

# Harrisonville Cheerleading Constitution



This constitution has been prepared to inform parents and students of the expectations and obligations of all HHS Cheerleaders. This constitution shall be kept by all cheerleaders and mascots as a point of reference. Parents and students should be familiar with the expectations and obligations of this spirit-leading program because a successful cheerleading program must have the support of all parents and students involved. Being a HHS Cheerleader is a privilege and an honor. Dedication to this program will encourage a rewarding experience as well as provide an environment that will allow cheerleaders to be proud of representing HHS.

### **Coach's Discretion**

*All HHS Cheerleading rules will be interpreted and carried out by HHS cheer coaches and activities staff, under the guidance of the HHS activities director.*

*Interpretation of these rules is at the strict discretion of HHS cheerleading coaching staff.*

## **Purpose of the Harrisonville Cheerleading Program**

- To create school spirit, pride and loyalty for the Harrisonville Cass R-IX School District
- To represent themselves, the Harrisonville Cass IX School District, and the community in the highest degree by always setting a good example, whether in uniform or not
- To develop responsibility, teach self-respect, encourage honest effort, strive for excellence, and develop character

## **Eligibility**

- Each squad member must meet all academic and attendance eligibility requirements according to the Harrisonville High School activities policy.
  - A squad member must be enrolled in a minimum of 3 credits
  - A squad member must have a "C" average (2.0) and no "Fs" grades at the quarter grade check. If a student has any "F" s/he will be put on probation and unable to cheer outside of practice until the grade is brought up.
  - Coaches have the discretion to bench any cheerleader who maintains any failing grade at any point.
  - Students must maintain at least 90% daily average attendance at all times while in season.
  - Those who do not meet eligibility criteria will be excluded from participating in games until eligibility is reinstated.
- Students will meet and abide by MSHSAA rules.
- A signed parental permission form, proof of insurance and a current physical will be on file with the coach and high school office before tryouts for the participating year.
- Previous Cheerleaders
  - All previous cheerleading fees must be paid and all loaned items must be turned in.
  - A position on any cheerleading squad does not guarantee a position in future years. Every student must go through the tryout process each spring.
  - Previous cheerleaders who quit during the previous season will not be recommended for a squad the following year.
- Move-In Policy
  - If in the event a student moves to the district and would like to tryout for a cheerleading team:
    - MSHSAA guidelines will be followed to establish eligibility
    - If eligibility is established prior to the beginning of the season for which the student wishes to cheer - the student will be allowed to tryout at the coach's discretion.

# Tryouts

- Through the tryout process six squads of cheerleaders will be selected: fall varsity, fall junior varsity, and fall middle school, winter varsity, winter junior varsity, and winter middle school squads. The size of the squads will be determined through the tryout process.
- **HHS Varsity and Junior Varsity (JV)**
  - Tryouts for the HHS Varsity and JV Cheerleading squads will be held in the spring each year.
  - To become a cheerleader a candidate must earn at least the minimum score set during tryouts. This score will be shared only with the Activities Director.
  - All tryout scores are final and non-negotiable. Tryouts scores will remain confidential.
  - All candidates will be evaluated using the following criteria:
    - Chant execution
    - Cheer execution
    - Jump execution
    - Fight Song execution
    - Fitness skill execution
    - Teacher recommendations
    - Coaches' recommendations
  - RETURNERS: You are expected to perform at a higher standard than other candidates, as you have been a part of the HHS Cheerleading Program for at least one year. In addition you will be evaluated on attitude, work ethic, integrity and character that you displayed over the course the season by the coaches.
  - During tryouts, candidates will tryout out in groups of 2-4. Returning cheerleaders will tryout with other returners and new candidates will tryout with other new candidates.
  - A position on any cheerleading squad does not guarantee a position in future years. Every student must go through the tryout process.
  - Alternate Cheerleaders: Alternates may be selected for both the fall and winter seasons. If in the event a cheerleader leaves during the season an alternate **MAY** be called upon to fill the vacant spot at the coach's discretion.
- **Middle School**
  - Tryouts for the HMS Cheerleading squads will be held in the fall and winter respectively
  - All candidates will be evaluated using the following criteria:
    - Fitness skill execution
    - Teacher recommendations
    - Coaches' recommendations
  - Middle school tryouts will follow a "no cut" policy. This means that those who try out will earn a spot on a team.

# Squad Specific Expectations and Responsibilities

- **Varsity Fall Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home and away varsity football games and all playoff football games
  - Design and create spirit items for all varsity athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff
- **Junior Varsity (JV) Fall Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home JV football games
  - Design and create spirit items for all JV athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff
- **Middle School Fall Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home 8<sup>th</sup> grade football games
  - Design and create spirit items for all HMS athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff
- **Varsity Winter Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home and designated away girls and boys basketball games, some tournaments, all playoff basketball games
  - Design and create spirit items for all varsity athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff
- **Junior Varsity (JV) Winter Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home girls and boys JV basketball games
  - Design and create spirit items for all JV athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff
- **Middle School Winter Squad cheerleaders will:**
  - Cheer all home girls and boys 8<sup>th</sup> grade basketball games
  - Design and create spirit items for all HMS athletes in season
  - Perform/cheer at all pep rallies in season
  - Perform other duties as specified by the coaching staff

# Expectations, Responsibilities, and Code of Conduct

- Appropriate Dress and Behavior - The following is **not allowed during practice or performances**:
  - Gum chewing
  - Jewelry or glitter (includes nose rings, tongue piercing, belly-button, eyebrow rings, or spacers)
  - **A good way to remember this...If you were not born with it-you cannot have it during practice or a game.**
  - Hair down in face – (hair must be pulled back in a ponytail or off shoulders and out of face)
  - Distracting hair colors and/or nail polish (hair must be natural looking and nails must be kept to a short length)
  - Tattoos exposed
  - Public displays of affection
  - The use of foul language or unsportsmanlike conduct
  - ALL cheerleaders must display proper conduct before, during, and after all games. All cheerleaders are expected to maintain good moral behavior, show cordial courtesy to visiting teams, spectators and each other. Squads must be respectful of visitors and of the game officials. Obscene language or gestures will not be tolerated. Cheerleaders are important representatives of our school and are very visible to everyone!
- Special Notes for Performances and Routines
  - HHS Cheerleaders will perform at HHS football, basketball, pep assemblies, and other performances that the coach or administration decides upon. It is a cheerleader's responsibility to know all times and dates of events.
  - HMS Cheerleaders will perform at HMS football, basketball, pep assemblies, and other performances that the coach or administration decides upon. It is a cheerleader's responsibility to know all times and dates of events.
  - Each squad member is responsible for learning routines, cheers/chants, builds, etc. If a squad member does not know a specific routine/chant/cheer, then said cheerleader will not participate in that performance. This decision will be made by the coaches and is non-negotiable.
  - If a squad member is physically unable to practice and/or perform a written doctor's excuse must be provided. A release from the doctor may be necessary in order to resume practices and/or performances. Failure to provide documentation when practice/performances are missed will result in a demerit.
  - All cheerleading activities are **mandatory** and cheerleaders are expected to be on time.
  - **For VARSITY home games squad members must be at the stadium ready to perform one hour before the game begins. For JV home games squad members must be at the stadium ready to perform 45 minutes before the game. For away games, Varsity squad members must to be at school in designated uniform at least 10 minutes prior to bus departure.**
  - A parent/legal guardian must sign the HHS Transportation Form for their child to ride home from away game **24 hours prior** to the event.
  - Cheerleaders must cheer during any regional, sectional or state events as well as school pep rallies, assemblies or parades. These performances count toward our lettering policy.
- Daily Expectations of Behavior
  - Cheerleaders are some of the most recognized members of the Harrisonville Schools community. As such, we expect behavior that is above reproach at all times.
  - Cheerleaders should conduct themselves in a manner that does not bring shame or ridicule to our teams, school, or community.

- If a cheerleader is not meeting these expectations the coaching staff has the right to visit with the cheerleader, and parent/guardians if necessary, to address the substandard behavior.
- Cheerleaders who gossip, defame, slander, or otherwise cause discontinuity inside or outside the program for individuals or teams associated with the program may be removed from the program at the coaches discretion. We will not tolerate drama within the Harrisonville Cheer Program.
- **Cheerleaders will follow all rules outlined in the HHS Student Handbook, HHS Activities Handbook, MCCA Handbook, all MSHSAA and NFHS regulations related to cheerleading.**
- **Possession and or use of alcohol, tobacco or other drugs or controlled substances, crimes against society, hate crimes/harassment/bullying will not be tolerated.**
- **Those found guilty of being in violation of our Activities Code of Conduct will not be allowed in uniform until the end of the suspension period. Those who do not complete the terms of the suspension in the time allotted will be removed from the team for the rest of the current season.**

## Varsity Letter

To earn a Varsity Letter in Cheerleading at HHS you must meet the following requirements:

- No demerits at the end of the season
- 95% participation in all cheer activities for the season including practices, games, and performances
- No suspensions as a result of violating the Activities Handbook Code of Conduct
- A Varsity Letter can be earned in both the fall and winter seasons

## Attendance

- All cheerleaders must be in regular full day attendance the day the activity is scheduled. This includes practices and performances. School policy on absences and extra-curricular participation will be in effect. **Please understand that being tardy to school the day of an activity makes you INELIGIBLE for participation. Ineligibility due to tardiness will result in a demerit.**
- The HHS attendance policy of 90% average daily attendance will be followed.
- Cheerleaders are required to attend all practices and performances in which they are scheduled to participate. Please plan all outside appointments around these scheduled events. In the event a scheduling conflict cannot be avoided the coaching staff must have a minimum of 24 hours notice or the absence will be unexcused.
- The cheerleading coach will be notified in the case of illness, family emergency, etc. within a reasonable amount of time depending on the circumstances.
  - Personal leaves such as a family vacation must be given in writing to the Cheer Coach with as much notice as possible prior to missing a performance and/or practice. Failure to notify the Cheer Coach within a reasonable amount of time will constitute an unexcused absence for each practice and/or performance missed and result in a demerit.
  - In case of emergency or illness, the squad member or their parent must contact the coach by phone on the day of the emergency BEFORE the scheduled practice, performance, meeting or game.
- In the event of an injury, the cheerleader will still be expected to attend all games, practices and functions in full uniform. An injured cheerleader is expected to remain with the coach, not with friends.
- In the event of a suspension due to demerits or violations outlined in the Activities Handbook, the cheerleader is expected to attend all games, practices and functions but is not allowed to be in uniform. A suspended cheerleader is expected to remain with the coach, not with friends.
- Injured and suspended cheerleaders are not excused from practices and performances. As part of the team these individuals are expected to be at all required events just like everyone else.

## Safety

- **A coach must be present during all cheerleading activities.** Coaches must approve all new stunts. There is to be no talking, laughing, or screaming during the building and execution of stunts to protect the safety of our athletes.
- Building and stunts require a certain amount of strength. Cheerleaders will be expected to participate in conditioning activities such as weightlifting and running to improve strength and stamina.
- **Under no circumstances is any cheerleader permitted to drive to any away game.** If a cheerleader misses the bus it will count as an unexcused absence from a performance.

## Practices

- A calendar will be provided by the head coach listing all practices, game times, and bus times. A coach may call extra practices when necessary. Practices are mandatory unless indicated by the coaching staff.
- Per MSHSAA guidelines, cheerleaders must attend 14 practices prior to the first scheduled performance
- Each cheerleader is to be on time. Cheerleaders must wear the required attire to practice. Hair must be tied back, no gum and ALL jewelry removed.
- Attention must be given to the coaches and captains at all times during practice and are expected to be attentive and cooperative when learning routines.
- Cell phones are not permitted during practice. Students will be asked to put phones in the phone box during practices. Coaches will have their phones on hand at all times in case of an emergency.
- **Missing practice to attend another personal activity is not permitted.** Failure to comply will result in unexcused absences. Students with a conflict between two school activities will have the option of selecting the activity in which they will participate. The student must request the coach's permission in advance in order to be considered excused. Games always take precedence over practice.
- **Each cheerleader and parent/guardian must understand that when one person misses a practice or game, the entire squad suffers. It is imperative that each member attends all cheerleading events.**

## Fundraising

It is sometimes necessary to establish a fundraiser to provide the funds required to maintain the traditions that have been established at HHS. Funds are needed to provide the team players with treats, decorations for games, homecoming and senior nights, signs, music, and props. All members are expected to participate in fundraising activities. If a cheerleader chooses not to participate in a fundraiser, s/he will be responsible for the average cost made by each participant. The use of cheerleading funds is at the discretion of the Cheerleading Coaching Staff with advisement from the Activities Director.

## Mascots

All HHS Mascots will abide by the HHS Cheerleading Constitution. There are some specific stipulations that govern the mascot, which are outlined below.

- Mascot tryouts will be conducted in the spring of each school year.
- Mascots will not take off the costume or speak in public.
- Mascots will perform at all home football games and all home boys and girls basketball games assigned by the cheerleading coach.
- Mascots will make appearances throughout the year at various events. These will be scheduled as far an advance as possible. Those who wish to serve as mascot should remain flexible.
- Mascots who meet the varsity cheer lettering criteria may earn a varsity letter in cheerleading/mascot

## Social Media

As members of the HHS Cheerleading program we expect you to represent yourself, our organization, and the Harrisonville R-IX school district in a manner that exemplifies integrity and responsibility. Refrain from posting information that is derogatory, demeaning, or antagonistic toward your teammates, classmates, or individuals from other school districts. Do not post pictures that are offensive, contain tobacco or alcohol, or that in any way could be a poor representation of you, your team, or your school. Cheerleaders who are found to be posting inappropriate material to social media will be disciplined through the demerit system.

## Discipline

**Please understand that all members of the HHS Cheer Program will be held to a high standard both socially and academically. Failure to meet our standards could result in removal from the program.**

- A. The HHS Cheerleading Program has adopted a demerit system for discipline during the cheerleading season. Demerits will be used to address misbehavior by cheerleaders. Demerits are issued by the coaching staff, are non-negotiable, and each situation involving a demerit will be dealt with on an individual basis. When necessary, the activities director may be involved. Merits will be awarded to those who meet a standard that is above that expected of an average cheerleader.
- B. Demerits and Merits will accumulate through the season.
- C. Demerits will be issued as follows
- |   |                    |
|---|--------------------|
| 1. Late to practice/performance                         | ½ Demerit          |
| 2. Leaving practice/performance early .....             | ½ Demerit          |
| 3. Unprepared to teach/performance a routine .....      | ½ Demerit          |
| 4. Uniform/practice/performance items missing .....     | ½ Demerit          |
| 5. After school detention (per hour assigned) .....     | ½ Demerit          |
| 6. Missed practice/performance .....                    | 1 Demerit          |
| 7. In School Suspension-1 per day (for any reason)..... | 1 Demerit          |
| 8. Out of School Suspension (for any reason).....       | Dismissal          |
| 9. Insubordination (to coaching staff or captains)      |                    |
| 1 <sup>st</sup> Offense .....                           | 1 Demerit          |
| 2 <sup>nd</sup> Offense .....                           | 1 Demerit          |
| 3 <sup>rd</sup> Offense .....                           | Removal from Squad |
- D. Consequences of Demerits
- |                  |  |
|------------------|--|
| 1 Demerit.....   | Warning  |
| 2 Demerits ..... | Bench 1 Performance                                      |
| 3 Demerits ..... | Ineligible to Letter-V Only/<br>HMS removal from program |
| 4 Demerits ..... | Removal From Squad                                       |
- E. Merits: *Merits can be earned by each cheerleader to reduce the demerits earned.*
- A/B Honor Roll at Quarter = ½ merit
  - Straight A's for the quarter = 1 merit
  - Perfect Attendance at school for the quarter = ½ merit
  - Attending additional conditioning/events (as approved by the coach) = ½ to 1 merit



# Constitution Agreement

The following form will be sent home with all potential cheerleaders for parent/guardian signature PRIOR to tryouts. Without this form you will not be allowed to tryout for the HHS Cheer Program.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, the undersigned, understand the information presented to me about the HHS Cheerleading Program. I understand that cheer is an extracurricular activity and that adherence to all school and regulatory body rules and regulations is required. Attendance at all practices, games, fund raisers and special functions is a requirement of all members, including me. In addition, I understand that attending summer camp, conditioning, and practices is necessary in order for the entire team to work together and be successful.

I hereby give consent for my child, \_\_\_\_\_, to tryout for a position within the HHS cheer program. I recognize that cheer is an extracurricular activity and that adherence to all school and regulatory body rules and regulations is required by my student. I understand that if chosen, my student will be required to pay for shoes, practice/camp clothing, camp, warm-ups, and other items as outlined by the coaching staff. Further, I understand that my personal insurance must cover my student under any and all circumstances.

I also give my permission for my child to receive medical attention in the event that I cannot be present or reached for any reason.

Parent Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_