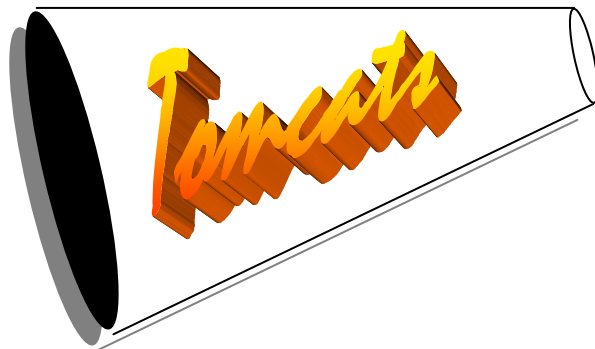


TBISD Cheerleading Handbook

School Year _____



Tom Bean ISD
This book belongs to:

Introduction

The Cheerleader. Traditionally these words bring to mind images of Friday nights and spirited coeds adorned in wool letter sweaters and saddle oxfords leading an enthusiastic crowd in traditional yells. However, cheerleading has changed. The contemporary cheerleaders do much more than just help generate crowd enthusiasm at athletic events.

Today the role of American cheerleaders must be, in addition to the primary role as spirit leaders, ambassadors of their schools, and in most instances, diversely skilled athletes. The role of the cheerleader now involves regular community support and interaction, public relations exposure, and school-based fund raising activities.

Cheerleading has been and is today in a state of rapid transition. Its many faceted roles in athletics and school programming are becoming increasingly diverse and complex.

Priorities

1. A cheerleader's first responsibility is to her academic program. The educational process should not be compromised by participation in cheerleading.
2. The primary function of a cheerleading program is to support interscholastic athletes.
3. A cheerleading squad has the responsibility to uphold, to reflect, and to project the goals and ideas of their school community.
4. A cheerleader may participate in the TBISD Athletic program. Coaches may not try to persuade cheerleaders to refrain from athletics or any other extra-curricular activity or club. UIL sanctioned contests will have precedence over cheerleading performances.
5. Cheerleading will have precedence over other non-UIL activities or obligations. Cheerleaders need to be cautious to not over-book themselves. Our goals include developing as an individual and as a team. These goals take no less than 100% effort from each individual. It is wrong to expect any program to lower its standards because you have overcommitted yourself.

Note: the term *cheerleader* is used to describe varsity, junior varsity, and middle school cheerleaders, and mascots.

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ARTICLE 1 – OBJECTIVE AND PURPOSE

To create school spirit, loyalty, pride, and establish a feeling of loyalty and cooperation with one another through being a member of a group. Cheerleading should inspire athletes to the very best of their abilities. Cheerleaders should plan and initiate activities that promote student body and community support and involvement in the promotion of athletic events and activities.

ARTICLE 2 – MEMBERSHIP

Section I – Cheerleaders will set a good example for their fellow classmates. Cheerleaders will display the following characteristics throughout the school year:

1. willing display of a positive school spirit
2. demonstration of a positive attitude toward cheerleading
3. display of high moral standards
4. showing good sportsmanship
5. honesty and truthfulness

Section II – *Cheerleaders will give freely of their time for any cheerleading activity throughout the year.* This includes all fundraisers, summer practices, summer camp, competitions, etc. All conflicts with other school activities must be discussed with the sponsor in advance. Employment and disciplinary detention will be considered as an unexcused absence for missing any cheerleading activity.

Section III – *Cheerleaders will cooperate with teachers, administrators, sponsors, and fellow cheerleaders.* Cheerleaders will promote and maintain good relationships with other school organizations and the student body. All problems and conflicts will be discussed within the cheerleading organization.

Section IV – Cheerleaders will be in good physical condition. Essential physical functions of a cheerleader are:

- Perform jumps and other physical moves that are part of cheerleader routines.
- Perform stunts that may involve climbing, balance, agility, and upper body strength
- Exhibit rhythm and coordination in performing cheerleader routines.
- Demonstrate stamina in performing regular physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness.
- Perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in heat and cold weather.
- Demonstrate clear diction and strong vocal qualities.

ARTICLE 3 – REQUIREMENTS

Section I – Candidates must be in good standing with the cheerleading organization.

Section II – The number of academic credit requirements must be met at the beginning of each year.

Section III – Eligibility at the beginning of the school year: during the first six weeks of the fall semester, freshman and sophomores must have accumulated the required number of academic credits in state-approved courses which count toward state graduation requirements to be eligible for participation in extra curricular activities as set forth in rule 10 TAC 97.113.

Section IV – A candidate is expected to of high moral, ethical and behavior standards. A candidate that has received two(2) or more major disciplinary actions during the present school year which include In School Suspension (ISS) or Out of School Suspension (OSS), will not be allowed to participate in try outs. A candidate that has been assigned to the district’s Disciplinary Alternative Educational Placement(DAP) classroom during the current school year will not be allowed to participate in try outs. Persistent misbehavior may result in disqualification of a candidate from trying out.

Section V – Any candidate for cheerleader who has outstanding fees incurred during the previous cheerleading year will not be permitted to try out.

Section VI – Any candidate must have attended TBISD for twelve weeks immediately prior to tryouts. If a candidate has been in attendance for less than twelve weeks, teacher evaluations must be produced from the school in which they were in attendance immediately prior to enrolling in TBISD. (Cheer Sponsor will attempt to obtain evaluations from the previous school.)

Section VII – Any candidate must have passing semester averages (70 or above) in every class for the previous semester

ARTICLE 4 – SELECTION PROCESS

CHEERLEADER:

Section I – A candidate will have a signed letter of agreement and signed TBISD Drug Testing Form on file.

Section II – A candidate will have grades verified.

Section III – A candidate will perform before a panel of two or three judges and perform a required cheer, chant, and dance. Judges will evaluate and score necessary skills. This score is 60% of the total score. The judges’ averaged scores will be used as the

judge's percentage. Candidates not meeting the minimum scoring requirements will not be placed on the squad. Minimum scoring requirements are as follows:

- Varsity will be 70% out of a possible 100% in judge's score
- Junior Varsity will be 60% out of a possible 100% in judge's score
- Middle School will be 50% out of a possible 100% in judge's score

Section IV – Sponsor and teacher evaluations of the candidate are 30% of the total score.

Section V – Student body vote is 10% of the total score.

Section VI - A candidate who is unable to physically perform during the tryout process due to a temporary physical injury may use a videotaping of previous cheerleading experience. The following guidelines have been put in place and must be followed. Sponsor will make these guidelines available to judges if a video is used for tryout.

- Judges shall be instructed to consider “absence of pressure,” lack of physical/respiratory exertion, vocal ability, and note if a cheerleader is using a hard or spring floor when performing specific skills” on video.
- The candidate must perform each individual “specific skill” required in the tryout to receive credit/points.
- No score reduction or credit shall be exercised due to the claimed surgery/injury. However, in light of the above considerations, a perfect score for any “specific skill” or category should be rare.

MASCOT:

Mascots will perform in conjunction with the cheerleaders. Mascots will abide by the same rules and regulations as the cheerleaders.

Section I – A candidate will have a signed letter of agreement and signed TBISD Drug Testing Form on file.

Section II – A candidate will have grades verified.

Section III – A candidate will perform before a panel of two or three judges and perform a required skit (approximately 3 minutes in length), impromptu skit (skit scenarios provided by the judges), and complete an interview with the judges. Judges will evaluate and score necessary skills. This score is 60% of the total score.

Section IV – Sponsor and teacher evaluations of the candidate are 30% of the total score.

Section V – Student body vote is 10% of the total score.

Section VI – Mascot skits must be presented in its entirety and have prior approval from the squad sponsor(s) before election day. Once the skit is approved it may not be

altered before election day. Skits that don't meet sponsor approval must be corrected, presented, and approved by the sponsor before election day.

PARENT MEETINGS:

- **PRE-TRYOUT:** Each candidate and her parent or guardian must attend an orientation to the cheerleading process and cheerleading responsibilities in order to tryout. Any parent/guardian who is unable to attend this meeting must contact the Cheerleader Instructor to schedule an individual conference in order for their student to participate in the cheerleading process.
- **UNIFORM FITTING:** A parent must be present at the uniform fitting session. All orders will be finalized on that date and the parent will be responsible for signing the Uniform Order Agreement Sheet. NOTE: camp clothes, game day shirts, and other small miscellaneous items are not included in this order.

PRE-TRYOUT CLINIC:

- The clinic is scheduled in order to acquaint candidates with skills/techniques on which they will be judged. Attendance at the clinic is strongly encouraged. Should a candidate not be present at the clinic session, she is responsible for learning any missed material on her own time from other participants; clinic leaders are not permitted to provide make-up instruction.
- Spectators (including parents, coaches, friends, non-involved school personnel) are not permitted to watch or videotape clinic practice.

ELECTION DAY:

- All candidates must attend the student body tryout evaluation and the judges' tryout evaluation. Candidates not present for one or both evaluations will be given a zero for each missed evaluation. The zero will then be averaged in with the other portions from the weighting process (school, teacher, judges) to develop a total score.
- Parents, friends, or family will not be allowed in the building during any phase of the tryouts with the judges.
- Candidates must be present at both the school tryout evaluation and the judge's evaluation.

ARTICLE 5 – SQUAD SIZE

Section I – Varsity squad will consist of no more than ten (10) cheerleaders and one mascot. This squad is made up of sophomores, juniors, and seniors. (exception: the mascot may be a freshman)

Section II - Junior varsity squad will consist of no more than eight (8) cheerleaders and one mascot. This squad is made up of freshman, sophomores, and juniors.

Section III – Middle school squad will consist of no more than ten (10) cheerleaders and one mascot. This squad is made up of no more than five seventh graders and no more than five eighth graders. The mascot may be either a 7th or 8th grader..

Section IV – Alternates

Alternates are not named. If a vacancy in a cheerleading squad occurs three or more weeks prior to the first day of the school year, the vacancy will be filled by naming the student with the next highest composite score, assuming that student still meets the qualifications and desires to make the necessary commitments. At the time a vacancy is filled, uniform and accessories will be ordered at parents' expense. If a vacancy occurs less than three weeks before the school year begins, it will not be filled. Judges ratings and other scoring are maintained in the principal's office for the use if this circumstance arises.

ARTICLE 6 – ABSENCES

Section I – Cheerleaders will have above average school attendance habits. Numerous absences are grounds for disciplinary action. Cheerleaders are responsible to their fellow squad members in attending and participating in all practices and activities.

Section II – Cheerleaders must seek approval from the sponsor before being absent from any cheerleading activity twenty-four (24) hours **in advance** when reasonable. The following are considered **excused** absences:

1. personal illness or accident
2. funeral or death in the family
3. medical or dental appointments during off-season
4. family vacation during off-season
5. religious holidays
6. participation in academic testing
7. approved UIL activities

Section III – Cheerleaders will receive demerits for unexcused absences. **Unexcused absences** include such reasons as serving detention, working on other school-related projects during cheerleading activities, and employment. Exceptions to this rule will be made on an individual basis at the discretion of the sponsor.

Section IV – Cheerleaders will notify the sponsor **before** being absent from cheerleading activities due to illness. A cheerleader will call the front office on the morning of her illness and ask that a notice be placed in the sponsor's mailbox. If an emergency should occur, the parent may write a note or call the sponsor the next day for the absence to be excused. Four (4) consecutive absences will require a doctor's note.

Section V – Any cheerleader who has not attended school for at least four (4) periods on game day will **not** perform.

Section VI – Any cheerleader whose absence from performing at an athletic event is unexcused will **not** perform at the next event.

Section VII – Any cheerleader whose absence from practice or a meeting is unexcused will **not** perform at a pep rally or game. She will attend the pep rally/game in full uniform and sit in a designated area.

Section VIII – Any cheerleader whose absence from participating in a major fundraising project is unexcused will **not** perform for one game.

Section IX – Cheerleaders will ride with the squad to and from all out of town functions or they will not be allowed to perform. Cheerleaders with occasional extenuating circumstances must receive prior approval from the sponsor.

ARTICLE 7 – COSTS AND UNIFORMS

Section I – Cheerleaders will pay all expenses before removing new garments from the school office. The cost of uniforms, camp clothes and required accessories is the sole responsibility of the parent.

Section II – If gymnastic or stunt classes are required, the cheerleader assumes financial responsibility for the classes.

Section III – Cheerleaders will be required to wear a standard outfit when cheering with the Tom Bean Cheerleading team to school and games. When athletes dress alike it creates an atmosphere of class and dignity; it communicates a unified sense of purpose. Standard attire also prevents the occasional embarrassment caused when athletes have “unique” tastes in clothing. It is also a safety violation for our athletes to wear jewelry during practice and games, including ALL body piercing.

Standard attire will always include specific uniform for that game, team shoes, briefs, warm-up suit, crop top, and hair in a ponytail with required team bow. No exceptions will be allowed. All attire should be brought to each game and weather will help determine which items will be worn at that game.

ARTICE 8 – GRADES

Section I – Cheerleaders will set a good example for their fellow classmates. They will put forth good effort in the classroom and display good citizenship qualities.

Section II – Cheerleaders will maintain an overall 70 average in all classes. The sponsor will monitor grades weekly. Any cheerleader with failing grades for a six-week period will **not** perform per in accordance with UIL guidelines without exception. If improvement is not forthcoming, suitable actions will be taken in keeping with state and school policy.

ARTICLE 9 – SPONSOR AUTHORITY

Section I – Cheerleaders will attend all activities and meetings scheduled by the sponsor.

Section II – All activities, projects, trips, expenditures, and fund raisers concerning the cheerleading organization must be approved by the sponsor.

ARTICLE 10 – HEAD CHEERLEADER

Section I – The head cheerleader position is very important and carries a large responsibility. The sponsor and fellow squad members look to her for leadership, dedication, enthusiasm, and the ability to work with others.

Section II –Varsity: only juniors and seniors with at least one year of experience with the squad will be considered for the position of head cheerleader. Junior Varsity: any squad member is eligible for election as head cheerleader. Middle school: only an eighth grade member with at least one year of experience with the squad will be considered for the position.

Section III – Selection: The head cheerleader selection is done with consideration to the qualities of leadership, responsibility, and academic performance of each candidate as well as the candidate's skill as a cheerleader. Head cheerleader selection will be determined through a three part selection process which will consists of a panel selection committee, judge ranking, and squad vote. The panel will consist of the middle school sponsor, high school sponsor, and the high school counselor. The panel decision will carry a weight of 50%. The judges' ranking on cheerleader skills will carry a weight of 20% and the squad vote will carry a weight of 30%.

Section IV – The duties of the head cheerleader include the following:

1. announcing all practices and meetings including time and place although most are scheduled regularly
2. notify each member of the uniform to be worn
3. notify sponsor of any group complications

Section V – If the head cheerleader mishandles the position or cannot for any reason uphold her duties, the instructor (with the approval of the principal) reserves the right to demote the head cheerleader and select another.

ARTICLE 11 – BEHAVIOR

Section I – Misconduct of any kind (at the discretion of the director) will not be tolerated. Cheerleaders are expected to follow the TBISD Student Code of Conduct. Infractions will result in disciplinary action and may cause a member to be considered for temporary or permanent suspension from the squad. This includes foul language, fighting, conduct unbecoming a cheerleader, disrespect, or other severe behavior infractions by the cheerleader.

Section II – The cheerleader will treat all school personnel and others with utmost respect.

Section III – *A cheerleader is an ambassador for the school and will act accordingly.* Any cheerleader representing themselves, or their organization, in an unfavorable, questionable or illegal manner through electronic media (i.e. websites, personal home pages, blogs, text messages, chat rooms or similar websites/files accessible through a server or internet) or using electronic communication devices in such a way as to bring discredit, dishonor, or disgrace on their organization or members of any other school organization including themselves (i.e. camera phones, digital photos, electronic descriptions) will be subject to the disciplinary actions determined by appropriate school officials and/or organization sponsors/directors/coaches, including probation or dismissal from the organization.

Section IV – If a cheerleader's behavior in school is so unacceptable that they are placed in ISS, they will sit out during that week's pep rally and game. This is in addition to demerit and probationary procedures. (EX: If placed in ISS on a Tuesday and Wednesday, they will set out for the Friday pep rally and game. If placed in ISS for Friday and Monday, they will set out for the Friday pep rally and game in which they served ISS only) (They will be required to sit by the sponsor during the game and pep rally. They will be in the appropriate uniform).

ARTICLE 12 – GENERAL RULES

Section I – Cheerleaders are responsible for advertising and creating enthusiasm for each game, pep rally, and activity.

Section II – All cheerleaders will work together as a team. Causing continual disruption within the squad will result in disciplinary action.

Section III – Unbecoming appearance or behavior of any cheerleader will result in the cheerleader being asked to correct the problem. Not correcting the problem will result in disciplinary action.

Section IV – Cheerleaders will be present at the beginning of the performance and remain in the assigned place for the duration of the performance. While performing at games, they must return to cheer after halftime.

Section V – Cheerleaders will not leave cheering at games to talk to or sit with friends. They are there to cheer and not to socialize.

Section VI – No part of the cheerleading uniform may be worn at any time other than cheerleading activities. No part of the current uniform will be worn by anyone other than a cheerleader.

Section VII – The mascot will wear the mascot uniform at all functions where cheerleaders perform. The mascot will remain in uniform throughout the performance.

ARTICLE 13 – CHEERLEADING CAMP

Section I – All varsity and junior varsity cheerleaders will attend summer cheerleading camp at their own expense. The sponsor will determine the camp attended and dates attended. Camp personnel will determine the level of capabilities.

Section II – Cheerleaders will abide by all rules and regulations throughout the course of the summer camp. Any cheerleader who does not act accordingly and brings embarrassment upon the squad and/or school will receive five (5) demerits that cannot be removed with merits. The cheerleader will not perform in the first pep rally or game of the football season.

Section III – Failure to attend and participate in the summer camp may result in permanent suspension from the squad.

ARTICLE 14 – SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

Section I – The sponsor and principal will determine at which events the cheerleaders will perform.

Section II – All varsity cheerleaders will perform/attend all of the following events (as determined by sponsor and principal):

1. pep rallies
2. varsity volleyball games - home
3. varsity football games – home and away
4. playoff football or volleyball games
5. varsity basketball games – boys and girls - home
6. playoff basketball games – boys and girls
7. varsity baseball games - home
8. playoff baseball games
9. varsity softball games – home
10. playoff softball games

Section III – The junior varsity squad will perform/attend at all of the following events:

1. pep rallies
2. junior varsity volleyball games - home
3. junior varsity football games – home and away
4. varsity playoff games
5. junior varsity basketball games – boys and girls - home
6. junior varsity softball games – home
7. junior varsity baseball games - home

Section IV – Practices:

1. Be at practice on time. This means fully dressed for practice at the beginning of practice. Dress out in designated shorts, t-shirt, shoes and socks, hair pulled up and absolutely no jewelry.
2. Visitors (friends and family) are not allowed at practices.
3. Food, drinks (other than water), and gum are not allowed in the practice area. Cheerleaders are encouraged to bring a personal water bottle.
4. Water breaks will be given.
5. Practice times will vary; typically three practices per week (morning or afternoon) in the summer and four during football season. Practice days and times are determined by the sponsor and may vary from this fore mentioned estimate.
6. Cheerleaders who miss the “walk-through” practice will be limited in their performance at the pep rally and game.
7. Cheerleaders should never stunt or practice unsupervised.
8. Parents are expected to arrange for prompt pick-up after practice is over.

ARTICLE 15 – DISCIPLINARY POLICY

Section I – Demerits

A cheerleader will receive a demerit when she fails to satisfactorily fulfill her responsibilities. The two demerit cycles are (1) from Election Day to the end of December and (2) from January 1st to the end of the school year.

A cheerleader will be benched for one week when she receives her fifth (5th) demerit and again when she receives her eighth (8th) demerit. Twelve (12) demerits in one cycle will result in dismissal from the squad for the remainder of the cycle. If a cheerleader receives her fifth demerit on Thursday, she will not perform on Friday. A benched cheerleader will attend the pep rally and game in full uniform and sit in a designated area.

Demerits will be given for the following:

1. missing practice
2. being late for practice
3. leaving practice early
4. missing a performance
5. poor performance
6. showing lack of enthusiasm and spirit during performance
7. not wearing the right uniform
8. poor cooperation with sponsor, teachers, and administrators
9. poor cooperation with head cheerleader
10. showing disrespect to sponsor, teachers, and administrators
11. continual disruptions, distractions, disrespect other cheerleaders
12. talking to outsiders during game
13. not having props
14. skipping classes
15. chewing gum or eating during a performance
16. being dishonest with sponsor

17. excessive absences from school
18. unexcused absence of cheerleading duties
19. conduct unbecoming a cheerleader (e.g.: foul language, fighting.)
20. being assigned a detention by a teacher
21. being assigned ISS
22. infraction of any school rule or policy as printed in the student handbook
23. loss of cheerleader handbook
24. Violation of Article 13 Section II

Demerits will be given at the discretion of the sponsor. Demerits may also be given for offenses not listed but based on the discretion of the sponsor.

Merits can be earned to erase demerits that have been accumulated. Merits will also be given at the discretion of the sponsor with consideration of input from faculty and administration.

Section II – Probation

Any member on probation is subject to all rules and regulations of the organization, but is not eligible to participate. Any member receiving five (5) demerits in one week will be placed on probation the following week.

A member receiving ten (10) demerits will be placed on probation the following two weeks.

A member will automatically be placed on one-week probation for receiving break or after school detention.

Section III – Suspension

Any member may be suspended temporarily or permanently for lack of cooperation or poor attitude as determined by the sponsor and/or administration.

A head cheerleader being suspended from the organization after having failed to meet the scholastic or attitude requirements will vacate her position immediately.

If a member chooses to leave the squad, they will be given a 24 hour “cool off” period to reconsider their decision. After the “cool off” period, they if they decide to leave the squad, they may not rejoin for the remainder of the school year but has the option to try out at the next opportunity. Medical injuries will be handled on an individual basis.

A member **may** be permanently suspended for the following:

1. engaging in any conduct that disrupts school activities
2. showing poor attitude or lack of cooperation
3. displaying conduct unbecoming a cheerleader (e.g. foul language, fighting).
4. non attendance of summer camp

A member **will** be permanently suspended for the following:

1. being expelled from school
2. receiving two (2) separate disciplinary ISS assignments in one election period
3. receiving a total of forty-eight (48) demerits within one election period
4. failing a drug test administered by the Tom Bean School for the *second* time
5. any violation that results in the placement into the DAEP program
6. if found **guilty** of an alcohol, illegal drugs, or other misconduct issues (EX: police involved matters)

If permanently suspended, a cheerleader will wait one full year (365 days) from date of suspension before they are eligible to try out for cheerleader again. If any violation occurs again after the 365 day suspension, the individual can no longer try out or become cheerleader.

ARTICLE 16 – THE CHEERLEADER HANDBOOK

Section I – Each member of the squad will be given a bound handbook that includes the Cheerleading Constitution and Bylaws and a list of demerits she has received. She is responsible for maintaining the handbook for the entire year. At the end of the school year, she will return the handbook to the sponsor. New handbooks will be issued each year.

Section II – Each member's handbook will contain a demerit sheet where accumulation of demerits is recorded. If the handbook is lost within the year, the member will receive twenty-three (23) demerits. The member's parent/guardian will initial the list of demerits each time one is given.

Section III – The member and her parent/guardian must sign the *Agreement to Abide by Constitution and Bylaws* statement to be inserted in the member's handbook. The original copy will be maintained for the year by the sponsor.

Agreement to Abide by Cheerleading Constitution and Bylaws

To the parent/guardian of _____:

Your daughter has been given the distinct honor of being a cheerleader for the 2009-10 school year. Of all the girls who tried out for this position, she was chosen for the skills she demonstrated as well as her spirit and enthusiasm.

With this honor come many responsibilities she has agreed to accept. She has been instructed that being a cheerleader at Tom Bean Independent School District is a privilege and not a right. For this reason, we ask that you take the time to read the Cheerleading Constitution and Bylaws with your daughter. This will ensure that no misunderstandings or complications arise throughout the year.

The Tom Bean ISD cheerleading organization works on a demerit system. Reasons for receiving a demerit are clearly stated in the constitution. If your daughter receives a demerit, she will bring you the handbook that contains the *List of Demerits*. I ask that you initial the offense at that time. Without this acknowledgment, your daughter may not be able to perform at the next scheduled event. It is her sole responsibility to have you initial the *List of Demerits* and return to me.

I hope that this year of being a cheerleader is an exciting one for you as well as your daughter!

Sincerely,

Amy White
TBHS Cheerleader Sponsor

Suzan Henderson
TBMS Cheerleader Sponsor

I, _____, have read the Cheerleading Constitution and Bylaws within this handbook and agree to abide by all.

(member signature)

I, _____, have read the Cheerleading Constitution and Bylaws within this handbook with my daughter and agree to abide by all.

(parent/guardian signature)