West High Cheerleading Constitution and Demerit/ Merit System

Congratulations and welcome to the 2015-2016 West High Cheerleading Squad! I am so happy to have you a part of the team this year and look forward to getting to know you as well as assisting in the development and achievement of your goals in being a cheerleader.

Please understand, being a West High Cheerleader is a PRIVILEGE that is earned upon the completion of the tryout process. With this privilege comes RESPONSIBILITY. Being a member of this team, the guidelines in this constitution must be followed and held with the utmost respect. If the policies outlined in this constitution are not followed, a cheerleader at the discretion of the cheerleading coach, athletic director, and/or administration may be removed from the team.

As a West High School Cheerleader you are responsible to promote and uphold school spirit, and pride to develop a sense of good sportsmanship among students at West High and to build better relationships between schools during all athletic events attended. Cheerleading is a privilege and not a right. Cheerleaders will serve as role models and leaders for WHS!

I. Communication

As we respect the fact that each person communicates differently, to uphold a standard, consistent form of communication, we will use email, knowing that each student has a school issued email address. It is each member’s responsibility to check his or her email daily for scheduling and team information. Please keep in mind the following when communicating with the team, coaches and administration:

a. Read the information to its entirety and thoroughly to avoid missing any important details and to avoid asking redundant questions.

b. If a response is needed/ required please do so in a timely fashion. It is not your peers’, coaches’, or administrators’ responsibility to use other methods (texts, phone calls, Facebook, Twitter, etc.) to contact you, when you have not responded, to make sure you have received the information.

c. As a respectful rule of thumb, UNLESS there is an emergency, practice at the expected time, or plans made before hand; please refrain from contacting peers, coaches and administrators in regards to cheer on weekdays before 9AM and after 9PM and on weekends before 10AM and after 9PM.

d. As it is important to keep your parents and guardians informed of all events, activities, etc., I would prefer to directly communicate with each member to instill responsibility, dedication and show how important commitment is from each individual. Should parents or guardians have any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at any time.
e. Communication information for coach is as follows:
   Ashlyn Mehlhaff
   WHSRegentsCheer@gmail.com
   (504)417-6584

II. Conduct and Responsibility of Cheerleaders:

a. Cooperate and respect the coach, captain (s), the game officials, and other squad members.
b. Promote good sportsmanship, positive image, and school spirit through cooperation with other students, teachers, community members, and administrators.
c. Always uphold the WHS Cheerleading Constitution.
d. Should not engage in undesirable or immoral behavior.
e. Maintain a GPA of 2.0 or above each semester.
f. Be able to take constructive criticism from the coach, captain(s), and other squad members.
g. Understand that the following are SERIOUS OFFENSES that will be dealt with on an individual basis: (Not an all-inclusive list. Offenses are not limited to the WHS campus and at sporting events):
   Alcohol/ Drugs  Fighting  Theft  Unsportsmanlike Conduct
   Arrests  Vandalism  Smoking  Inappropriate Social Media
   Disrespecting Adults  Disobedience  Profanity  Disrespecting Peers
   Cheating  Weapons  Lying  Irresponsibleness

h. Report illness or injury to the coach immediately
i. Agree to maintain a high level of physical fitness and good nutrition
j. Agree to approach each cheerleading responsibility with a good attitude.
k. Refrain from excessive displays of public affection in and out of uniform.
l. Follow coach’s directions and stay in assigned areas during events.
m. Wear specified uniform on game day.
n. Excused absences must be PRE-APPROVED by the coach. A physician’s note or parent note must be turned in to the coach as well.

III. Social Media/ Networking:

a. Cheerleaders are expected to uphold exemplary behavior on and off campus.
b. If you choose to participate in social networking and all of other forms of technology and social media (Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, SnapChat, Yik Yak, Text Messaging, Email etc.) you are required to refrain from posting pictures containing explicit content, inappropriate behavior and dress, and derogatory comments. Additionally, posting negative comments (profanity, gossip, rumors, insulting language, threats, racial slurs, online bullying, bullying, etc.) and/ or participating in bullying about your coach, teammates, peers, community, school, athletic teams, administrators, other schools,
etc., upon the coaches’, athletic director’s, and administration’s discretion, inappropriate behavior may result in automatic dismissal from the squad.

IV. Attendance:

Absences can be the downfall of a great team. You are expected to be at all games and practices. Jobs, clubs, extracurricular activities, doctor’s appointments, etc. must not interfere. If you commit to cheerleading, you are committing to your teammates, coaches, administration, peers, school, community, athletic teams, etc. Unexcused absences are those caused by anything other than illness or family emergencies. Please notify the coach before the absence or as soon after as possible; only under extreme circumstances will prior notice not be expected.

Please note: Due to late notice this year (2015), we understand that prior vacation and plans have been scheduled, therefore, all schedules will not work out for this year. If the member has informed the coach of their plans, no penalties will be issued; however, it is the member’s responsibility to return to the next practice knowing all material that has been taught. If the member attends the next practice not knowing the material, he or she will automatically be on probation. Should the member return to the 2nd practice knowing the material, he or she will be taken off of probation. If the member returns to the 2nd practice not knowing the material again, or does not attend the practice, he or she will be removed from the team.

An addendum will be issued to cover all Games, Rules & Regulations once we get closer to the season beginning.

a. Punctuality: All members must be prepared and ready to begin practice, games, camps, meetings, etc. at the time assigned. (If practice begins at 3:30PM – all members are expected to be dressed in appropriate attire, stretched, warmed up, prepared and ready to begin) If a member is tardy, he or she will be issued demerits.

b. If a student is not present at school, he or she will not be allowed to practice or participate in the practice, games, event, etc. It is up to the reasoning of the absence to determine if it is considered an excused absence, which the coach should know about before hand. If the student is at school for a ½ day, the student will be allowed to participate in the Cheer event.

c. If a practice is missed (unexcused) prior to a game or pep rally, the cheerleader will be disciplined (consequences will be determined by the coach).

d. Any cheerleader who misses a scheduled practice is responsible for learning missed choreography and contacting an officer or peer in order to be notified of announcements. (See above for consequences of returning to practice without knowing the material)

e. The coach must be notified by email or phone call (voicemail) with a detailed explanation if the member is going to be absent from practice. (The student must be in school a ½ day to participate).
f. Medical: Should injury or illness occur, a written doctor’s excuse must be submitted to the coach. The note should specifically dictate the type and degree of physical activity allowed. No injured or ill cheerleader will be permitted to practice or perform until fully recovered and released by a doctor. When possible (not involving contagious illness), the cheerleader is still expected to be dressed out and sitting with the coach at all times learning.

V. Coach’s Responsibility:

a. Establish program structure
b. Work with the administration
c. Organize and conduct tryouts
d. Communicate with parents and guardians as needed
e. Make suspension decisions regarding serious offenses
f. Attend all practices and games with the squad
g. Enforce the demerit/ merit system
h. Hold tryouts for home routines and competition
i. Help each member to achieve their goals as a cheerleader

VI . Discipline – Demerits/ Merit System:

The following rules have been developed to insure a disciplined squad and clear expectations. If the cheerleader is removed from the squad due to a serious offense (see above) by the coach or quits the squad at any time he/she at the discretion of the coaches, athletic director, and administration may not be eligible to tryout the following year:

- Academic ineligibility
- Unexcused absence from a game
- Excused absence not pre-approved by the coach
- Not fulfilling cheer responsibilities and commitments
- Unexcused absence from practice or an activity
- Behavior considered by coach and AD to be unbecoming of a Cheerleader
- Not following instructions (verbal and/or written instructions, including rules given by coach, admin, or the cheerleading constitution)

Demerit System:

In order to keep disciplinary actions consistent for everyone we have the demerit/ merit system. Demerits will be distributed accordingly for ANY behavior that the coaches and officers feel is unacceptable. Please note that we may add or remove penalties throughout the year as necessary, but written notice will be given if a change is made. All merits/demerits will be recorded and dated. Demerits do not restart at the end of the semester. The following is a list of conduct unbecoming to a cheerleader and the penalty assessed for each violation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CONDUCT &amp; APPEARANCE</th>
<th>DEMERITS ISSUED</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wearing jewelry at games or practice</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inappropriate dress at games or practice</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chewing gum while cheering</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Incorrect uniform for a game or unapproved additions</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forgetting apparel items for practice</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wearing uniform in improper places/ letting non cheer members wear uniform</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improper care for all uniform parts (poms, shoes, top, skirt, etc.)</td>
<td>TBD</td>
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<tr>
<td>PDA in public</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unsportsmanlike conduct</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking to friends during practice or games without approval</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using cell phone or other distraction once cheer activity has started without coach’s approval</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Inappropriate material posted on the internet</td>
<td>5+</td>
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<td>Fighting with a team member</td>
<td>5+</td>
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<tr>
<td>No whining or bad attitudes towards coaches, peers, fans, etc.</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DISRESPECT TO COACH/ PEER/ ADMIN/ FAN</td>
<td>5</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PRACTICE &amp; PARTICIPATION</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Late/ Unsatisfactory fulfillment of duties</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allowing a cheerleader to fall during stunting</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unexcused tardiness for game/ practice/ event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Failure to practice fully at a game/ practice/ event</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excessive talking while cheering</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not cooperating with coaches/ captains/ squad</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excused absence from practice or game with a parent note</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Excuse absence from practice with a doctor’s note</td>
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<tr>
<td>Unexcused absence from a game/ practice/ event</td>
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<tr>
<th>GLASS &amp; CLASS ATTENDANCE</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acquiring a D for the grading period</td>
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<tr>
<td>Using cheering as an excuse for tardiness/ absence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Not attending school on practice/ game day</td>
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ADDITIONAL CONSEQUENCE FOR CUMULATIVE DEMERITS (COMPELTED AT END OF SELECTED PRACTICE):

1 DEMERIT – WARNING
2 DEMERITS – 10 TOE TOUCHES
4 DEMERITS - 15 TOE TOUCHES, 10 OTHER JUMPS
6 DEMERITS – 20 TOE TOUCHES, 15 OTHER JUMPS, AND 6 LAPS
8 DEMERITS – PLACED ON THE “GAME DAY PREP CREW” FOR THE YEAR
10 DEMERITS – WARNING LETTER SENT HOME TO PARENTS AND SIT OUT ½ OF THE NEXT GAME WITH COACH
15 DEMERITS – PROBATION LETTER AND MEETING WITH PARENTS. MEMBER WILL SIT OUT NEXT GAME WITH COACH
20 DEMERITS – REMOVAL FROM SQUAD FOR THE REST OF THE SCHOOL YEAR AND MUST RECEIVE APPROVAL FROM COACH IN ORDER TO TRY OUT THE NEXT YEAR.

Merit System:

Member may have the option to make the demerits up by earning MERITS. Only 10 merits can be earned per school year. A cheerleader must take his/her merit option upon received 10 demerits. The merit make up must begin the next week. Merits can be earned by doing the following (1 merit = 1 hour):

- Attending another practice to help another squad or coaches
- Attending a complete middle school practice to teach new material and help out
- Volunteer to assist with a sporting event that you are not cheering for
- Make extra signs to be used by the squad when cheering at games
- Work with a cheer coach or in the athletic department helping out
- Do volunteer work for teachers before or after school
- Any other activity first approved by the sponsor

In order to get credit for the merits, the coach needs verification that you completed the task prior to the next event you would cheer. If it is not a task the coach (es) are involved in, a completed for provided by the coach is needed for the person in charge to fill out and explain that you completed the task. Forms may be obtained from the coach.

Any cheerleader who quits or is removed from the squad due to demerits or a disciplinary action may at the discretion of the coaches, athletic director, and administration not be allowed to try out for the following year.
* PLEASE SIGN, DETACH, & RETURN TO CHEER COACH*

I HAVE READ THE WEST HIGH CHEERLEADING CONSTITUTION AND AGREE TO ABIDE BY THIS CONSTITUTION AND FOLLOW THESE RULES TO THE BEST OF MY ABILITY.

____________________________________________________________
PRINT NAME

________________
GRADE

_________________________________________________________________________
SIGNATURE

_____ 
DATE

___________________________ 
PARENT/ GUARDIAN PRINTED NAME

_______________________________________________
PARENT/ GUARDIAN SIGNATURE

DATE

PLEASE INCLUDE ANY UPDATED CONTACT INFORMATION BELOW: