

***O'DONNELL ISD
CHEERLEADER AND MASCOT
HANDBOOK***



2024-2025

I. Educational Objectives

- A. *All objectives of the cheerleading program are geared to the welfare and educational development of the students of O'Donnell High School.***
- B. *To enhance a good healthy environment for the students to work and learn.***
- C. *To help each student at O'Donnell High School to develop a sense of belonging.***
- D. *To enhance good habits, morals, citizenship, and sportsmanship in each student at O'Donnell through proper attitude and example.***
- E. *To foster better social abilities and attitudes.***
- F. *To promote and maintain a spirit of competitiveness and cooperation within the school society.***

General Election Policies

- G. *Cheerleaders are chosen each year to lead the student body cheering section during pep rallies, football games, and basketball games.***
- H. *Selection of cheerleaders will be in three parts:***
 - 1. *One hundred percent (100%) of the total points for the election will be based on an outside judge(s) such as a college cheerleader(s) and/or cheerleading sponsors from another school chosen by the sponsor and the principal. The judge(s) will conduct a try-out.***

I. Eligibility: All candidates must:

- 1. Must be enrolled in O'Donnell ISD as a full-time student and be eligible according to UIL academic requirements for High School.**
- 2. High School Cheer is considered a Varsity Level sport, so HS will follow all varsity level academic requirements.**
- 3. Junior High must be enrolled as a full-time student and be academically eligible according to UIL academic requirements for High School.**
- 4. Must be in good academic standing by March 10th.**

J. Try-outs:

- 1. Each contestant will present individually one cheer and one chant in front of Judges.**
- 2. Each contestant will present one group cheer in front of the student body.**
- 3. Proper attire will be worn during try-outs as approved by the sponsor.**
- 4. The school and sponsor will assume no responsibility in regard to injuries during try-outs, practices or games.**
- 5. No student will be allowed to try-out without parental permission.**

K. Number:

- 1. There will be six (6) elected cheerleaders and one (1) alternate.**

II. Policies for Participants as a Cheerleader

A. Responsibility

- 1. The cheerleaders, as a group, will attend and participate in all practice sessions. These sessions must be cleared in advance with the cheerleading sponsor. Cheerleaders who are late or fail to attend practice will be issued consequences to be determined by sponsors, which may include sitting out of full or partial performance.**
- 2. The cheerleaders will have a duty to perform and take part in planning SOME pep rallies. There will be a captain of the week who plans the pep rally and assumes head cheerleader responsibilities. The pep rallies will be approved in advance by the cheerleading sponsor. ALL cheerleaders are responsible for decoration and clean up of every pep rally.**

B. Uniforms

- 1. Uniforms are bought by the school upon squad rotation. The school will purchase skirt and tops. These things will be returned to the school after the completed year.**
- 2. Each Cheerleader will be responsible for purchasing shoes, tights, warm-ups/jackets, megaphones pom-poms, mid drift and any other equipment needed for the squad. The cheerleaders will be able to keep these things after the completed year.**
- 3. The parents will be responsible for purchasing items to personalize the uniforms such as socks, body armor, camp attire,**

and uniform cleaning and alteration fees. Any alterations must be completed by August 1, 2024.

4. The sponsor is responsible for selection and arrangements for the purchase of all uniforms.

C. Insurance

1. It is recommended that each cheerleader be covered by adequate accident insurance. O'Donnell I.S.D. will provide at-school insurance for all cheerleaders.

2. The O'Donnell School system is not liable for any injury or expenses resulting from participation in the cheerleading program outside of the school year.

D. Attendance at Practice and Games:

1. No one shall miss more than two consecutive practices or any three practices without being replaced. This does not include illness or sponsor excused absences. Cheerleaders who are late or fail to attend practice under any circumstance will be issued a consequence, and/or will sit out of partial or full performances. Cheerleaders **MUST** be in attendance for at least half of the day on a game day to be eligible to cheer.

2. Varsity Cheerleaders are expected to attend **all** football games and all district varsity basketball games. Junior High cheerleaders are expected to attend all football games.

E. Travel to Games

1. Cheerleaders are expected to travel together and to return together as a group. (Exception: If the parents are going to another destination, the student may go with them if arrangements are made in advance.)

2. Cheerleaders who attend out-of-town basketball games may not represent O'Donnell as a cheerleader unless properly sponsored by school personnel.

3. Cheerleaders should realize that all out-of-town trips are extensions of the school day; therefore, all rules and regulations as set forth by the student handbook are to be observed at all times.

F. Alternates: *The alternates, with approval of the principal and sponsor, will replace any cheerleader who is dismissed or who*

relinquishes his/her position. The timing and feasibility of this change shall be considered in this event.

G. Mascots

- 1. An Eagle mascot will be chosen each year to cheer and entertain the student body and fans during pep rallies, football games, and basketball games.**
- 2. The mascot must be chosen from the ninth (9th) through eleventh (11th) grades.**
- 3. The selection of the mascot will be in three parts:**
 - a) One hundred percent (100%) of the total points for the election will be based on an outside judge(s) such as a college cheerleader(s) and/or cheerleading sponsors from another school chosen by the sponsor and the principal. The judge(s) will conduct a try-out. The candidates for mascot must perform a routine in front of the judge(s) and the student body. The routine time limit is one and one-half (1 ½) to two (2) minutes. Music may be played during the routine and props may be used. Routines may not include anything that must be cleaned up following the performance (i.e. water, confetti) and no props should be used that might cause damage to the performing surface. The judge(s) will be looking for originality, humor and spirit, character development, exaggerated motion, and use of props.**
- 4. The Eagle mascot will be a member of the cheerleading squad and will travel with the squad and be governed by the same rules and regulations.**

III. Responsibilities and Obligations

A. All cheerleaders must maintain a passing average in compliance with UIL standards. If a cheerleader fails to maintain his/her grades, he/she will be placed on probation for the following grading cycle according to UIL rules and not allowed to cheer. If after this

probation period there is no improvement in grades, the cheerleader will relinquish his/her title as a Varsity Cheerleader.

B. All cheerleaders are expected to maintain conduct beyond reproach. Each cheerleader will abide by the cheerleader Code of Conduct. If there is improper conduct, it will be to the discretion of the principal and sponsor as to the consequences. Improper conduct may be grounds for immediate dismissal. Such things as smoking, drinking, improper conduct with the opposite/same sex and other unacceptable actions will not be tolerated. Varsity and Junior High cheerleaders, as representatives of O'Donnell ISD School, will always behave like young ladies/gentlemen at all times.

C. All cheerleaders must realize that cheerleading requires a great deal of time. This includes time before and after school, some late practices. Practice and/or sign making will be limited to four (4) hours per week during the school year.

IV. General Policies

A. Cheerleading Sponsor

- 1. The cheerleader sponsor is appointed by the principal from members of the faculty.**
- 2. The cheerleader sponsor has full control and respect from the cheerleading unit at all times.**
- 3. The cheerleader sponsor shall secure travel arrangements for the cheerleading squad to out-of-town football and basketball games.**

B. Summer Camp & Other Activities

- 1. The cheerleading squad will attend a 3-day cheerleading camp. The selection of the camp shall be made by the sponsor and principal. Camp will be at home this year. Dates for camp will be July 25-27, 2024. Each cheerleader will be required to pay a \$200 deposit to help with camp cost.**
- 2. Fundraisers for both JH and HS are mandatory. These funds help contribute to the things needed throughout the cheer season. Each cheerleader will be responsible for a certain amount. If that**

amount is not met with fundraising, the remaining balance will be the responsibility of the cheerleader.

3. The sponsor and cheerleaders are responsible for the planning and implementation of homecoming activities and basketball sweetheart activities for the O'Donnell student body. All plans should be approved by the principal.

4. All cheerleaders must report to practice and activities beginning the first day of two-a-day football practices to prepare for the upcoming season. All family and summer activities must be scheduled before that first day of practice.

For every day they miss of either camp or planning activities during the month of August they will have to sit out of partial or full performances.

CODE OF CONDUCT

Each cheerleader has duties to fulfill and an image to uphold while being a representative of O'Donnell Schools. Appropriate behavior and responsibility are expected from any person elected as an O'Donnell cheerleader. At the sponsor and/or principal's discretion, strikes may be issued against a cheerleader for failure to meet any requirements listed in the O'Donnell High School Cheerleading and Mascot Handbook or any situation listed below.

Consequences against you may be issued for the following reasons:

- Being late to practice, pep rallies, the bus, before games, fundraisers, or any scheduled event. There will be a 5-minute grace period.
- Unexcused absence from a game, practice, fundraiser, pep rally, or any other required activity.
- Not having pep rally planned at least one week before scheduled practice.
- Not having proper attire for practice. (i.e. shoes for lifting and performing stunts, clothes within the dress code)
- No cell phones during scheduled event. (practice, pep rallies, fund raisers, games, etc.)
- Any disciplinary action that has to be taken and is brought to the sponsor's attention.
- Receiving a progress report because of grades. As a leader, grades need to be taken care of and you should be going to your teacher for help. If more help is necessary, your sponsor will get you the help you need. **MAKE THE EFFORT!**
- Wearing any part of your uniform, including shoes, at any time other than related cheerleading activities. The cheerleading jacket or pullover **MAY** be worn at any time as the only exception!!
- Wearing jewelry while in uniform at any practice or cheerleading related event that may cause injury. Jewelry must be approved by sponsor.

- Hair must be neat, and face must be visible while performing any cheerleading activities. Hair must be approved by sponsor.
- Wearing the wrong uniform or missing a required part of the uniform.
- Inappropriate behavior in or out of uniform. NO display of affection - kissing, holding hands, or excessive hugging while in uniform. There will be no tolerance for any other behaviors that are unbecoming of a cheerleader.
- Unnecessary conversation with the crowd or fellow cheerleaders, horseplay, or cutting up during the game.
- Leaving during the game or eating during the game. Eating at half time is okay.
- Talking back to the sponsor and/or direct disobedience to the sponsor or any adult. The sponsor has authority at all times.
- Not participating in a fundraiser for the amount you are to sell, and you do not sell will be counted as a demerit against you.
- ATTITUDE! ATTITUDE! ATTITUDE! Direct or indirect disrespect to fellow squad members or the sponsor. (i.e. mouthing, rolling eyes, mocking, talking back, gossiping, complaining, talking about others, etc.) As well, lack of enthusiasm.

NOTE: The responsibility of a cheerleader is to CHEER THE GAME, WORK THE CROWD, and BUILD THE SPIRIT. Cheerleaders will cheer during every time-out and between quarters. When the game is in a close situation, there should be constant cheering. When the fans do not participate and help you cheer, you do not have permission to have an attitude with the crowd. When the fans start cheers in the stands, cheerleaders will smile and cheer along with them. If a cheerleader *refuses* to perform up to cheerleader standards, he/she will be benched.



O'DONNELL CHEERLEADER OR MASCOT: PARENTAL PERMISSION AND AGREEMENT

My son/daughter has my permission to try out for Varsity Cheerleader/Mascot at O'Donnell High School. I will not hold the school or the sponsor liable for any injuries which could occur during try-outs.

I have read the Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook and am aware of the obligations and responsibilities of this position. I will also take responsibility for the uniform in case of loss or damage.

Varsity orders must be paid in full by the deadline. This is non-negotiable. The Varsity Representative will not place the order until ALL of the elected cheerleaders' fees are turned in. If a cheerleader is not able to pay the fee by the deadline, an alternate will have the opportunity to turn in the said fees and replace the elected cheerleader.

Signature of Parent/Guardian

I have read and studied the Cheerleader and Mascot Handbook and if elected, I will fulfill these obligations to the best of my ability. I agree to follow the rules and regulations set forth in this handbook and to keep my conduct favorable at all times.

Signature of Student

This should be signed and returned to the sponsor at the designated time before try-outs.

STUDENT/PARENT DISCIPLINE AGREEMENT

I have thoroughly read the Code of Conduct and understand the Discipline Procedures. I am willing to abide by all of the rules and will promote a healthy and enthusiastic environment. I will work my hardest to fulfill all duties and have a positive attitude.

Student Signature

I have read the Code of Conduct and the Discipline Procedures and am willing to help my child abide by the rules at all times.

Parent/Guardian Signature



