

## **Moorpark Cheerleading Program Handbook**

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### *Philosophy*

Being the most visible and recognizable representative of a school, cheer teams are in a position of great influence; therefore, high standards of conduct are essential. Positive personal behavior and team cohesiveness demonstrate these standards. Appropriate behavior will help earn the respect of the student body, which is the core of developing effective school spirit, student involvement, and overall development of the team's reputation.

The Moorpark High School Cheer program serves as a sideline support team for the football and basketball programs. Teams shall strive to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, develop good positive crowd involvement, and help student participants and spectators achieve the most worthwhile educational objectives of the interscholastic program. The Moorpark High School Cheerleaders will appear and perform at designated school events, community events, and charity events/fundraisers.

### *Eligibility*

Students must maintain a 2.0 GPA at the quarter and semester grade-reporting period in order to remain on the team and to be eligible to cheer. If the student's GPA falls below a 2.0 at any time during the semester, the student will be placed on probation that can include being benched from performances and possible removal from the team. Performances include cheering at games, competitions, or at rallies. Coaches will be periodically checking/monitoring grades. However, printed academic reports will be required to be printed and turned in at the end of each grading period.

### *Costs*

In order for our outstanding program to continue to offer the highest level of skill development, athletic training, and competitive prominence, we rely on the generous financial support of parents. The amount of contributions we receive determines the scope of our program. We establish our yearly calendar of events and competitions to match the amount of funding that is generated by our fundraising and contribution efforts. Please note: Fees are NOT required, and no student will be precluded from participation based on whether or not he/she contributes.

This year's goal of contributions should allow us to offer the full program, which may include, but not limited to, sideline props, transportation, coaching/ choreography fees, banquet, etc. Since the components of this program are based on secured revenue, we will not be able to maintain all aspects for the current year unless contributions are received. If we do not receive enough contributions, we will have to cut portions of our program. All financial information is kept in strict confidence and is known only to the head coach and administration.

### *Code of Ethics*

Students will adhere to all guidelines as outlined in the school Code of Ethics, including required GPA and citizenship.

### *Team Definitions of the Moorpark Cheerleading Program*

- **SIDELINE Teams (Crowd-leaders)**
  1. Freshman (9th grade), JV (10th/11th grade), and Varsity (10th, 11th and 12th grade).
  2. These teams are formed based on GRADE LEVEL, SCORE and POSITION.
  3. Sideline Teams are crowd leading teams.
- **STUNT Team (Competitive Sport Cheer)**
  1. Separate Tryouts held in November
  2. Open to all 9-12th

### *General Team Rules*

Remember – you are school representatives at all times. You represent not only yourself, but also those who support the program.

1. Phones are expected to be turned off and put away BEFORE arrival and for the duration of cheer practices, games, and cheer performances at any cheer related event. Phones WILL be taken if seen out.
2. Hair must be pulled back away from face BEFORE arrival.
3. Chewing gum is prohibited.
4. Nails must not extend past the fingertips. If nails extend past fingertips, the cheerleaders will be asked to cut them by the next practice/game and the cheerleaders will be asked to sit out of practice or event. NO ACRYLICS allowed at any time. If acrylics are on, cheerleader will lose points and will be asked to sit out of practice or event until removed. Even athletes out on injury must follow this rule.
5. Team athletic shoes must be clean/white at all times, and must be worn to every cheer practice, game, or event.
6. Body Piercing and Hair Color: Due to safety reasons, body piercings are NOT allowed; all jewelry, including clear spacers, have to be removed prior to each practice, game, performance or competition.
7. Social Media WILL be monitored. Misuse will be reported to the administration.
8. Parents must email Coach regarding absences, at least 24 hours in advance.
9. Coaches determine the size and divisions of the teams.
10. Coaches will NOT enter into any discussion with parents regarding coaches' decisions about selections for any teams.
11. Cheerleaders are required to make up all running, conditioning, and any other participation missed.
12. All practices, games, and events are MANDATORY. All outside activities, work schedules, doctor appointments, haircuts, homework etc. must be planned around cheer schedule. Failure to attend practice, games, or events, and/or two or more tardies, will result in benching, lower grades and possible removal from the team.

### *Conduct*

1. Members of each team are responsible for knowing all the cheers, expectations and requirements.
2. Attitude, attendance, dedication and enthusiasm are just as important as physical skills. You should have school spirit and get involved at MHS. Be friendly, cheerful, and always observe the rules of good sportsmanship.
3. If you are involved in other activities, they MUST COME SECOND to cheer. This includes not leaving practice early or coming late due to an outside activity. You may have a job as long as it does not conflict with cheer practices, events, or games. If at any point absences or tardies are repeated, removal from team or other consequences will be considered. This will be decided by the coach.
4. All members must be good citizens. Any student suspended or expelled from school can (at the coaches' and administration's discretion) be dropped from the team. Foul language, bullying, smoking, use of alcohol, excessive public displays of affection, fighting, poor sportsmanship or disrespectful behavior are unacceptable and subject to team and school disciplinary action.
5. Use of alcohol, drugs, "vaping" or tobacco will not be tolerated. A student may be automatically dismissed for confirmed use of such substances. Students suspected of substance abuse can be suspended until investigation of the matter is cleared/confirmed by administration.

6. Open communication needs to be maintained with the Coach. If you have any problems or concerns, you need to communicate them to the Coach first. It is detrimental to the whole team if you complain to other members and/or parents instead of voicing your concerns with the Coach. If another member is unhappy or starts complaining to you, encourage them to talk directly to the Coach.
7. Head Cheerleader, Captains and/or Co-Captains will be selected by the Coaches toward the beginning of the season, STUNT captains will be appointed, and all will remain in that position for the duration of the school year. All cheerleaders chosen will have specific responsibilities and duties, and if they are unable to fulfill these duties to the level expected by the coaches, they can and will be replaced mid-season. In addition, should a captain become ineligible or display a poor attitude/behavior, his/her position will be immediately terminated.
8. As each athlete represents the team as a whole both on and off campus, the surfacing of any inappropriate, incriminating, or explicit photographs of any member of the team is grounds for termination based on a case-by-case basis. This includes but is not limited to drinking alcohol, partaking in other illegal substances, or posing with full or partial nudity. This clause also applies to any written comments on social networking sites or in other public domains. Social networking sites can and will be monitored.
9. Understand that when a cheerleader is selected this year, he/she will still have to tryout again next year and his/her position on the team is NOT guaranteed. Improvement, attitude, attendance, coach-ability, and skill level all play a part in whether or not she returns

#### *Attendance and "Grading Policy"*

Because of the nature of our sport, it is very important to have all cheerleaders at all practices at all times, or the practices become ineffective for the entire team.

1. Missing a practice for any reason could result in being taken out of your spot in a routine or group, taken out of cheering for a game, being taken out of a routine completely, being made an alternate, or removal from the team. This decision will be at the coaches' discretion.
2. ALL PRACTICES, GAMES, AND EVENTS ARE MANDATORY
3. Depending on the team, If two or more stunt groups are missing from a team at any given practice, the team may forgo practicing the current routines or game prep and work on gaining athletic endurance and strength individually.
4. MUSD policy requires that students MUST attend all classes on the day of games or performances. Please see the Coach for extenuating circumstances.
5. Cheer Program policy requires that students MUST attend a game-prep practice before game day to fully participate or the member will be benched for that game, or any consequence the coach decides.
6. If a student misses choreography or practice, he/she may not be given a spot in that specific routine that he/she missed.
7. Any cheerleader on academic ineligibility WILL attend all practices and games as usual, but may not dress or perform at any event until cleared by the Coach. However, the individual will continue to work out with the team at practices.
8. Missed practice/event notification: If a practice or event must be missed FOR ANY REASON, the parent must contact the Coach through email. This notification should be done well ahead of the scheduled practice or event, at least 24 hours in advance. If notification is not made, the cheerleader will be asked to sit out of the next game or event. Remember, if you aren't at practice, it hurts the entire squad – routines may have to be rearranged, stunts changed, and girls switched around in the routine.
9. A cheerleader MUST ride the bus to all away games. Each individual's parent (or a cleared driver) must provide transportation to events in which school transportation is not available. Cheerleaders are not required to ride the bus home from away games, but notice must be given in writing to the coach by 12:00pm the day prior to the game.

10. Commitment to the team is taken into consideration the following year in Coach evaluations.
11. One mile will be completed for every absence from practices and/or events.
12. An unexcused absence will result in benching from that week's game or event.
13. Tardies will result in a half a mile run, two or more tardies will result in benching from games.
14. 2 points will be removed from grade for jewelry found in, dress code violations, acrylics, use of phone at practice or events, or any other form of breaking the handbook rules.
15. Dress code violations, on game days, will result in benching from the game.

### *Injury and Illness*

1. If a cheerleader is ill and unable to attend practice, the parent of the cheerleader should contact the Coach and let her know that the cheerleader will be absent that day, and the cheerleader may be asked to sit out of the next game or event.
2. If a cheerleader is absent, he/she may be either removed from a routine or have his/her spot moved. This is not done to punish the cheerleader; it is a safety issue for all team members. If you are absent, we cannot stop practice. We may have to shuffle things around.
3. Understand the difference between being hurt and/or injured. If a coach is given a doctor's note with a medical restriction, the cheerleader will be out of practice until he/she receives a full medical clearance or the date on the note expires. If the coach observes that an injury may still be in effect or reoccurring, the coaches have the option to make an immediate call to pull an athlete from practice.
4. Any medical restriction will place a cheerleader out of all participation in practice and games until full medical clearance.

### *Risk*

1. Cheerleading can incorporate acrobatic, tumbling, stunt, and precision movements that are very difficult. Moderate to severe injuries including concussions, paralysis, and even death can occur in any activity involving motion and increased height or force.
2. Please be aware that each individual can maximize his/her own safety and the safety of others by following our Moorpark Cheerleading rules, putting out his/her full effort every day at practice, and being involved in an outside tumbling class.
3. Staying focused and living a healthy lifestyle such as eating a well-balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, staying physically fit, and getting plenty of rest also aids in injury prevention.

### *Health*

Cheerleading is a rigorous activity, which requires its participants to be in top physical and mental shape.

1. Cheerleading is a performance-oriented activity; full participation is required.
2. Students with serious health problems that are aggravated by exercise and/or which limit full participation for a substantial amount of time should consider the dedication required for our program. These students could be asked to become alternates should their illnesses hinder their performance. This policy has been enacted in order to protect both the potentially ill member as well as other team members from injury.
3. Medical clearance is required for all levels of injuries in order to resume full participation.
4. Each team member will be required to have a physical examination at their own expense prior to the start of practice.
5. Full medical clearance is needed to cheer at games or participate in practice in the event of an injury. If a doctor's note is given at any time, the cheerleader will be benched from games or practice until fully cleared.

### *Parent Responsibilities*

1. Maintain your role as a supportive parent but do not stir up “drama”. Please consider the entire situation, not just your daughter’s position, before jumping to conclusions. The Coach is always available to discuss an issue but that does not guarantee any specific changes or requests. The best decision for the team will always prevail.
2. Maintain open communication with the Coach and coaches at all times.
3. Attend parent meetings and participate in fundraising.
4. Always remember that your perspective of practice, routines, etc. may not always be the same as the coaches. You may address your concerns that you may have, but will not make changes to routines, positions or placements of an individual cheerleader based on parent complaints.
5. Line of communication starts with the Coach FIRST

### *Tryouts*

\*The following skills and expectations are a part of the tryout process and will determine placement. Skill level, stunt technique and positions, attitude/behavior, coach evaluations, interview, sharp/clean motions, and overall tryout scores will be taken into consideration when selecting teams.

Tryouts will include:

- Standing and running tumbling
- Jumps- single toe touch and jump of choice
- 1 Cheer
- Fight Song
- Dance
- Flexibility and strength
- Stunting (Varsity Only)
- Interview
- GPA
- Teacher Recommendation
- Coach Score

### *Tryout Attire*

Each applicant must wear a black t shirt or tank with black shorts. The shirt must be tucked into shorts. Cheer shoes or (tennis-type shoes) must be worn. Hair should be slicked back into a low pony. No Moorpark Cheer uniforms or official Moorpark spirit wear, may be worn by any applicant. Jewelry and nails will be checked.

### *Tryout Dates, Times, and Info*

- Clinic dates are May 8th - 11th from 4-6 pm
- Tryouts are on Friday, May 12th starting at 4 pm
- All necessary paperwork must be completed and submitted by 3:30pm, May 5th. This includes grades, proof of attending Moorpark in the fall, application forms, tryout agreement letter, handbook agreement, emergency form, and etc.). If paperwork is not submitted you may not tryout.

### *Cheerleading Selections*

Freshman Sideline Team  
9<sup>th</sup> grade only

JV Sideline Team  
10<sup>th</sup> /11<sup>th</sup> grade

Varsity Sideline Team  
10<sup>th</sup> /11<sup>th</sup> /12<sup>th</sup> grade only

\*Skills, stunt positions, attitude/behavior, and tryout scores will be taken into consideration when choosing teams.

### *Tryout Results*

- Sideline teams will be posted on [www.moorparkhighschoolcheer.com](http://www.moorparkhighschoolcheer.com) by 6pm on May 13th.
- Unsuccessful candidates are encouraged to work on skills, attend tumbling and cheerleading classes, and to try out again the following year.

### *Parent Meeting/Uniform Fittings*

Uniform Fitting May 17th 2:45pm

MANDATORY Parent Meeting May 17th 6pm

### *Time Commitment*

Please be aware that dedication from each team member is necessary in order to have a successful season! The team cannot function properly without every member present at every practice, game, and event .

Summer Commitment (June through August )

- See important dates

Football games take place on Thursdays and Fridays

- Fall Practice for Freshman and JV
  - Mondays - Wednesday 6th period - 4:30pm
- Fall Practice for Varsity
  - Mondays - Wednesdays 4- 6 pm Thurs days if no Freshman game
  - Fridays 7:15-8:15 am as needed

\*Because of the many athletic teams that use the gym, these are the practice times. Athletes are expected to be here at these assigned times just like any other athletes on a sports team.

1. Winter Practice for basketball schedule changes depending on gym availability and STUNT practice.
2. All team members are expected to attend UCA Home Cheer Camp on Aug 1-3, skills clinics June 19th and 20th, and Hell Week July 10-13. and be available for all summer practices.
3. For each practice missed over summer, the cheerleader may be precluded from Camp training sessions as well as from any crowd-leading and/or stunting in timeouts, that were created during those missed practice at one or more football games when school starts due to insufficient practice.
4. Football and Basketball Season: During these seasons, in addition to weekly game(s), practice hours/day will be at the Coach's discretion. Schedules may change (especially for playoff games and weather conditions).
5. All practices, games and events are Mandatory.
6. Playoff games: Football- Mandatory Varsity Sideline teams must be present at ALL playoff games. Playoff games can run through the beginning of December and are usually called last minute. Possible game on Thanksgiving weekend.
7. Basketball- Mandatory Varsity Sideline teams must be present at ALL playoff games. Playoff games can run through the middle of March, and include possible games on Presidents Day weekend.
8. Fundraising/Community Events: There are highly recommended events to help contribute everything we hope to include in our program monetarily. Dates will be scheduled and noted on the practice calendars, through emails, and on the website.
9. Outside Commitments: Being a part of the Moorpark High School Cheerleading program takes a great deal of commitment, and there are certain sacrifices that come with this commitment. Outside commitments can not conflict with any student's cheerleading duties and attendance. Please consult the website and the practice calendars BEFORE making personal appointments.
10. Missed practices will result in removal from timeouts, certain positions on teams, and/ or the team.
11. Moving into the second semester, it is likely that all 9th and 10th grade sideline cheerleaders not competing in STUNT will be placed into a general 9th and 10th grade physical education class.

### *Tumbling*

1. With the strenuous demands in our routines, we strongly encourage everyone who is participating to get involved in an extracurricular gymnastics class not only to develop their gymnastic skills, but also to increase general strength.
2. No matter the level of tumbling the cheerleader has at tryouts, he/she is always encouraged to improve his/her skills throughout the year!!
3. If at any time during the year, a cheerleader does not have the tumbling he/she had at tryouts or is required for his/her team or it is at an unacceptable level, he/she will be removed from games, assigned extra conditioning, be removed from team routines until he/she is able to perform the required tumbling.
4. Tumbling shown at tryouts WILL be required to be performed on turf, track, and mats at all games and practices.

### *Safety*

Practices may be held during 6<sup>th</sup> period, after school, during the weekday evenings, and/or Saturdays. For safety reasons, the Coaches will designate practice areas. Mats or a grassy area/turf may be used for mastering stunting and tumbling techniques.

1. All stunts must be practiced under the supervision of the Coaches. Safety guidelines set forth by "AACCA" should be followed.
2. Students are not allowed to schedule practices. Only the coaches can schedule practices. Moorpark High School, the Coach, and/or Coaches will not assume liability for injuries resulting from student-scheduled practices.
3. Taking part in a stunt without the cheer staff's approval or presence is prohibited. If students stunt outside of practice, he/she is violating policy and therefore releases the coaches, administrators, school, and district from any responsibility of injuries, etc.

### *Games*

Tardies may result in sitting out!!

Family and friends are encouraged to attend the games but must avoid interrupting performances. If an emergency occurs, please make contact with coaches rather than interrupting cheerleaders during games.

1. For games, students are to arrive 1 hour prior to the start of a game, unless told otherwise. Once you arrive, you should be ready to begin stretching with the captains/coaches.
2. Students should be in full uniform with hair/makeup done, jewelry out, and phone away before entering the stadium/gym.
3. There may be occasions when the team is split to cover numerous events scheduled on the same day.
4. STUNT team members will be required to attend home Basketball game practices and performances.

### *Uniform Guidelines*

1. Practice Days: sports/supportive bra, cheer shoes, socks, briefs, no jewelry, phones away and assigned practice attire.
2. Game Days (at school): Spirit jersey or skort/polo is required. If dress code is violated on game day, the cheerleader will be benched from the game, but still required to attend.
3. Games: Full uniform. poms, liners, game shoes, white no show socks, bow, and warm-ups always need to be brought. Warm up jackets may be worn with the uniform, Varsity is highly encouraged to purchase warm up jackets. Night games get chilly.
4. Rally Days: Full uniform unless otherwise notified.