

**PALESTINE ISD
PALESTINE HIGH SCHOOL
CHEERLEADING/MASCOT**

**2019-2020
CONSTITUTION**

PURPOSE

The purpose of the PHS cheerleading squad/mascot is to effectively execute a school spirit program that supports the athletic teams and promotes the school itself. Cheerleaders will serve as positive role models and leaders for PHS and should promote sportsmanship and good citizenship within our school and among other schools. The high priority should be to display and encourage spirit and pride for Palestine High School.

OBJECTIVES

Being a cheerleader/mascot is an honor and a privilege. Cheerleaders should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to their position and in accordance with the rules as stated in the PISD Student Code of Conduct. Members of this group have a fundamental responsibility to play a leadership role in building teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives. Because of these responsibilities, members will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus and to promote high academic achievement among their peers.

Cheerleaders are expected to be physically and mentally skilled in learning and remembering cheers, dances and routines. They are also expected to be able to publicly demonstrate a skill level suitable for the team position. Off the field they are to enthusiastically support all athletic teams through advertisement, personal attitude, and attendance at any event chosen by the sponsor(s) and approved by the principal.

CHEER COMMITMENT

- Candidates selected to be a member of the cheerleading squad are expected to make a commitment to the cheer program for the full cheerleading year. Any cheerleader who voluntarily quits the squad before the end of the cheerleading year will not be allowed to try out for the next school year.
- Cheerleaders are required to be at all scheduled practices, games, and events. Failure to show up on time and stay for the entire planned practice/ game/ event will result in disciplinary action and may ultimately lead to removal from the squad. School related functions are not counted against the cheerleader.
- A student who misses a cheer event for practice of another sport or school activity must notify the sponsors three (3) days prior to the absence in order to work out an alternate schedule.
- Any practice that is missed due to an excused absence from school will not count against the student. Students will be dismissed if they have more than nine (9) absences in any one class per semester (by review of administration and sponsor[s]).
- A student must be in attendance for the entire duration of the practice or scheduled event. Arriving more than fifteen (15) minutes late, or leaving more than fifteen (15) minutes early to a practice or scheduled event will count as an absence and will be subject to disciplinary action.

MASCOT COMMITMENT

The responsibilities of the Wildcat mascot are:

- Preparing skit for pep rallies, as needed
- Assist cheerleaders with promoting school spirit
- Interact with the crowd at scheduled sporting events
- The mascot is required to attend cheer camp.

TRYOUT – Requirements

All students shall be eligible for membership upon completion of the established requirements for entrance. To be eligible to try out for membership on the team:

- At the time of the tryout, the student is enrolled in PISD and is trying out at the school where the student is registered to attend the next school year.
 - If the student is not currently enrolled in PISD, but is registered to attend PISD the next school year and has completed all necessary enrollment/transfer paperwork through PISD central office the student will be eligible for tryout.
- The student's parent or guardian must attend an orientation meeting scheduled by the sponsor(s). At that time, all paperwork should be signed by student and guardian and returned to the sponsor(s).
- The student must attend the after school clinics scheduled for learning the cheer, dance and jumps. Full-time attendance at the cheer clinic is mandatory and failure to attend may be reason for automatic disqualification from current try outs.
- A student must not have been assigned to DAEP during the current school year. He/she may try out the following year pending a review of the student's disciplinary record.
- Disciplinary history is given consideration with regard to eligibility for tryout. Individual approval from the campus principal and cheer sponsor(s) must be given if:
 - The student has previously been removed from the squad for disciplinary reasons.
 - The student has been assigned ISS, Friday night school, or detention a combination of 3 times, or
 - The student has an excessive number of disciplinary referrals, has been assigned to DAEP, and/or suspended from school by any PISD administrator.
- Any student who has previously been removed from the squad for disciplinary reasons is not eligible for cheerleading tryouts without approval from the principal and the sponsor(s).
- Students who are in 8th grade, are freshmen, sophomores and juniors may try out for cheer/mascot.
- Students must be academically eligible at the time of tryouts.
- Any student who has any outstanding balance of fees or money due to Palestine ISD for any organization will not be allowed to try out unless fees are paid in full. This includes any fees related to cheerleading in the past.
- The candidate must sign up by the deadline.
- All candidates must try out each year.
- Attend parent/candidate meeting, cheer clinics, mock tryout and cheer tryout are all mandatory.
- In order to insure equity, affordability, and safety for students during the tryout procedures, the tryout uniform must be:
 - Plain white tee
 - Solid black shorts
 - Tennis shoes – no cheerleading shoes

- White no show socks
- Sports bra (white, nude or tan)
- All hair must be in a ponytail; no bow
- No jewelry
- No long or brightly colored fingernails. Artificial nails must be short and rounded. No pointed nails.
- No glitter or stickers

TRYOUT – Selection Process

- PHS will have a centralized tryout for the selection of the high school cheerleading squads. The goal is to provide a consistent, equitable and monitored tryout process for all high school cheerleader candidates.
- The tryout date is determined by the sponsor(s) and will be posted and announced to students at least one month prior to the tryout date.
- High School cheerleaders will be selected by a scoring method that assigns a weight of 90% to the scoring of judges and sponsor(s) will have 10%.
- Numbers will be drawn during clinic to determine tryout order.
- Applicants will be judged on motion sharpness, voice projection, jumps, cheer ability, dance ability, spiring, attitude, initiative, teamwork, leadership. Tumbling is as added bonus (mats will be provided).
- Students may not leave the designated waiting area until tryouts are complete. Tryouts are CLOSED to the public for cheer clinics, mock tryout, and cheer tryout.
- After tryouts are complete, students will be asked to leave campus. Once scores are tabulated the results will be posted on the school district website on the Friday following tryouts at 6:00 p.m.

TRYOUT - Squad Membership, Judges and Scoring

- The varsity squad will be made up of a minimum of 10 cheerleaders, with a maximum of 16 cheerleaders with no more than a 5-point difference between scores. The squad will be made up of the top scoring sophomores (who choose to try out for varsity), juniors and seniors. If a male candidate makes the cheer squad, there can be up to a total of 18 cheerleaders.
- The minimum scoring requirement for varsity members is 50 points.
- The junior varsity squad will be made up of a minimum of 8 cheerleaders, with a maximum of 12 with no more than a 5-point difference between scores. The squad will be made up of the top scoring juniors, sophomores and freshmen. The minimum scoring requirement for junior varsity members is 35 points.
- All candidates must meet the minimum scoring requirements in order to be placed on a squad. In the event there are not enough candidates who earn the minimum score, the squad membership may be smaller than the maximum number allowed.
- In the event that a cheerleader moves, resigns or quits BEFORE summer camp, the next candidate in line of scores will be the replacement. There will not be any replacements after summer camp. Members will not be allowed to return once he/she leaves the squad or withdraws from Palestine ISD.
- There will be a 3 judge panel. Judges will be selected from professional cheerleading associations, universities and/or out-of-district sponsors.

Judges will not be hired to judge tryouts if they have tutored or taught the cheerleader candidates during the current school year. Every attempt will be made to hire judges who have not worked with students in the Palestine area. Professional judges will be instructed to judge the candidates based only on mastery of skills that they demonstrate during tryouts.

- PISD cheerleader sponsors/drill team coaches or employees of Palestine ISD may not serve as a judge for cheerleader tryouts.
- Each sponsor (s) and judge will enter each candidate's scores on a pre-designed score sheet. Tabulations will be checked by high school administration and then prepared for tabulation. The judge(s) and sponsor (s) scores will then be averaged for final scoring. Candidates will be ranked from high to low and the appropriate number selected for each squad.
- Each candidate must score the minimum percentage of points for his/her squad in order to be placed on a cheerleading squad.
- Scores will remain with the principal until candidates are notified. Original scoring sheets will be retained for 30 days following the tryout date. Scores given for a student by an individual judge will not be changed by a coach, technical assistant, principal, or principal designee.
- In case of a tie, both students shall be selected.

TRYOUT - Exceptions

A previous cheer video of the student may only be used after notification to the cheerleading sponsor(s) and only in case of recent surgery or broken bones that impair a student participating in a specific skill of the tryout. A medical doctor's note indicating the specific skill the student is incapable of performing will be required prior to video use. If the video is used, only a small segment of the video that shows the specific skill done by the student prior to tryout may be judged. A video may not be used showing the individual performing in a competition setting, All-Stars or Nationals, etc. Sponsor(s) will make the guidelines available to the judges if a video is used for tryouts.

TRYOUT - Parent Request for Scores

Any student's request to receive his/her scores must be made through written request from a parent/guardian. Parents may request to see his/her own child's score (no rank score) from the judging panel. By law, all other student scores are protected and cannot be shared with anyone except the sponsor, principal or principal designee.

MASCOT TRYOUT INFORMATION

The mascot will appear before panel of judges designated by the sponsor(s) and principal. Props and costuming should be used. The score will be based on originality, energy and props. Mascots will follow the same tryout guidelines as outlined in the cheerleading constitution. Tryouts will be held after school on the next day following cheer try-outs.

CHEER COSTS

After members are selected, the sponsor(s) will determine and schedule fittings for uniforms, shoes, etc. Once the squad selection is complete, a mandatory parent meeting will be scheduled. At that time, parents/guardians will be given a payment schedule. Parents/guardians will be asked to sign a financial contract agreeing to pay associated costs. The first payment, a deposit, of \$250 will be due at the time of the

first fitting. If the cheerleader does not pay the \$250, the cheerleader will not be fitted for a uniform.

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Not paying the \$250 deposit due at the time of the first fitting could result in the cheerleader being dismissed from the squad. Additional payments will be due before any uniforms or accessories are released to the cheerleader. Unpaid outstanding balances may result in the cheerleader being removed from the squad. A parent meeting with the principal and sponsor(s) will be required. Refunds will not be made for items that have already been ordered.

CAPTAIN AND/OR CO-CAPTAIN(S) SELECTION PROCESS

These students will be held to a higher standard and will be required to sign a contract stating their expectations and responsibilities. The student must agree to the standards or forfeit the position to the next appointed captain. If the cheerleading sponsor(s) believe a captain is not meeting the expectation set forth, the coach may remove the captain at any time during the season. Under no circumstances does a captain's position replace any directives given by the sponsor(s). The candidate selection will be determined by votes of the sponsor (s), staff judge, varsity and junior varsity members. Scores will be calculated and averaged to determine who are selected.

Co-Captains will be selected from those with the top two highest average scores. If there is a significant score difference between the top two candidates only a captain will be selected.

Each candidate must submit a notebook with the following:

1. Essay stating why I would be a good leader.
2. Squad Expectations
3. Pep-Rally ideas

Each candidate during try-outs must teach a one minute dance and a cheer.

Each candidate during try-outs must answer three questions from the sponsor (s) and staff judge.

CHEERLEADER MANAGERS

The sponsor(s) will choose the manager(s) for the squads based on an application and knowledge of the sport.

FUNDRAISING OPPORTUNITIES

There will be designated fundraising opportunities to help offset the costs of cheer participation. All members are encouraged to participate in fundraising events. In order to receive funds from a designated fundraiser, the cheerleader must participate in their scheduled time slot. No credit will be issued for late arrivals or early departures.

Additional activity fundraisers may be held at the sponsor(s) discretion. Proceeds will benefit cheerleading activities.

AWARDS

- Only varsity cheerleaders may earn a letter jacket if the student has not received one previously and has successfully fulfilled the duties of a PHS cheerleader.
- Letter jackets will be ordered after basketball season for those who remain in good standing. Any cheerleader who is ineligible for a 6-weeks grading period due to grades, leaves the cheer team through disciplinary action, or resigns, moves or quits will not receive a letter jacket.

CONDUCT/ RULES/ DEMERITS

- Cheerleaders are expected to behave in a manner that is becoming to the individual as well as to the organization they represent. They should be aware that, in and out of uniform, they are representatives of the cheerleading squad and PHS and should behave accordingly.
- Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include ensuring that cheerleaders' websites are appropriate. The internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Any communication such as Myspace, Facebook, Snap Chat, Twitter or any other social media outlet, or photo sharing, etc. that appears on the internet is public domain even if it is marked private.

Cheerleaders are responsible for their personal websites and postings as well as postings on other students' websites. The area of appropriateness will include, but are not limited to language (abbreviated

or alluding to), pictures, suggestive poses, clothing, reference to alcohol, drugs, and tobacco. Any question of appropriateness will be decided by the administration and sponsor(s).

- Members are expected to follow instructions. Failure to do so will result in demerits.
- Any member placed in Alternative School (DAEP) will be immediately dismissed from the squad.
- Any member that resigns, quits or is dismissed may not try out during the current year without the review and approval of the administration and sponsor(s).
- Any cheerleader removed from his/her squad for disciplinary reasons during the current cheerleading year will not be eligible to participate in the next year's tryouts without approval from the administration and sponsor(s). Areas to be reviewed will include, but are not limited to review of the reason(s) for the removal and student records since removal (academic grades, discipline records, attitude, etc.).
- Students who have been removed and those who voluntarily quit retain no rights to the team awards, recognitions, etc. They lose all privileges associated with cheerleading membership, including attending cheerleading events, using cheerleading facilities, and wearing cheerleading attire.
- UIL Rules on No Pass No Play will apply during the cheerleading year.
- Academic probation means the student may not wear uniform, travel, participate in scheduled activities or sit with the organization at performance.
- If a cheerleader is on academic probation she/her are still required to come to practice and attend tutorials.
- Failing two six weeks in any combination of subjects will result in dismissal.
- Proper manners should be used at all times, especially when addressing adults. Mutual respect and politeness toward members within the squad are basic elements that contribute to the total success of the squad. All members are expected to abide by PISD's Student Code of Conduct rules relating to conduct, possession and/or use of drugs, alcoholic beverages or other illegal activities. The possession and/or use of alcohol, tobacco, **vaping or jewelling vaping** and illegal drugs are expressly forbidden and will not be tolerated in or out of uniform. Any infraction of this nature will result in immediate dismissal from the squad. Any student removed from the cheerleading squad will also be removed from the cheer class.
- Cheerleaders are expected to be at all practices/events and be on time. A cheerleader who misses the practice before a planned event may not be allowed to participate in the event.
- Any absence must be cleared by the sponsor prior to the practice. Excused absences may include: personal illness, death in the family, illness in the family that requires out of town travel, funeral,

mandatory court appearance and religious holidays. Unexcused absences include: work, vacation, appointments, non-UIL involvement, all-stars, babysitting, etc.

- Summer practices, summer designated paint days, Mini Cheer camp in July are mandatory.
- Calendars of planned practices and events will be given to cheerleaders and it is the responsibility of the cheerleader to adhere to that schedule. Practice schedules may be edited at the discretion of the sponsor(s). Sponsor(s) will make every effort to notify cheerleaders in a timely manner of changes made to the calendar.

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- Cheerleading camp is mandatory. Missing camp will result in dismissal of the cheerleader from the squad.
- A member absent from school must turn in a doctor's note to the sponsor(s). Work will not interfere with cheerleader's practices or the events schedule. A cheerleader who misses any combination of 3 practices/ events during the season may be removed from the squad.
- Cell phone usage is a distraction for cheerleading practices and events. The sponsors(s) will collect cell phones prior to practice or any scheduled event. Parents need to be aware of this policy. Parents will have the sponsors' cell phone numbers in case of an emergency. Phones will be returned at the end of practice or the scheduled event.
- When traveling out of town, cheerleaders travel to and from events as a team. The only exceptions are family emergencies.
- Cheerleaders must adhere to the designated dress guidelines as outlined and required by the cheer sponsor(s); including district guidelines for hair, visible tattoos.
- Cheerleaders may not wear jewelry to practice or any scheduled activity for safety reasons.
- Cheerleaders will wear designated clothing on scheduled events as determined by the cheer sponsor(s). Failure to follow these guidelines will result in removal from participation during that day's event and cheerleader will receive five (5) demerits.
- Sponsor(s) reserve the right to handle discipline occurrences on a case by case basis.
- Once a cheerleader accumulates 5 demerits, a demerit sheet will be sent home for the student and parent/guardian to sign. The cheerleader may not participate in any event until the demerit sheet is returned to the sponsor(s).
- All cheerleaders are required to join the REMIND APP, communication for important cheer information is sent through this APP. Parents are encouraged to join the APP to stay connected with important cheer information.
- All squad dismissal hearings will be held with an administrator, sponsor(s) and parent/guardians.
- The following is a list of possible infractions.

One Demerit

- Being insubordinate, including not following directions the first time given
- Wearing inappropriate workout clothes when practice begins, including not having cheerleading shoes
- Being tardy to cheerleading class, including being in the locker room or hallway when the tardy bell rings
- Wearing jewelry
- Using a cell phone without permission
- Chewing gum, eating, drinking during practice or scheduled event
- Exhibiting lack of knowledge of cheers (can also result in being benched from cheering)
- Wearing dirty uniform articles, uniform not worn correctly or missing any uniform article. The cheerleader will not participate in the event until appearance is corrected.
- Out of formation and conversing with the crowd and/or team or one another
- Displaying unsportsmanlike conduct

- Allowing any other student or person to wear any part of the uniform
- Leaving an event before being dismissed by cheer sponsor(s)
- Late to the court/field after halftime or break. Cheerleaders are expected to be on the track/court ready to cheer at least 4 minutes before halftime/break ends. The second infraction for this reason will result in being benched during 3rd quarter or sport equivalent to 3rd quarter.

Three Demerits

- Missing practice/scheduled event (without a doctor’s note, school-related reason or the student informing sponsor(s))
- Using profane language
- Lying/intentional deceiving
- Being referred for disciplinary issues
- Being more than 15 minutes late for a planned event or practice
- Acting in an unsafe manner, as determined by the sponsor(s)

- Leaving food or trash in dressing room, practice room or any performance areas. Cheerleaders are expected to clean up after themselves and will not be dismissed until situation is addressed.
- Displaying public affection during school, at school activities or while wearing the cheerleading uniform

Five Demerits

- Cheerleader not showing respect during the National Anthem, moment of silence and school songs
- Not wearing designated clothing on scheduled event

Ten Demerits

- Exhibiting conduct that does not exemplify a good role model (such as public information displayed on any social media site). This will be reviewed by sponsor(s) and principal.

Demerit Consequences:

Five Demerits –	will result in a demerit form being sent home
Ten Demerits –	will result in sitting out one quarter and parents will be notified
Fifteen Demerits –	will result in sitting out two quarters and parents will be notified
Twenty Demerits -	will result in a probation period for no less than one week and a meeting with an administrator, sponsor(s), parent/guardian and cheerleader will be required
Twenty-Five Demerits –	will result in dismissal from squad

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By signing below, you acknowledge that you have read the PHS Cheer Constitution.

Student Signature

Date

Parent/Guardian Signature

Date

