

ARAB CITY SCHOOLS CHEERLEADER HANDBOOK

INTRODUCTION

The role of American cheerleaders today must be, in addition to the primary role as spirit leader, ambassadors of their schools, and in most instances, diversely skilled athletes. The role of the high school cheerleader now involves regular community support and interaction, public relations, exposure, and school-based fund-raising activities. Additionally, today's cheerleaders are competing which brings them into a sport in its own right.

Cheerleading has been, and is today, in a state of rapid transition. Its many faceted roles in athletics and school programming are becoming increasingly diverse and complex.

We are hopeful that the information in this handbook will help you to examine, evaluate, and clarify the role of cheerleaders in our city system.

PRIORITIES

1. A cheerleader's first responsibility is to the academic program. The educational process should not be compromised by participation in cheerleading.
2. The primary function of a cheerleading program is to support interscholastic athletics.
3. A cheerleading squad has the responsibility to uphold, reflect, and project the goals and ideals of the school and community.
4. Squads engaging in cheerleading gymnastics and competitive programs should adopt and execute a comprehensive safety program.

ELIGIBILITY

The Arab Cheerleaders will follow the State "No Pass No Play" policy which reads as follows:

"Students entering the 10th, 11th and 12th grades must have passed during the preceding school year in attendance at least six new full Carnegie units with a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in those six units. Four core curriculum courses must be included in those units passed and averaged. (English, mathematics, science and social studies are core curriculum courses.)

Students entering the 8th and 9th grades must have passed during the preceding school year in attendance at least five new full Carnegie units with a minimum composite numerical average of 70 in those five units or subjects.

Students entering the 7th grade for the first time are eligible."

Cheerleader tryouts will be held in late winter or the spring of each school year.

The students will be given a copy of the cheerleading handbook during clinic. (Clinic — a practice time set aside prior to tryouts to teach all interested prospects necessary skills with which to tryout: cheers, dances, jumps, chants, basic tumbling, etc.). This clinic will last approximately eight (8) days. Participation in the clinic is **required** if a student wants to tryout for cheerleader.

This handbook will include rules and regulations for active Arab cheerleaders to follow. All release forms and medical forms included in the handbook must be signed and returned at the requested time.

If a cheerleader refuses to cheer for a sport he/she chose to represent, this cheerleader will not be allowed to participate in the cheerleading selection process the following school year.

TRYOUT CRITERIA

All interested students in the sixth through eleventh grade will attend clinic to learn new materials, tryout procedures, line-ups, and to receive coaches' evaluations.

Tryouts will be scheduled on a specified date after school or on a weekend before a panel of three out of town judges. The panel of judges shall have a high level of cheerleading knowledge and shall be selected from active cheerleader sponsors and college cheerleaders with no known ties to Arab. Spectators will not be allowed to watch clinic except on specified day(s). Tryouts will be closed to spectators.

The participants will be required to perform the following at tryouts:

1. *Cheer*
2. *Dance or Band Chant (male participants will perform two required stunts)*
3. *Toe Touch and Herkie Jump (male participants will perform a Pike instead of a Herkie)*
4. *One Stunt*
5. *One Tumbling Pass*

All participants eligible for the varsity squad will try-out first. Scores will be immediately tabulated and results will be announced. Those who did not make the varsity squad and are eligible to try out for junior varsity will then have two options. They may use the score from the varsity tryout OR they may try out again with the other junior varsity participants. If a participant chooses to tryout again, the only score that would be carried over would be the stunt score. The judges' evaluation will count as seventy-five percent of the total score.

Participants will also be evaluated during clinic. The varsity, junior varsity, and junior high coaches will evaluate attitude, experience, potential for improvement, and clinic participation. The total coaches evaluation will be given to the tabulator prior to tryouts and the judges will not be allowed to view these scores. This evaluation will count as twenty-five percent of the total score. The second Monday of clinic will be videotaped. This will allow the judges to view a participant in case of injury. If a current cheerleader is injured at the time of tryouts, the videotape from the previous year may be viewed by the judges to score the participant on skills that cannot be performed.

Participants will not be allowed to view tryout scores.

CHEERLEADING ALIGNMENT

Varsity Cheerleading:

10th, 11th, and 12th grade cheerleaders form one squad to cheer for varsity football and basketball. After tryouts each cheerleader will decide if they would like to try out for the competition cheerleading squad*.

Junior Varsity Cheerleading:

9th, 10th, and 11th grade cheerleaders form one squad to cheer for junior varsity and/or 9th grade football and basketball. After tryouts each cheerleader will decide if they would like to try out for the competition cheerleading squad*.

*Members of the Varsity and Junior Varsity Cheerleading squads may be eligible for consideration for *possible* selection for the competition squad. The number on the competition cheerleading squad and requirements will be determined by the coach/sponsor. Competition members will not be eligible for full-season basketball cheerleading. If at any time a competition cheerleader decides not to compete, they will automatically resume regular cheerleading duties.

Junior High:

7th and 8th grade cheerleaders form one squad to cheer for junior high football and basketball teams.

*Coaches for each squad will determine the number of participants before each tryout.

*Up to three (3) males may be added to the varsity, junior varsity, or junior high squad if a male's total score falls between the high and low score of the squad.

*Anyone participating in cheerleading cannot be involved in another sport and/or activity with a conflicting schedule.

RULES AND REGULATIONS

TA good attitude should be maintained at all times.

TCheerleaders are placed in the public eye and should take pride in the example they are setting by displaying high moral standards.

TMature conduct is expected at all times.

TAll cheerleaders must abide by Arab City Schools' Code of Conduct rules and regulations. Each cheerleader should set a positive example as a school leader in and out of school.

TCheerleaders should never argue back with the crowd.

TCheerleaders in uniform should not chew gum.

TCheerleaders selected for a particular sport must cheer at all games unless excused for illness or emergency.

TCheerleaders must attend all practice sessions during the week (unless excused) in order to cheer at pep rallies or ballgames.

TCheerleaders in uniform should not sit with or among spectators. Once dressed in uniform, they should sit as a group.

TCheerleaders that miss the bus traveling to any away game will face disciplinary action unless excused by the sponsor or coach.

TCheerleaders must be present half of a school day the day of a ballgame and the day following a school night ballgame.

TEach cheerleader must have a yearly physical as approved by the Alabama High School Athletic Association.

When school personnel becomes aware of a student's medical or physical condition that represents a potential health or safety risk, the student may be required to provide a statement from a medical doctor that the existing condition does not jeopardize the student's continued participation in cheerleading or the cheerleader's ability to successfully perform the Duties and Responsibilities of cheerleading.

CHEERLEADER CONDUCT

Cheerleader behavior and discipline will be tied directly to the Arab City Schools Code of Student Conduct.

1. Classifications of violations will be determined as: Class 1 — Minor Class 2 — Intermediate Class 3 — Major
2. Violations will increase in magnitude in relation to the number of offenses: first, second, and subsequent offenses.
3. Example of discipline: probation periods, suspension from games, removal from squad.
4. Violations of rules and related disciplinary actions will be documented.

DEMERIT SYSTEM

A demerit system will be implemented. This system allows the cheerleaders to know the type of punishment that would be given for certain offenses. Twelve demerits will be the maximum number to be given in a year. After the twelfth demerit, the cheerleader will be dismissed from the squad and will be unable to try out the next year. Offenses and the number of demerits for each will be as follows:

One Demerit Offenses:

Late for Practice

Bringing/Wearing the Wrong Uniform

Two Demerit Offenses:

Dressing Improperly for Practice or Games (Shoes, Jewelry, etc. . . .)

Bad Sportsmanship (Mocking Opposing Fans or Cheerleaders)

Three Demerit Offense:

Missing Practice

Four Demerit Offense:

Missing Game

Six Demerit Offense:

Drinking or Any Tobacco Use

*1-12 demerits may be given for other actions at the discrepancy of the sponsor and principal.

**The demerits will be in addition to any of the following types of discipline: Probation Periods, Suspension From Games, Removal From Squad.

PRACTICE

Be there! Practices will not be scheduled unless they are needed. If one student is missing, it disrupts the entire practice. Cheerleaders must attend all practices unless they have a medical excuse, sponsor excuse, or an immediate emergency.

Summer practices will be set by the sponsors as needed.

Dress for practice should be decent, comfortable, and clean. Clothes should provide ample movement and adequately cover the body. Socks and lightweight shoes should be worn. Hair should be kept out of the eyes.

All unexcused absences will result in equal number of time benched from games or related events.

Medical excuses must be turned in and kept on file.

CAMP

All high school cheerleaders **must attend** a weeklong camp during the summer when the girls work on foundations and basics of cheerleading. They learn routines and cheers that will be used during their season. This is a highly professional camp directed by Universal Cheerleaders Association (UCA). Transportation to camp will be provided by the school. After a week of hard work, a final day of evaluation and competition is held. Parents are asked to come to camp for this final evaluation and provide transportation home.

Practices will be held prior to camp to get the student in shape and make all necessary arrangements.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms are valued at approximately \$150.00 per garment and are the property of Arab City Schools. Each cheerleader will assume complete responsibility for the uniform should any mishap occur which destroys any part of it. Cheerleaders will have their uniforms cleaned and returned to the sponsor immediately upon completion of the cheering responsibility. If returned dirty or damaged, a cleaning and replacement fee will be charged. Each cheerleader must buy her own body suit, tights, and socks. Each cheerleader will pay a rental fee to replace and purchase new uniforms.

We expect our cheerleaders to take pride in their appearance! Uniforms should always be clean and neat, and cheerleaders should have everything in order and always look their best.

Cheerleaders are provided with warm uniforms. Cumbersome jackets are not allowed for cheering; therefore, the purchase of letter jackets is optional. Matching cheerleader apparel should be worn unless prior approval has been granted by the sponsor.

Jewelry is not allowed! The Alabama High School Athletic Association safety guidelines state that jewelry is prohibited at practice or events with the exception of religious or medical medals. If such medals are worn, they should be taped to the body under the uniform.

TRANSPORTATION

During football season, cheerleaders will travel on a "cheerleader" bus to and from all games.

During basketball season, cheerleaders will travel with their designated basketball teams to and from all games.

Cheerleaders are required to ride to and from all "away" games on a bus furnished by the Arab City Board of Education, with the following exception: The cheerleader sponsor may allow cheerleaders to ride home with custodial parents or legal guardians. In such cases the parent/guardian must sign an appropriate release and provide assurance that the cheerleader will ride in the same vehicle as the parent/guardian. Failure to gain the sponsor's prior permission or failure to ride in the same vehicle as the parent/guardian will result in appropriate disciplinary sanctions.

GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE

If cheerleader regulations are violated, the sponsor will contact the violator's parents to explain the rules violated and the punishment for the infraction.

If a cheerleader or parent feels they are receiving unfair treatment from the sponsor or other members of the cheerleading squad, they should discuss the situation with the sponsor. If, after a conference between the sponsor and the parent, a problem still exists, the school principal should be contacted.

FORMS

Please complete and sign the given forms. These forms should be returned to the cheerleader sponsor before the selection process.

PARENT MEETING

There will be a mandatory parent meeting prior to tryouts. This meeting will be held to open the lines of communication between the school, parents, and cheerleaders.