

**Hendricks**  
**Middle School**  
Cheerleading  
Handbook

# Cheerleading handbook

**2021-2022**

Our Purpose

**Mission Statement:** The purpose of the Hendricks Middle School Cheerleading teams shall be to promote and uphold school spirit, to develop a sense of sportsmanship among the students, and to better relationships between schools during all athletic events.

For campuses and the community, cheerleading exists in order to promote:

- Tradition
- Spirit
- Ambassadorship

For participants, cheerleading exists to provide students:

- Multiple leadership opportunities
- A sense of family
- Participation in athletics for students with a particular skill set
- Occasions to learn and exhibit sportsmanship and citizenship
- Assistance in achieving academic excellence

These multiple opportunities will help students grow and mature, both physically and emotionally, resulting in citizens who embody the HMS ethical principles. We believe learning these qualities in Middle School prepare you to succeed later in life. These guidelines are made so we can have fun, be safe, work hard, and develop character qualities that make us successful. **Excellence is expected and required.**

## Coaches

### Basketball

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*For updates, electronic version of handbook/signature sheets, or additional information please see  
HMS Basketball Cheerleading Webpage.*

## **Article 1: Expectations**

### **Section A: All Teams**

Cheerleaders must enjoy learning and performing stunts, jumps cheers, chants, and dances as well as conditioning. Cheerleaders must promote and maintain relationships with faculty, administration, student body, and work cooperatively with the band, dance team, athletic teams, and all school organizations. A cheerleader must maintain a positive attitude, maintain high energy, and enjoy working as part of a team. Everything you do, whether in uniform or NOT, reflects upon you, your team, your school and your family. **A HMS Cheerleader is expected to act above reproach at all times.**

### **Section B: Commitment**

Being a member of the HMS Cheerleading team requires a major commitment from athletes and their families. Our goals include developing as an individual *and* as a team. Therefore, it is important for athletes to understand the necessity of time management. Though it is highly encouraged to take advantage of and participate in multiple organizations and activities, it is important not to overextend yourself. All-star squads are allowed and encouraged, but they DO NOT come before HMS Cheerleading. Absences due to All-Star events will not be deemed excused. If an athlete commits to both the squads, they will be expected to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities for both teams. Any scheduling conflicts will be resolved by the coaches.

### **Section C: Respect**

Cheerleaders at Hendricks Middle School are expected to show everyone the highest level of respect. Disrespect will not be tolerated. Disrespect toward coaches or other adults (teachers, administrators, faculty, and parents) or peers will result in immediate discipline. Disrespect may result in being excused from practice by the coach for the day and/or other disciplinary consequences.

## **Section D: Parental Expectations**

- Support the decisions, goals, policies and procedures made by the coach or athletic director in accordance with the HMS Cheerleading Handbook, even when it does not fall in the favor of your specific athlete.
- Encourage your athlete to try their best at all times; Remember they take cue from their parents
- Review the expectations with your athlete and be sure they understand there will be consequences for unacceptable behaviors.
- Teach your child to be responsible and punctual by helping them be on time.
- Enthusiastically attend athletic functions to show your support.
- Read and respond to all emails that concern your cheerleader.
- Refrain from expressing *any* negativity on social media.
- Participate in all fundraising activities.
- Volunteer in areas where you can make a difference, and we can keep the program running effectively (We cannot run this program without parental/family/friend volunteers).
- Follow appropriate chain of command regarding communication: Head Coach, Athletic Director, Administrative Staff.

## **Article II: Requirements**

### **Section A: Participation**

As participation in Cheerleading is a privilege and not a right, HMS Cheer is authorized to set higher standards for participants than it would for those students who choose not to participate in these activities. Important goals of the program are to give students direction in developing character, self-discipline, responsibility, pride, loyalty, leadership, teamwork, respect for authority, and healthy living habits. Additionally, each cheerleader may be expected to complete at least one community service project.

### **Section B: Academics**

HMS cheerleaders will be expected to maintain academic eligibility. Simply stated: grades come first! Cheerleading will never be an acceptable reason for grades to falter. **Grades earned in the spring semester will be used for eligibility for the fall season.** (this will pertain specifically to football/competition team)

**\*\*A cheerleader must pass 5 out of 7 classes in order to be eligible by GHSA regulations to cheer during the following semester. However, it is poorly looked upon for a student-athlete to be failing any class. Grades will be taken into consideration during tryouts. If grades fall below or close to unacceptable standards, students should:**

1. Attend help sessions/Instructional Extension until grades are brought up to passing.
2. Attend without participation at games, competitions, and practices.
3. Weekly progress report may be necessary until grades are brought up to passing.

### **Section C: Physical Requirements**

Cheerleaders must be capable of performing the essential functions specified for each squad.

*Cheerleaders will:*

- Perform physical moves that may involve jumps, balance, rhythm, coordination, agility, and upper body strength.
- Exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness, and will perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in hot and cold weather.

\*Competition only: Cheerleaders **must uphold the skill level demonstrated** (i.e. tumbling, stunting, jumps, etc.) **at tryouts** while striving for continuous improvement. Failure to uphold skills while another cheerleader exceeds, may result in denial of participation. Periodic skill checks will be performed to ensure all cheerleaders are held accountable for maintaining their skills.

### **Article III: Attendance**

#### **Section A: General Expectations**

Cheerleaders are expected to be at practice in their practice clothes unless absent from school- this includes cheerleaders that may not be participating in an upcoming event.

**\*\*All appointments should be made on days that practice is not occurring. No other non-school activity may interfere with any cheerleading practice (this includes All-Star Cheerleading Squads).** An agreement must be made between teachers/coaches for simultaneous school-related activities. All squads are expected to attend all other required activities including, but not limited to: fundraisers/mini-camp,

team building activities, spirit raising, community service, and all other school functions to show unified school spirit to other teams at HMS.

**All** cheerleaders are expected to attend all games, pre and post season activities, competitions, and playoffs/tournaments.

**\*\*Note competition only-Athletes not present at a Friday practice will be denied the opportunity to cheer at the following Tuesday's football game.**

### **Section B: Absences**

The Coach will determine if the absence is excused or not. A cheerleader who must miss a practice and who is NOT absent from school **MUST discuss the situation with the coach prior to the absence** and is responsible for obtaining all information disseminated at practice. The coach may require written notification prior to the absence once it has been discussed with the coach.

1. An unexcused absence may result in the participant not being allowed to participate in the next event.
2. *"I don't feel good"*- If a cheerleader is sick and claims that she cannot practice as a result, written documentation the morning of the absence must be sent. However, in general, if you are well enough to be at school, you are well enough to practice and vice versa if you are well enough to practice you are well enough to attend school that day.
3. If you do not participate in PE you will be denied participation in cheerleading events—this includes dressing out!
4. Game/Performance day: If a cheerleader is absent from school the day of a game or performance, she may not participate and is responsible for informing the coach prior to the event. To be considered present, a student must attend a minimum of four class periods at the end of the day (at least ½ school day) per FCPS policy.
5. Two unexcused absences from mandatory events (practices, games, competitions, mini-camp, fundraisers) without coach approval could result in removal from the team and/or scheduled events.

### **Section C: Tardiness**

*If you are early, you are on time. If you are on time, you are late. If you are late you are in trouble!*

- Athletes who are late to practice, a game, an event, or the bus will receive the proper the disciplinary consequence as tardiness is disrespectful to all parties involved.

- Students are considered late if they are not properly attired when the practice/game/event time is scheduled. If you are late for the bus, you will be left and there will be disciplinary consequences to follow.
- What “on time” means: in the designated area, ready at the assigned time. This means being fully dressed in specified attire, shoes and socks, with hair pulled back and absolutely **no** jewelry, mats pulled out and stretching.

## **Article IV: General Information**

### **Section A: Transportation**

- Transportation arrangement to performances will be determined by the coaches. If buses are used, ALL cheerleaders are required to ride the bus to events unless otherwise advised/permitted by coach(s). Parents may take students home as long as they sign their children out with the coaches. If your child is riding home with someone else, the coaches must be notified in writing prior to departure. **THERE ARE NO BUSES BACK FOR FOOTBALL CHEERLEADING.**
- Transportation to competitions will be designated prior to the start of the season.
- Cheerleaders are to abide by all school transportation rules, procedures and safety guidelines in accordance with FCPS Transportation policies.
- As stated in the “Tardiness” section, participants who arrive late for a scheduled bus departure may be left for the event.

### **Section B: Safety**

- Squads shall be under the direct supervision of the appropriate Coach designee at all practices, events, and performances.
- Each team member must have a **current physical on file with HMS** to participate in tryouts or any practice/performance activity.
- All participants must be trained and qualified for proper spotting and landing techniques and must go through appropriate stunt progressions following NFHS/AACCA safety standards at all times.
- Absolutely **no jewelry** (including body piercings) or **acrylic nails/gel/SNS** will be worn during practices, games, or competitions. Band-Aid’s covering any piercing are also prohibited.
- No tumbling or stunting is permitted unless a cheer coach is present. **Because of the increased athleticism of today’s cheerleaders and the complexity of the stunts performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic sport, of serious injury.**

## **Article V: Responsibilities**

Being a member of the HMS cheer program is an honor, a responsibility and a privilege. Due to the level of visibility of campus cheerleaders, it is imperative that squad members set a good example for peers.

### **Section A: Uniforms**

- Uniforms are school property and will be worn only when instructed by the coaches.
- Sideline: Poms, bows, socks, and shoes are part of your uniform. If you do not have ALL parts of your uniform at the game, you will not cheer.
- Cheerleaders will be responsible for any missing or damaged uniform pieces and will be expected to pay reimbursement or replacement costs.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for maintaining the cleanliness and condition of their uniforms.
- Cheerleaders that do not return their uniform at the conclusion of their season will not be permitted to try out for any squad the following season and will be added to the school's fine list. (this includes the high school cheerleading)
- **Bras/sports bras should not be visible while in uniform and bra color should be neutral. At no time is a cheerleader to have her bra/sports bra exposed.**

### **Section B: Personal Presentation**

#### ***In Uniform***

1. Cheerleaders will wear hair and fingernails as designated by the coaches.  
COMPETITION: NAILS MAY NOT EXTEND PAST THE END OF THE FINGER, NO ACRYLICS, GEL, SNS, etc (per GHSA guidelines), NO POLISH!
2. Cheerleaders will not chew gum or eat during practice, pep rally, game or performance.
3. **Cheerleaders may NOT wear any type of jewelry (including bandages covering piercings) while in uniform, practicing, or performing in accordance with NFHS rules. It is a safety violation for athletes to wear jewelry during practice games, and competitions, including ALL body piercings.**

#### ***Out of Uniform***

1. Cheerleaders are expected to abide by the HMS Code of Conduct/Dress Code both at school and at school functions (including athletic events).



2. Cheerleaders are expected to dress in a manner that would reflect a positive image on HMS and fellow cheerleaders.

### **Section C: Practice**

Cheerleaders must wear the appropriate attire to practice. This includes cheerleading shoes and a hair rubber band if necessary. Additionally, cheerleaders will practice in specified attire as directed by coach.

## **Article VI**

### **Section A: Etiquette**

All members of the HMS Cheerleading squads are expected to conduct themselves with class and dignity at all times, both inside and outside of school. Athletes should remember that games and competitions are a chance to make a positive impression upon our public and community and be a role model. Your good behavior and best performance is critical to that goal. Unsportsmanlike conduct is not tolerated at HMS athletic events, and any cheerleader acting in an unsportsmanlike way will face the appropriate consequences. **This includes behavior in class, at practice, at games, out in the community, or on social media.**

### **Section B: Bullying**

Hendricks Middle School enforces a **ZERO** tolerance policy for all types of bullying, including in and out of school, in person or online. Please know that if the coach(es) are not notified of a bullying situation, the situation cannot be handled.

This definition includes three important components:

1. Bullying is aggressive behavior that involves unwanted, negative actions.
2. Bullying involves a pattern of behavior repeated over time.
3. Bullying involves an imbalance of power or strength.

#### *Types of Bullying: (verbally/social media)*

1. Verbal bullying including derogatory comments and bad names
2. Bullying through social exclusion or isolation
3. Physical bullying such as hitting, kicking, shoving, and spitting
4. Bullying through lies and false rumor.
5. Having money or other things taken or damaged by students who bully
6. Being threatened or being forced to do things by students who bully

7. Racial bullying
8. Sexual bullying
9. Cyber bullying (via cell phone or Internet)

### **Section B: Alcohol, Tobacco and Drugs**

The use, possession of, or association with tobacco, drugs, and/or alcohol at ANY time while being a member of the cheerleading team is prohibited. This includes the summer, weekends, and holidays continuing through the participants season. Any involvement in lude behaviors and/or activities in public is prohibited (including publication of photos on social media). **Violation of these may result in automatic dismissal from the squad.** You are expected to comply with the HMS Code of Conduct and laws of our community. Consequences will be administered at coaches and administrators discretion.

### **Section C: Internet Safety**

Members of the HMS Cheerleading team shall refrain from posting questionable material, including pictures and dialogue on the internet (including but not limited to Snapchat, Twitter, Instagram, Vine, etc) and will monitor to the best of their ability what their friends post about them or on their pages. Cheerleaders with pictures of themselves in compromising situations will result in benching/probation/removal from the team. **Cheerleaders will not have pictures of themselves with any form of alcohol/drugs/tobacco in the background or foreground of the picture as well as not posting any pictures of a sexual nature. Failure to follow this policy can and will result in benching/probation/removal from the team.**

### **Article VII: Consequences and Discipline Policy**

This discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the HMS Cheer Program. Cheerleaders will receive **one** courtesy warning prior to receiving a consequence on Level I or Level II.

**Level I Infractions include but are not limited to the following: (Consequence: Physical Conditioning, parent contact)**

- Tardiness to practice
- Failure to be in complete uniform as specified by coach (at school, games, and performances)
- Forgetting practice/game uniform attire

- Wearing jewelry in practice, game, or performance
- Chewing gum, eating candy, or snacking during a game, practice or activity without permission
- Being disruptive, horsing around, talking excessively during a game, practice or activity
- Socializing with friends or family without permission

Level II Infractions include but are not limited to the following: (Consequence: sitting out game/competition)

- Disrespect/insubordination toward cheer coaches
- Disrespect and behavior unbecoming of a cheerleader
- Disrespect toward a teacher or administrator
- Disrespect/inappropriate language toward other team members
- Unexcused absence to a game/practice/performance
- Leaving a game, practice, or performance without permission of coach
- Refusing to work or pay attention at practice
- Unsportsmanlike conduct at a game or performance
- Talking on cell phones during a game, practice or performance without permission
- Academic dishonesty
- Assignment to ISS
- Receiving a discipline referral (for dress code or behavioral issues)
- Receiving 3 Level I Infractions

Level III Infractions include but are not limited to: (Consequence: Automatic dismissal from HMS Cheer program)

- Alcohol
- Drug use
- Smoking
- Destruction or vandalism of school property
- OSS from school
- Stealing
- Gross/serious misconduct
- Receiving 4 Level I/II Infractions

\* Violations of student code of conduct may also be handled by HMS administration in conjunction with the Athletic Department.

### **Article VIII: Financial Responsibilities**

All financial obligations are handled by the HMS Cheer Booster Clubs. All payments should be made to the respective booster club for the athlete's squad.

A returned check fee of \$25 will be billed to the cheerleader's account if a check does not clear.

Cheer members will be required to participate in group fundraising activities in which all money earned will be contributed to the general cheer activity fund. The general cheer fund for each program is designed to alleviate group costs (transportation fees, competition entry fees, etc). There will be a "buy out" option for some fundraisers.

The estimated out-of-pocket to be paid to the Cheer Booster Club is \$800-900 (Football/Competition) and \$300 (Basketball) and will include all mandatory items. Other items may be purchased throughout the season through vendors and will be deemed optional.

### **Article IX: Coaches**

Section A: Responsibilities (in accordance with the Director of Interscholastic Athletics, and Principals)

- Be responsible for the cheerleading squads in all their activities.
- Supervise all practices and performances or provide a faculty member substitute to supervise.
- Work cooperatively with the local school athletic director or proper administrator throughout the year.
- Arrange transportation of the squad for away games and competitions.
- Keep accurate attendance for practices and games.
- Approve all cheers, dances, routines, signs, and apparel.
- Keep medical information for each cheerleader readily accessible at all practices and events.
- Supervise carefully the teaching of stunts to ensure the safety of the team and eliminate stunts requiring skills beyond the ability of the squad members.
- Be responsible for the planned practice tryouts and selection of the squad.

- Follow the spirit rules and regulations of the NFHS.
- Seek training in the elements of proper cheerleading.
- Ensure the cheerleading team practices proper athletic conditioning to reduce the risks of injury.

### **Section B: National Federation of High Schools- Coaches Code of Ethics**

The function of a coach is to educate students through participation in interscholastic competition. The following guidelines for coaches have been adopted by the NFHS Board of Directors.

#### *The Coach:*

- Shall be aware that he or she has a tremendous influence, for either good or ill, on the education of the student and, thus, shall never place the value of winning above the value of instilling the highest ideals of character.
- Shall uphold the honor and dignity of the profession. In all personal contact with students, officials, athletic directors, school administrators, the state high school athletic association, the media, and the public, the coach shall strive to set an example of the highest ethical and moral conduct.
- Shall take an active role in the prevention of drug, alcohol and tobacco abuse.
- Shall avoid the use of alcohol and tobacco products when in contact with players.
- Shall promote the entire interscholastic program of the school and direct his or her program in harmony with the total school program.
- Shall master the contest rules and shall teach them to his or her team members. The coach shall not seek an advantage by circumvention of the spirit or letter of the rules.
- Shall exert his or her influence to enhance sportsmanship by spectators, both directly and by working closely with cheerleaders, pep club sponsors, booster clubs, and administrators.
- Shall respect and support contest officials. The coach shall not indulge in conduct which would incite players or spectators against the officials. Public criticism of officials or players is unethical.
- Shall meet and exchange cordial greetings with the opposing coach to set the correct tone for the event before and after the contest.
- Shall not exert pressure on faculty members to give student special consideration.