

HST Cheer Program Guidelines 2022 - 2023

Coach Showers:

Email: kjshowers@gaston.k12.nc.us

Cell Phone Number: (704) 604 - 5176

Communication:

Please do not assume that because you sent a message or email, I received it. If there is no response from me, then I did not get your message and if the message was to inform me of an absence and you get no response, your absence will be counted as unexcused. I will communicate with the parents and the cheerleaders almost 100% through electronic communication. This will include text and email which is created to communicate with the cheerleaders and the parents. No cheerleader will be permitted to be friends with the coach on social networking sites as this is a violation of Gaston County Schools policy.

Academics:

You will be expected to have a C average in all classes. Grades will be checked on a biweekly basis. If a cheerleader does not submit their grades, they will not be able to participate. **Academics should and will be placed before athletics!** I, as the coach, reserve the right to administer consequences if these priorities are not met. Skipping school at any time without a valid reason will NOT be tolerated and will be punished by immediate dismissal from the squad! Cheerleaders should make the coach aware of school absences as well as absences from practice. Please understand that I expect your child to be at school unless there is a valid reason for missing. Skipping school includes with the parent's knowledge, but not having a valid excuse (as approved in the school handbook).

Conduct and Commitment:

- **Commitment** is the #1 goal of the Highland School of Technology cheerleading squad. **All cheerleaders should be 100% committed to their squad and coach at all times.** Leaving the squad for any reason before the cheerleader's commitment is fulfilled will result in full loss of credit and the cheerleader not being allowed to return to the squad that cheerleading season or the next.

- HST cheerleaders are expected to be **positive role models that represent the school well on and off the field/court/mat.**
- HST cheerleaders **will not participate in ANY illegal activity**, including but not limited to: tobacco use (including electronic cigarettes), alcohol, drugs, theft, vandalism, physical fighting, etc. Any participation in any of these activities can and will result in the cheerleader's immediate dismissal from the squad.
- Absolute **NO PROFANITY** and **NO PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION** with a significant other are allowed while in uniform or while representing Highland in any way. **This includes internet sites, and any other place that you post pictures and/or discuss being a member of the Highland School of Technology cheerleaders.** Pictures in these places must also be appropriate for representing the squad as well. Pictures of a Highland cheerleader in inappropriate clothing, pictures of excessive public displays of affection, videos/pictures of inappropriate dancing, and videos/pictures of illegal activity posted on social media will not be tolerated and can result in immediate dismissal from the squad depending on severity.
- **You will show respect to ALL Highland School of Technology students, faculty, coaches, administrators, and those from other schools while at home and away games.**

Appearance:

- **No jewelry may be worn during practice or games.** All jewelry must be removed. This is for the safety of all cheerleaders. Any jewelry that cannot be removed will result in the cheerleader being removed from all practices and performances until their jewelry can be removed. (Piercings may not be covered with tape, bandages, etc.)
- **Hair should be worn in a ponytail or braids during all practices and games.** All hair should be out of the cheerleader's face and off of her shoulders as much as possible. No hair should fall out of the ponytail or braid at any time. Cheerleaders may use bobby pins and hairspray to keep their hair up properly. This is for the safety of the cheerleaders.
- No visible tattoos at any time. Any cheerleader with a visible tattoo will not be allowed to practice or perform.
- **Fingernails must be cut where they cannot be seen when looking at the palm of the hand at all times. This is for the safety of all the cheerleaders.** Consequences will be administered for fingernails longer than the length mentioned above. This includes real and fake nails.

- Cheerleaders should dress appropriately at school and other times when they are in public and not in uniform. Cheerleaders are representatives of the school at ALL times, on and off the field/court. Cheerleaders should be appropriately covered during practice times, and shorts and shirts should be worn at a length that will not reveal any undergarments or midriff. Cheerleaders must always follow the GCS dress code.

Attendance:

- **ALL ABSENCES AFFECT THE ENTIRE TEAM AND KEEP THE TEAM FROM BEING ABLE TO PERFORM AT THEIR BEST. ABSENCES SHOULD BE RESERVED FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY. EXCESSIVE ABSENCES (3 - 4) FROM PRACTICES WILL RESULT IN THE CHEERLEADING BEING REMOVED FROM ALL UPCOMING GAMES TO PREVENT THE REST OF THE TEAM FROM BEING AFFECTED.** Cheerleaders may earn back the right to perform with their team when they consistently attend practices (3-4 weeks of not missing a practice or performance and not being tardy to any practice or performance) and show the coach and the team they are dependable and will not hinder the performance of the team. If an alternate has stepped into their place, they will not be given this spot back - they will have to earn it.
- Absences from school do NOT automatically excuse an absence or tardy from practice. The cheerleader must still clear their absence AT LEAST 2 HOURS IN ADVANCED with coach, and must bring a note to excuse the absence.
- **Injuries and prolonged illnesses (more than 1 practice) will only be excused with a doctor's note.**
- Death in the family and vomiting/fever are the only excuses for missing a practice or a game. All other illnesses require that the cheerleader be present to watch, learn, and cheer on their teammates. This is NOT optional and is NOT at the parent's discretion. This is the decision of the coach based on the illness/injury. *Any possible COVID exposure will excuse the cheerleader as well.
- **Cheerleaders must be on time and completely dressed for all cheer related functions. This includes having hair up, jewelry off, shoes on, and in their place by their designated time.**
- **The practice before a game is MANDATORY, if you miss this practice you will NOT cheer at that game.**
- **It is the CHEERLEADER'S responsibility to notify the coach prior to an absence.** This should be done as far in advance as possible and should

not be done less than 2 hours before a practice or a game unless there is an emergency. If the coach is not notified by the CHEERLEADER, the absence becomes unexcused and a demerit will be recorded. Understand that just because you call doesn't make it excused. Cheerleaders should call no matter what to keep the coach aware of the reason for their absence/tardy. If you get no response from me, assume that I did NOT get your message, and keep trying to contact me. If I do not respond to you, your absence is unexcused no matter the reason.

- Attendance requirements and practices are subject to change based on upcoming games, pep rallies or other performances with little advanced warning. They are still mandatory.

Practices and Ballgames:

- **Practice time is to be serious and well structured. Practices are closed to everyone to cut down on distractions. Playing and goofing off will not be tolerated** as it can result in unnecessary injury.
- Every cheerleader will participate in all activities that take place during practice time unless a doctor has excused them due to injury or illness. At such time, different conditioning will take place that will not further the cheerleader's injury or illness. NO cheerleader will be excused from conditioning, practices or performances for chronic illness or injury. Any chronic illness or injury that prevents a cheerleader from performing his/her duties to their team will result in that cheerleader being removed from practices and performances to prevent problems for the team.
- **The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during practices and games. Cheerleaders may use their phones during breaks at practice and games.** If you have an emergency and need your child, please call or text me. All phones should be on silent during practice and games.
- **Cheerleaders will not leave any cheer related event until dismissed by the coach for any reason.** They will be required to follow the Gaston County Schools dismissal policy. Leaving an event without being dismissed will be considered an unexcused absence.
- **Whining and complaining will not be tolerated. Please address all issues as they arise in private with other team members or the coach if it becomes necessary. Problems could include anything from injury to a disagreement. It is important for team members to be positive in their interactions with each other and their coach. Arguing among team members is not tolerated as it causes tension among the squad.**

- **All cheerleaders must be present and checked in at the designated location at home and away games at the specified time or they will not participate during that game.**
- **Bathroom breaks need to be taken before the games or during a break. Refreshments are allowed only during a designated break or in between games and cheerleaders are expected to be ready to go at the start of the next game/quarter.**
- **While at away games, cheerleaders will stay with a buddy at all times that they are away from the coach. This ensures that no problems arise and everyone is safe.**
- **Cheerleaders are ONE TEAM with multiple functions.** They will be cheering at all home football games and all home basketball games, planning pep rallies, and participating in school spirit activities. They will also be expected to represent Highland to the best of their ability.
- **Cheerleaders will be pulled out of a performance for grades, behavior, attitude, injury, illness, lack of effort at practice, excessive absences or tardies, or any other reason the coach sees fit.** These cheerleaders will still go to all events, they will still practice, and be at attendance at every practice and game or they will be dismissed from the squad.
- **Summer practices are mandatory. All vacations and trips are to be given to the coach as soon as possible.**
- **Sitting out at a practice or game for any reason means the cheerleader is in uniform sitting with the coach; NOT with friends or family. Cell phone use is prohibited, and they will not be allowed to leave the area unless the rest of the team also has permission to leave. This is a punishment and will be treated as such.**
- **Please understand that I will make decisions based on the best interest of the squad, and never anything personal. Please do not take these decisions personally, and understand that I will give everyone an equal opportunity to perform to the best of their ability.**

Demerits:

We will follow a demerit system in order to keep disciplinary actions consistent for everyone. Demerits will be distributed for any behavior that the coach feels is unacceptable. Please note that I may add or remove penalties throughout the year as necessary, but written notice will be given if a change is made. All demerits will be recorded, dated, and signed by the cheerleader and kept in a notebook. The following is a list of conduct that is unbecoming for a cheerleader. These demerits below are a list of things evaluated by the coach and are subject to change with each sport.

15 = Immediate dismissal from the squad

10 = Benched for 2 games

5 = Benched for 1 game

3 = Sitting out with coach for first half of game

<p>1 Demerit:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Talking excessively during games/practices to other cheerleaders OR friends/family • Chewing gum/eating at undesignated times 	<p>5 Demerits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexcused game/practice absence • Showing disrespect to anyone from HST or another school • Using phones without permission
<p>2 Demerits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leaving early from a game without permission • Late to practice/game • Improper nail length • Wearing jewelry at games/practice • Dirty uniform (bows/shoes included) 	<p>10 Demerits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inappropriate posts, shares, retweets, or pictures on any form of Social Media that could portray the school, staff, athletic program, or others negatively
<p>3 Demerits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improper uniform at games (missing pieces: poms, socks, etc.) • Inappropriate PDA or language when in uniform (cheer shirt included) • In-school infraction (ASD) 	<p>15 Demerits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suspension • Illegal substance use • Skipping school • Fighting with teammate, coach or anyone from HST or another school • Bullying/harassment • Actions that result in your arrest either on or off campus

Please sign and return the following to allow your child to participate on the Highland School of Technology Cheerleading Squad. By signing, you agree that you have read, understand, and agree with all of the terms, rules, and demerit system stated in this contract.

I am aware that it is a privilege to be a Highland School of Technology Cheerleader. I am aware of all of the rules stated in this contract, and I agree to adhere to them at all times. I understand that if I do not, consequences will be administered and I can be removed from certain practices, performances, or from the team if the coach deems it necessary. I understand that it is my responsibility to communicate with my coach and my parents at all times for cheer activities and events, including practices and games.

Cheerleader Signature: _____

Date: _____

As a parent, I understand that my child is subject to consequences if they do not follow the rules as stated in this contract, and I give the coach permission to administer any consequences they deem necessary. By signing, I understand that I am agreeing to all of the terms and conditions of this contract, and I understand that I am financially responsible for my child's cheerleading account. I also understand that as a parent, I must commit to making sure my child has a ride to and from all cheer related activities, and I understand that they must attend all practices and games. I understand that under certain circumstances, the terms of this contract can change and that the coach will do all she can to inform us of any changes should they become necessary. I understand that my child and I are responsible for any changes that are made, and I agree to adhere to those changes. I agree to do all I can to help my child be successful as a Highland School of Technology Cheerleader.

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Date: _____