



CHEERLEADER AND MASCOT CONSTITUTION

I. PHILOSOPHY/PURPOSE/GOALS

The purpose of Birdville Independent School District's Cheerleaders and Mascots will be to promote positive school spirit for Birdville ISD's three high schools. Cheerleaders and spirit groups exist to promote good sportsmanship, good citizenship, and wholesome and enthusiastic school spirit and are first and foremost representatives of their school. Because of these responsibilities, members of the cheerleading squad and mascot(s) will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior (both on and off-campus) and academic achievement than that of their peers. Cheerleaders and Mascot(s) will help develop a good sense of sportsmanship among the student body.

Support of Birdville, Haltom, or Richland High School activities will take precedence over **any** outside activity, including, but not limited to, jobs, community commitments, and family functions.

Each school's cheerleaders and mascot(s) will cheer and perform at various sporting events such as home games, pep rallies, and other events as determined by the cheer coaches in conjunction with the campus principal.

II. MEMBERSHIP

The Varsity cheerleading squad may consist of 11th - 12th grade students. The Junior Varsity Squad may consist of 10th - 12th grade students. The Freshman squad will consist of 9th-grade students.

All candidates will be selected with a score that combines a judges' panel score and an academic/discipline/clinic score. Judges' scores will have a 75% weight and the academic/discipline score will have a 25% weight. Three judges' scores will be derived on the day of tryouts from a panel of two professional cheerleader consultants and the campus head cheer coach. The academic/discipline/clinic score will be derived from the report cards, teacher evaluations, any referrals on file with the cheerleading liaison Assistant Principal's Office, and a pre-tryout clinic evaluation. Senior candidates' final scores will be weighted by .075, junior candidates' final scores will be weighted by .050, and sophomore candidates' final scores will be weighted by .025. The top-scoring mascot candidate(s) will be selected as a mascot(s). Mascot candidates do not receive weighted scores. Mascot scores will consist of 75% judges' scores and 25% academic/discipline/clinic score. On the day of tryouts, all candidates will perform before the judges' panel in a centralized location.

III. ELIGIBILITY - TRYOUTS

1. Secure an information packet, complete all required forms, and return them to the high school campus by the designated deadline.
2. Have a signed permission slip from a parent or guardian.
3. Attend a mandatory pre-tryout meeting. Parents and candidates are both required to attend the meeting before being allowed to try out.
4. Have a signed doctor's release stating the candidate is in good physical condition and can withstand strenuous activity. If selected, a UIL Pre-Participation Physical Evaluation-Medical History Form must be filed **annually** at each high school.



5. For those currently enrolled in Birdville ISD, students trying out for Varsity and Junior Varsity squads must attend the high school where they are seeking a position. Students who are not currently enrolled in Birdville ISD may try out for Varsity and Junior Varsity squads by either 1) showing proof of residency within the attendance zone of the high school where seeking a position or 2) getting approval to attend the high school where seeking a position through the district's Open Enrollment process.
6. For those currently enrolled in Birdville ISD, students trying out for the Freshman squad must be attending a middle school feeding into the high school where they are seeking a position. Students who are not currently enrolled in Birdville ISD may try out for the Freshman squad by either 1) showing proof of residency within the attendance zone of the high school where seeking a position or 2) approval to attend the high school where seeking a position through the district's Open Enrollment process.
7. Attend practice sessions conducted before tryouts.
8. Must not have outstanding fees or fines with BISD or any BISD campus.

IV. EXPECTATIONS OF CHEERLEADERS/MASCOT

The student must be able to provide all required uniforms, emblems, paraphernalia, etc. This includes uniforms, equipment, and refreshments for various events. The squads will be provided fundraising opportunities to offset costs associated with cheerleading as needed to benefit the squad. Each cheerleader will be expected to support cheerleader fundraising projects under the direction of the cheerleader coach.

Purchasing uniforms from graduating cheerleaders can save money.

The sizing of the uniform must be agreeable to the cheerleader coach (and parent, if available) at order placement. Changes due to weight or height gain or loss are not the responsibility of the uniform vendor or Birdville ISD. The cheerleader coaches' standards of correct fit must be followed. Any necessary uniform alterations are to be arranged and paid for by the parent and approved by the cheerleader coach before any changes.

Uniforms must be paid for by the 1st day of school in August. 50% of the bill must be paid before camp. An outstanding balance after the 1st day of school will cause the cheerleader to perform once the balance is paid.

Payment for each cheerleader's account becomes the responsibility of that cheerleader/mascot and his/her parents at the time of order, whether or not that cheerleader or mascot completes the year as a cheerleader or mascot.

Cheerleaders are to follow the National Federation Cheerleading Rules, which have rules on safety issues. (www.nfhs.org)

A student accident insurance program is available to students. Those who choose not to participate in this program must indicate so on their audition application.

V. RESPONSIBILITIES OF SELECTED CHEERLEADERS/MASCOT(S)

Loyalty is a key ingredient to the success of a group like the Cheerleaders and Mascot(s).



Cheerleaders and mascots:

- Must give unqualified loyalty to your high school, its athletic teams, administrators, fellow cheerleaders, coach, and other school groups.
- Must abide by the district's rules stated in the BISD Code of Conduct Handbook and the Extracurricular Honor Code.
- Attend all summer activities, which begin as soon as school is out in May.

It is the cheerleader's and mascot's responsibility to notify the cheerleader coach before any absence from practice. The following are **excused** absences: personal illness, injury, funeral or death in the family, special school activities with prior notice to the coach, and religious holidays. The cheerleading class/practices will be treated the same as any other class and the campus administration will make the final determination about excused and unexcused absences. The coach must receive written notices no later than the second day a member returns from the emergency absence. If the excuse is not received by the second day, the absence will be unexcused.

Cheerleaders and mascots are expected to:

- Be on time and prepared to participate in all scheduled cheerleader team practice sessions and events
- Participate in and share equally in preparation for cheer activities
- Participate in all cheerleader-sponsored fundraising activities
- Perform at all school events scheduled by the cheerleader coach
- Exhibit high moral standards and abstain from tobacco, illegal drugs, and alcoholic beverages at all times, both on and off campus
- Cheerleaders will provide their transportation to and from the games in the BISD district when school transportation is not provided.

Cheerleader/mascot leadership class is a ½ credit elective course applying to high school graduation. All cheerleaders and mascot(s) must be enrolled in the class during the fall and those not enrolled in a sport for the spring semester are required to remain in the class for the spring semester. The class will meet daily. If enrolled in a sport during the spring semester, the cheerleader or mascot is responsible for attending some practices and all cheerleading commitments unless approved by the cheerleading coach.

Eligibility rules for the number of games cheerleaders can participate in per week: one day between Monday – Thursday, and any amount of games Friday after 3:30 p.m. through the weekend. Play-off games are excluded from this rule.

When wearing the school-approved uniform, a student is not allowed to wear jewelry, including strings/rope chains. Cheerleaders must also have hair pulled back in a tight ponytail or away from the face for short hair. Fingernails, including artificial nails, shall be kept at a length appropriate and within safety rules. All cheerleaders in uniform will not be allowed to chew gum during school-sponsored activities.

Cheerleading uniforms, defined as anything purchased through your high school, are only to be worn at assigned times.

Cheerleaders must not:

- **wear any part of your uniform to school or any other activities without specific permission to do so.**
- **lend any part of your uniform to someone who is not a cheerleader or mascot.**

Remember that you represent your high school and BISD and must act appropriately when putting on the cheerleader uniform.



VI. MAINTAINING ELIGIBILITY

Cheerleaders must maintain an academic grade of 70 or above in every class*. Any student receiving an individual grade lower than 70(F) is ineligible and will be placed on probation for three weeks according to the “No Pass – No Play Rule” (state law).

*Excluding exempt courses. See Board Policy FM (Legal)

- Probation means no participation in cheerleading activities both during and after school (excluding practices).
- A cheerleader’s grade probation is lifted at the end of the probationary period if every subject grade is 70 or above.

Becoming ineligible two times beginning with the end of the first nine-week grading period will result in automatic dismissal from the squad. This includes three-week grade checks.

Cheerleaders and Mascot(s) must abide by the Disciplinary System in their respective schools. (Candidates receive a copy of the Disciplinary System and Cheerleading Guidelines in their tryout packets.)

Cheerleaders and Mascot(s) must meet district eligibility requirements published in the *BISD Secondary School Handbook*.

Cheerleading is a commitment for a full year. Award letters and jackets will be presented at the beginning of the year for a full year’s service as a Varsity Cheerleader/Mascot.

VII. COMPETITION

Competition squad members are left to the determination of the cheer coach. UIL and other cheerleading competitions only allow a certain number of cheerleaders to compete on the mat. For numbers beyond what is allowed, those cheerleaders will be considered alternates and will still be required to be at all mandatory practices, performances, and competitions.