other additional paperwork required. **Parent Involvement /Complaints*** Please volunteer if you would like to help or be in charge of fundraisers.
* Grievances need to be discussed in a civil, non-violent matter with the coach first. Do not confront the coach before, during or after a practice, game or event. Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalate it. After parents have discussed their problems with coach, they may feel free to contact the DDMS Athletic Director.

  **Coaches/Contact Information** * The coach will provide email address and the school phone number in which they can be reached. A cell phone number will be given to parents and may be only used in emergency situations or to notify the coach that a cheerleader cannot participate in a practice or game. It is best to email during the school day.
* Cheerleaders will be notified through Remind 101/email frequently when changes to the schedule are made or to relay information to them about upcoming events, the correct uniforms/attire to wear, etc.

**Expenses** * Cheerleading is an expensive activity. It is the responsibility of each cheerleader to purchase any items that are necessary.

 *The Coach reserves the right to add to, change, or delete any or all parts of this handbook as deemed necessary. Members of the squad will be notified immediately of any changes, additions, or deletions.***All of these rules are necessary. However, our primary goal is for you to HAVE FUN!!!*****Dillard Drive Middle School******Cheerleading Rules and Regulations******Contract Agreement 2016-2017***Cheerleaders are expected to demonstrate a winning attitude and foster team spirit through cohesion and commitment to common goals. Cheerleaders conduct at games and team events is especially important. Team pride, positive attitude, and gracious behavior towards competitor teams are EXPECTED AT ALL TIMES. Any attempt by a cheerleader to intimidate a fellow team member, or participant in a negative behavior by word and/or physical deed will result in immediate removal from the team. Cheerleading is a rewarding experience that teaches many life skills. With cooperation, hard work and dedication, everyone will be a WINNER. **Any situation that arises and is not specifically covered or stated in these rules will be handled by coach and/or the athletic director depending on the nature of the situation. Consequences will be the sole decision of the DDMS Cheerleading Coach and athletic director.** Cheerleader Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ |  |

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