

Olton ISD Cheerleader/Mascot Handbook

GUIDELINES FOR OLTON ISD CHEERLEADERS

2021-2022

Mission

The mission of the Olton ISD Cheerleading Squad is to lead support for OISD athletics through performances at games and pep rallies, to promote school spirit and pride for the Olton Mustangs, Colts, and Fillies and to serve as representatives of Olton ISD and the community. Every expectation laid out in this handbook is intended to support in accomplishing this mission. It is your job as an Olton ISD cheerleader to show commitment and dedication to your team at all times by fulfilling all of these expectations to the very best of your ability. Being a cheerleader requires a large commitment of time, often-times sacrificing activities with family and friends.

As cheerleaders, you serve as representatives of your school and community. You must always demonstrate the best possible behavior both in and out of school activities. As a symbol of your school, your private behavior is subject to scrutiny by the entire community. The personal behavior expectations are intended to protect the reputations of the entire squad.

Our primary responsibility as a squad is performing in pep rallies and games. During a performance, many eyes are on you. Precision and uniformity are keys to excellent presentation. The practice and performance expectations are meant to ensure that we are always giving the fans a great performance.

Qualities of Olton Cheerleaders

- Disciplined
 - Understand the need for practice and make time for it.
- Punctual
 - Always be on time for class, practice, and games.
- Persistent
 - Understand that becoming a good cheerleader is a process. It takes time and effort. Work to improve on a daily basis.
- Positive
 - Attitudes are contagious! Be sure yours is worth catching. Smile and be a part of the solution, not a part of the problem.
- Honest
 - Admit your limitations and mistakes. Take full responsibility for your actions and attitudes. Do not lie, cheat, or steal.
- Responsible
 - You are young adults. Take care of your responsibilities before someone has to tell you to take care of them.
- Well-behaved
 - Follow instructions the first time they are given. Be quiet, attentive, and in control of yourself.
- Prepared
 - Bring all necessary items to each practice and game.
- Committed
 - Realize the impact that your individual attitudes, actions, and performances will have on the group.

Fundraising

- Each squad member will be responsible for helping fundraise their part for the squad during each cheerleading sponsored fundraiser. Each member will be required to raise a certain amount. If that amount is not met, it is the responsibility of the squad member and their parents/guardians to pay the remaining amount.

Transportation

- Cheerleaders, mascots or their parents are responsible for their transportation to all home activities. The squad will ride in a school district vehicle for all out of town activities. Extenuating circumstances may require a squad member to travel to or from a game or event with a parent, guardian, or other designee. Principal prior approval is required if the student is arriving to the event apart from the team. OISD protocols are required prior to allowing a squad member to leave with another individual:
 - A written and signed note from the guardian must be hand-delivered to the sponsor and must note the identity of the individual transporting the student. The sponsor must speak with the guardian verifying the note that they received.
 - The same guardian or non-guardian designated on the note and conversation must present a photo ID, in person, at the time they receive and escort the squad member.

Responsibilities

- *Grades*
 - *Grades* should and will be your first priority. The sponsor will check on grades randomly.
 - If a cheerleader is struggling in any subject, they are to seek help from the teacher immediately.

- If the sponsor determines a cheerleader is showing academic struggle, tutorials may be required.
- All UIL rules of participation (no pass, no play) due to failing grades will be enforced and the UIL schedule of participation will be followed.

Duties of Cheerleaders/Mascots

- Attend summer camp and all practices.
- Paint signs, make spirit sticks, participate in spirit raising activities, etc.
- Organize, set up, and clean up pep rallies and games
- Attend all football games, all home girls and boys basketball games, district boys and girls away basketball games, and playoff games for football and basketball
- Participate in all fundraisers
- Participate in Sandhills parade and Hometown Christmas parade
- Participate in any public appearances as scheduled
- Promote school spirit and maintain cheerleader policies in a positive manner
- Perform at your maximum ability
- Maintain a positive attitude about the squad, cheer sponsor, and school at all times
- Maintain a spirit of cooperation
- Mascot will wear suit at all games but may remove the suit during approved times or as needed due to safety, weather, or heat
- The sponsor will determine the mascot's responsibilities.
- Mascot will entertain the crowd and create additional enthusiasm and spirit
- All members of the squad will participate in additional community service activities as determined by the cheer sponsor

Uniforms

- Cheerleaders will be required to wear a standard uniform when cheering.
- Cheerleaders should arrive at the game or practice dressed in standard cheerleading attire.
- Cheerleaders will only wear uniforms approved by the sponsor, principal, and superintendent. Standard attire will be as specified by the sponsor.

NO jewelry will be worn by cheerleaders while in uniform or during practices.

- Uniforms owned by the school are not to be worn outside of cheerleading activities and are not to be loaned to anyone else for any reason.
- Do not wear bright undergarments that will show through the suit. Do not wear undergarments that are able to be seen or will not stay put under uniform.
- Mascot uniform: The mascot is required to wear the mascot suit for all attended games, and pep rallies. The mascot is responsible for the care and upkeep of the suit.
- **If any piece of a uniform is lost or destroyed, the cheerleader will be responsible for paying the cost of replacement.**

Practices

- Practices will be held during the summer and after school on a schedule determined by the cheer sponsor
- Cheerleaders must wear practice attire as deemed by the sponsor.
- Absences can be either excused or unexcused as identified by the sponsor and, if necessary, the campus principal. The squad

member or a parent must notify the sponsor of an absence prior to the scheduled practice.

- Cell phones are prohibited from practice. They are to be turned off or put on silent at the start of practice and put away.

Games/Performances

- Absences and participation in extracurricular activities
 - Illness: If the cheerleader misses school, they may not be allowed to cheer at the game that night.
 - A cheerleader who misses all or part of a school day due to an unexcused absence will not be allowed to participate in school-related activities on that day or evening
 - A cheerleader whose absence is excused at the discretion of the campus principal, may participate in school-related activities on that day or evening.

Game Behavior

- Cheerleaders and Mascot are required to stand in formation during all games. Cheerleaders should show positive attitudes and stay engaged during their duties.
- The sponsor will provide guidance as to acceptable times for breaks for cheerleaders, the mascot, or both.
- Cheerleaders are not to have conversations with people in the stands during game time.
- NO GUM CHEWING!
- Only water is allowed on the sideline.
- Cell phones are to be put on silent, put away, and stay away during game times.
- Squad members must arrive to and participate in all designated events and take breaks as determined by the sponsor.

Consequences/Disciplinary Action

- Cheerleaders are held to a high standard and are expected to carry themselves in a manner of high character at all times. Failure to present yourself in this manner or to follow the student code of conduct will mean disciplinary measures as deemed appropriate by the cheer sponsor.
 - Warnings are not required before enforcing the cheer handbook or student code of conduct. The squad member and parent/guardian signature on the contract acknowledges an awareness, understanding, and acceptance of policies contained herein.
 - Student's disciplinary actions may result in suspension or dismissal from the cheer squad due to perpetual behavioral problems or a single incident severe enough to warrant the suspension or dismissal. Disciplinary action for any violation of the cheer handbook or student code of conduct that results in suspension or dismissal from the squad will require principal approval.
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Suspension and dismissal progression:

- First Suspension = 15 consecutive school day suspension
- Second Suspension = 30 consecutive school day suspension
- Third Suspension = 1 calendar year suspension (may try out for cheer squad if tryouts occur during the suspension)
- Fourth Suspension = permanent dismissal from cheer

- ISS = Suspension from the squad
- DAEP
 - 1st placement: 1 year suspension from cheer activities (student will be dismissed upon next suspension; student may try out for cheer for the next year unless the DAEP placement occurs during cheer tryouts)
 - 2nd placement: permanent dismissal from the cheer squad

All squad members must enter the random drug testing program at Olton ISD. All squad members are bound by the rules and regulations of the Olton ISD drug testing policy.

- Use or possession of illegal drugs (including steroids)
- Use or possession of alcohol, tobacco and e-cigarettes/Vape products.

Disciplinary actions to be taken for drug, alcohol, and tobacco use or possession:

First Offense

- The student will be suspended from all in season athletic events for 15 consecutive school days. During the suspension, practices will be mandatory and the student shall complete a district-approved substance abuse counseling course. The athlete and his/her parents will be required to sign a *Cheer Probationary Contract*.

Second Offense

- The student will be suspended from all in season athletic events for 30 consecutive school days. During the suspension, practices will be mandatory and the student shall complete a district-approved substance abuse counseling course. The athlete and his/her parents will be required to sign a *Cheer Probationary Contract*.

Third Offense

- The student will be suspended from all in season athletic events for no less than one calendar year. During the suspension, practices will be mandatory and the student shall complete a district-approved substance abuse counseling course. The athlete and his/her parents will be required to sign a *Cheer Probationary Contract*.

Fourth Offense

- The student will be permanently removed from cheerleading.

Conviction of a felony offense will result in immediate removal from cheerleading. A squad member that has been charged or is under indictment of a felony offense will be removed from cheerleading until the issue has been resolved. Once the issue has been resolved, the squad member may be reinstated upon a review by the sponsor.

- **Suspension due to academic failure:**
 - If a squad member fails a class, the UIL Extracurricular Activity Guidelines will be in effect.
 - Squad members are still responsible for showing up to practices and any other activities (not in uniform).
 - If the squad member fails two six weeks or more, the member may be dismissed from the squad.

*****NOTE*****

Any member who voluntarily resigns from the squad will be considered dismissed from the squad unless otherwise approved by the Principal.

The final decision regarding standards of behavior and disciplinary consequences rest with the cheer sponsor and school administration, including those not specifically mentioned in this document.

**RULES AND REGULATIONS IN THIS HANDBOOK
MAY NOT BE ALL INCLUSIVE. WHILE EVERY
ATTEMPT HAS BEEN MADE TO AS
ENCOMPASSING AS POSSIBLE, SITUATIONS MAY
ARISE THAT ARE SUBJECT TO INTERPRETATION. IT
IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE SPONSOR AND
PRINCIPAL TO MAKE THE DETERMINATIONS TO
AREAS NOT SPECIFICALLY COVERED.**

Cheerleader Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____