

**Venus Independent School District**  
**Cheerleading Constitution**

**I. Organization**

- A. This Constitution has been written and adopted for the Venus ISD cheerleading squads. The squads and this Constitution are governed by Venus ISD, the administration of Venus High School, Venus Middle School, and the cheer coaching staff.
- B. The purpose of the cheerleading squads are to:
  - 1. Exhibit leadership skills utilizing exemplary standards that are generally greater than those expected of the general student body;
  - 2. Improve student morale and boost team spirit;
  - 3. Exhibit and promote good behavior, citizenship, and sportsmanship among athletes and fans through personal example and action while both in the classroom and on the field/court;
  - 4. Create and develop school spirit, pride and loyalty regardless of the outcome of a game;
  - 5. Promote interest in school activities and performances at school games;
  - 6. Develop responsibility, teach self-respect, encourage honest effort, strive for perfection and develop character;
  - 7. Learn teamwork and pride in a quality performance through maintaining high personal standards;
- 8. Illustrate, support, and encourage respect for the school staff, district policies, the other members of the squad, and the cheer sponsor/coach and her authority at all times.
- C. A cheer coach will be hired upon recommendation of the campus Principal.
  - 1. The Coach will be responsible for the daily operations and activities of the squad.
  - 2. The Coach will be responsible for administering all disciplinary procedures.
  - 3. The Coach may place certain restrictions on squad members at his/her discretion in accordance with VISD disciplinary policies and standards.
- D. The Varsity squad shall consist of a maximum of 20 squad members in grades 9-12.
- E. The Junior Varsity squad shall consist of a maximum of 12 squad members in grades 9 - 12.
- F. The Venus Middle School squad shall consist of a maximum of 20 squad members in grade 7 and 8.
- G. The position of cheer manager for each squad will be optional and selected at the coach's discretion. Managers may also be removed at the coach's discretion.

**II. Eligibility**

- A. A parent or guardian **must** attend the cheer informational meeting held before tryouts.
- B. Each squad member must submit a completed Application Form and Parental Consent/Medical Release Form **BEFORE** the annual tryouts take place.
- C. The application form must be signed by the candidate.
- D. The application form must be signed by the parent/guardian.

- E. Teacher recommendation forms will be required and considered.
- F. Cheer candidates will be approved for tryout based upon their history of good character, school spirit, leadership, and disciplinary record. Final tryout approval will be made by the campus principal.
- G. Cheer candidates and cheerleaders must be enrolled in the district at the time the annual tryout clinic starts and must remain continuously enrolled in the district to remain eligible.
- H. Cheerleaders must consider their role as a cheerleader to be an honor and a special privilege, and must exhibit excellent leadership at all times.
- I. Each candidate must have a passing grade in all classes at the time of tryouts and all cheerleaders must be passing at all times once the squad is made.
- J. Cheerleader grades will be continuously monitored by the cheer coach.
- K. Any squad member who receives a failing grade on a nine weeks grade report will be declared ineligible per UIL regulations.
- L. Ineligible cheerleaders will be required to sit in bleachers/stand at fence behind the sponsor, in street clothes and cheer with the squad.
- M. Ineligible cheerleaders must attend practices and participate in cheer class, if applicable.
- N. Ineligible cheerleaders may NOT wear any part of their uniform during the school day or to any after school activity.
- O. Ineligible cheerleaders may NOT travel with the squad to any event.
- P. Ineligible cheerleaders MUST attend weekly tutorial sessions.
- Q. Any squad member who receives school disciplinary action will be subject to further discipline by the cheer coach.
- R. Any squad member who receives out of school suspension or is placed in a district alternative education program as the result of a disciplinary issue will be removed from the squad.
- S. Cheerleaders must lead by example and follow all district policies at all times. Failure to adhere to district policies may result in removal from the squad.

### **III. Attendance**

#### A. School

1. To participate in a practice, a student must attend school hours and this must be fully documented by the Attendance Secretary.
2. In order to participate in a cheer event, the cheerleader must attend at least 50% of his/her academic classes that school day.

#### B. Cheer Activities

1. All cheerleading activities are **mandatory**.
2. Cheerleaders are always expected to be on time.
3. In case of emergency or illness, the **parent/student** must contact the coach by phone on the day of the emergency **BEFORE** the scheduled practice, performance, meeting or game. If not notified prior to the scheduled event by the parent, then the absence will remain unexcused.

4. All doctor appointments, etc. should be scheduled so they do not interfere with cheer activities.
5. Work is not considered an excuse for missing any cheer activity unless it is approved IN ADVANCE by the coach.
6. Only Varsity level UIL practices/games/events are eligible as excused absences. Any other absences for select sports, gymnastic classes, or any other non-UIL varsity events are NOT excused.
7. If a cheerleader has an absence, either excused or unexcused, from the last practice before an event, he/ she may not be allowed to perform or stunt during that event.
8. In the event of an injury that prevents performance, the cheerleader will be required to attend all games, practices and functions in full uniform. An injured cheerleader is expected to sit with the coach, not with friends.
9. If a cheerleader has an unexcused absence at a practice or discipline resulting in prevention of performance, then she will be required to attend all games and is expected to sit with the coach, not with friends.

#### **IV. Summer Camp and Competition**

All cheerleaders will be **required to attend summer camp** If at all possible, the dates of summer camp will be provided before tryouts. Summer camp includes training in cheer and dance, as well as safety training required for all cheer squad members. Camp uniforms will be utilized for extra-duty and practice uniforms during the school year.

(VARSITY ONLY) Competition is also mandatory. Cheerleaders that have a conflicting UIL activity are required to notify the coach three weeks before the competition dates for the absence to be excused. Competition boot camp is also mandatory. There are no exceptions. Cheerleaders who cannot attend all of the camp days, competition days, or competition boot camp days will be removed from the squad.

#### **V. Uniform**

A. Each member will be expected to purchase his/her uniforms for practice, camp, and game performances.

1. Every effort will be made to provide a complete price list of uniforms to each candidate prior to tryouts.
2. Any financial limitations should be discussed with the Coach in advance of tryouts.
3. Cheerleaders will not be allowed to go to camp until all uniform expenses are paid in full.

B. Each squad member will be required to maintain their uniforms in good condition and maintain cleanliness and good appearance of his/her uniform at all times.

C. In the event that any uniform pieces or cheer supplies (poms, megaphones, etc.) are purchased through squad fundraising or by Venus ISD, these uniform pieces will become the property of the school and must be returned to the cheer coach before the end of the school

year or upon dismissal from the squad.

1. Each member will be required to have all team or school uniforms issued cleaned and in good condition before being returned.
  2. Failure to return issued squad uniforms or supplies will result in a hold being placed on the student's report card, transcript and/or graduation diploma until the items are returned or until the squad is reimbursed financially for the cost of replacing the items issued.
- D. Cheerleaders must wear approved cheer uniforms when performing. Uniforms will consist of a shell, approved sports bra, skirt, briefs, socks, hair bow, and shoes. Additional uniform pieces may be approved and/or required by the coaching staff.
- E. Cheerleaders must wear the required practice wear to all practices.
- F. Letterman jackets will be awarded to cheerleaders making the Varsity cheer squad. Any extra patches or additional bars will be the sole financial responsibility of the cheerleader.
- G. Cheerleaders shall not allow anyone to wear any portion of their practice, camp, or performance uniform at any time.

## **VI. Medical**

- A. Each cheer candidate must have a current physical on file with the athletic trainer (less than one year old) before they will be allowed to practice with the new squad.
- B. Once the physical expires, the cheerleader will be benched until a new physical is received.
- C. A copy of the school physical form can be obtained from the school nurse or athletic trainer.
- D. A member must also have a completed medical emergency release form on file with the coach.
- E. Cheerleading is a strenuous sport that involves lifting, jumping, dancing, and a variety of physical strength, coordination, and agility. In an effort to prevent injury, cheerleaders must properly condition, warm up, and stretch before all cheerleading activities.

## **VII. Character/Conduct**

- A. Whether at home or away games, cheerleaders must set a good example and display proper conduct before, during and after all games.
- B. Each cheerleader is expected to maintain good moral behavior, show cordial courtesy to visiting teams, spectators and each other.
- C. Squad members must be respectful of visiting cheerleaders, fans, and of the game officials. Venus Cheerleaders are important representatives of our school and are very visible to everyone!
- D. Possessing/using alcohol or other drugs will NOT be tolerated and will result in suspension or dismissal from the squad. Participation in or being in the presence of illegal activities will also result in suspension or dismissal from the squad.
- E. Obscene language or gestures will not be tolerated and public displays of affection are not allowed in school or at school activities.
- F. Disrespect to any member of the cheerleading staff may result in dismissal from the squad, practice, season or game at the discretion of the cheerleading staff.
- G. Inappropriate behavior and defiance will NOT be tolerated.

- H. A cheerleader's responsibility includes their actions on social media. A cheerleader is required to maintain a high standard of conduct. Inappropriate postings including, but not limited to, language (abbreviated, slang, or alluding to), pictures, suggestive poses, inappropriate clothing, any reference to drugs, alcohol, or tobacco will result in suspension or dismissal from the squad.
- I. Each squad member must abide by all standards found in the Student Handbook and Extracurricular Handbook .
- J. Cheerleaders placed in DAEP will be removed from the squad.

### **VIII. Constructive Criticism**

Cheerleaders and captains must be able to accept constructive criticism. It is given to help improve the individual athlete and the team as a whole. Negative attitudes toward suggestions from coaches will not be tolerated, and may cause the issuance of demerits. It is also unacceptable to criticize your teammates during an event. The captain and the coach will be the only team members allowed to give out critique during an event. If you would like to suggest a fix it will need to be a suggestion given to the coach and will be addressed at the next practice.

### **IX. Parent/ Guardian Representation of VISD**

Parents are expected to maintain proper behavior during all games, performances and cheerleading competitions. Parents are representatives of our teams as much as the athletes themselves. Parents will not be invited to accompany the cheer teams to games or competitions if they display negative attitudes towards opposing players, opposing parents, referees, judges, opposing coaches or VISD coaches, staff, or students.

### **X. Squad Discipline**

- A. Demerits will be used as a disciplinary tool. It is important to understand that cheerleaders will be eligible to receive demerits immediately upon making the squad and demerits will accumulate during summer cheer practices as well as the following fall and spring semesters. Demerits do not start over each semester.
- B. Demerits will be issued by the Coach.
- C. Three demerits will result in the removal from a performance.
- D. Six demerits will result in suspension for two weeks.
- E. Twelve demerits will result in dismissal from the team.
- F. Demerits will be given for:
  - 1. Unexcused absence from any team activity. (Excused absences must be approved by coach, in writing, 2 weeks before event.)
  - 2. Tardiness to any team activity. Unless instructed differently by coach, arrive, at least, 10 minutes before scheduled time. (3 will also result in an unexcused absence demerit.)
  - 3. **Wearing ANY jewelry during practice or games .**
  - 4. Uniform inspection violation.
  - 5. Inappropriate uniform:

- a. This would include failure to wear any piece of the uniform, including the approved sports bra, appropriate shoes and hair bow;
  - b. This would also include inappropriate hair style.
  - c. No tank tops, flip flops, pajamas, house shoes will be allowed.
  - d. No visible body piercings or tattoos allowed.
  - e. Shoes must be properly fastened or tied.
- 6. Forgotten props or accessories (poms, megaphones, etc).
  - 7. Absence which will also result in removal from performance.
  - 8. Using a cell phone or other electronic device or text messaging during any cheer activity.
  - 9. Disrespect toward coaching staff or insubordination. Additionally, any cheerleader who is disrespectful or insubordinate will be immediately benched for a minimum of one cheer activity.
  - 10. Talking to fans or family during cheer activities.
  - 14. Use of inappropriate language in uniform.
  - 15. In-school suspension (ISS). Any cheerleader who is assigned ISS for any reason will be suspended from all performances that occur during the same week as the ISS assignment.
  - 16. Transportation policy violations.
- G. Achieving a cumulative total of six points for a combination of any of the above violations totaling six points will result in suspension for two weeks.
- a. Suspended cheerleaders must attend all squad activities
  - b. Suspended cheerleaders must dress out for and attend games but they must sit with the coach and cheer with the squad.
- H. The following violations will result in automatic dismissal:
- 1. Drinking or smoking.
  - 2. Drug use.
  - 3. Suspension from school.
  - 4. Placement in an alternative education program.
  - 5. Receiving a failing grade on a nine weeks report card during two different nine-week grading periods. (Do NOT have to be consecutive).
- I. There will be no refunds of any monies paid or funds raised in the event that a squad member is voluntarily or involuntarily removed from a cheer squad.

**J. Merits**

In the event that a cheerleader receives a demerit related to being late or missing a practice or game, the cheerleader will have the opportunity to receive merits to make up for demerits received by working extra sections of fundraising activities, if available or may also be accumulated by attending specially planned squad events. Accumulated Merits will not be used for making up behavior demerits, but are only for making up demerits received for being late or unexcused absences or inappropriate uniform demerits.

**XI. Fund Raising**

In order to defray costs of cheerleading activities and supplies needed for decorations and spirit support, the squads will be asked to contribute to various fundraising efforts including, but not limited to, concession duties during football, basketball, and baseball seasons and other

school events. Cheerleaders will sign up each week for time slots. Time slots will be given in sections by quarter or half per game depending on the number of games being played.

- A. All members are required to participate in all fund-raising which is generated by the team and/or the Booster Club.
- B. There will be set goals for each member to attain in their fund raising activities.
- C. Fundraising may also be used to offset camp costs, uniform expenses, or competition costs.

## **XII. Extra Duties and Activities**

The squad will be called upon to attend various school functions to represent and assist the student body of the school. Since these activities vary from year to year and season to season, a specific list cannot be given at this time but the cheerleaders will be given ample notice of their requirement to attend these events. Failure to attend these events will result in demerit penalties at the discretion of the coach.

## **XIII. Squad Captain/Co-Captain**

Selection of squad Captain and/or Co-Captains will be done by a separate tryout following regular cheerleader tryouts. This tryout will include a scored essay, interview, and squad vote. The Captain will be the highest scoring applicant and the Co-Captain will be the first runner-up.

The Captain will be expected to take charge of selecting and leading the cheers at games and at practice. She will also be expected to work well with the entire squad and coaching staff. She will attempt to keep communications open among the entire squad and the coaching staff. She is expected to refrain from showing any favoritism, and to make all decisions based on what is best for the whole squad. **Squad members must respect the decisions of the Captain and be cooperative at all times, even if they do not particularly like the decisions made.** Being a Captain is trying at times, but the Captain must remember to be strong, especially when making decisions based upon what is best for the entire squad. A Captain must not consider it tattling or betrayal to report something that reflects negatively on the squad to the coach. She knows how to delegate, has great people skills, can mediate disagreements without taking sides, and is familiar with all aspects of a cheerleading squad. An excellent Captain is a very valuable asset to the cheer squad.

The Co-Captain will serve in place of the Captain whenever the Captain is not available, and will maintain a good relationship with the Captain and keep open communication between the captain and the squad. The **Co-Captain will support the Captain** and assist the Captain in decision making processes including but not limited to planning of cheers, dances, and performances. Additionally, the Co-Captain must maintain communication with the coaching staff in an effort to make the squad successful. An excellent Co-Captain is vital to the success of any squad.

#### **XIV. Skills and Traits of a Good Cheerleading Captain and Co-Captain**

A. The coaches expect the captain and co-captain to possess the following qualities:

- Good Communication Skills - speaks clearly and listens well.
- Responsible and Mature - is dependable, punctual, and emotionally mature.
- Positive Role Model - attempts to always set a good example in what she says and how she acts.
- Fair and Impartial - can separate friendships from responsibilities. Decisions should not be based on favoritism and she should always do what's best for the whole squad and not any one individual.
- Helpful and Friendly - should always be willing to do extra for others or to get tasks accomplished and should be kind and considerate.
- Be Approachable - the squad should feel like they can discuss situations and problems with the captain.
- Be Able to Delegate without Being Bossy - can be tactful and respectful of others' feelings. Remember it's not always what you say that's important but the way you say it.
- Respectful - must always respect each other, peers, and coaches.

B. Responsibility and Duties of Captain and Co-Captains:

- Arrive at practices five minutes early and be one of the last ones to leave.
- Routinely lead conditioning and stretching.
- Contact squad members when asked to do so by the coach(es).
- Call cheers/chants at games and/or establish how cheers will be called.
- Participate in extra scheduled activities.
- Greet and make visiting squads feel welcome during games.
- Establish a system for getting the signs and run-through complete.
- Help solve conflicts by being fair and impartial.
- Meet with the coach(es) on a regular basis.
- Address all concerns, issues, etc. with the coach(es).
- Remain positive regardless of the situation.
- Keep girls on task (especially at games)... no talking, horseplay, etc.
- Act as the linking source between the coach and the squad... all informational phone calls will be going to you. The captain will be responsible for knowing all squad information and relaying that information to the squad.
- Other various tasks asked of by the coach.

NOTE: If the selected captain or co-captain fails to meet the expectations set forth, she may be asked to step down at any time by the cheer coach. A written warning will be issued to parent and cheerleader prior to dismissal from captain and co-captain positions.

## **XV. Safety Rules**

- A. A coach must be present to supervise during all stunting activities.
- B. Coaches must approve all stunts and pyramids.
- C. There is to be no talking, laughing or screaming during the building and execution of stunts to protect the safety of our athletes.
- D. Venus Cheerleaders will be required to participate in warm up, conditioning, and weight training activities to maintain strength and flexibility and prevent injury (during Athletic Period. This only applies if cheerleaders are required to be in Athletics.)  
Seniors will be allowed to drop Athletic Period second semester on approval of the Coach.

## **XVI. Practices**

- A. After school cheer practices will begin immediately after cheer tryouts and will continue into the summer in preparation for cheer camp.
- B. A schedule will be provided to each cheerleader by the coach listing the practices, game times and game bus times. A coach may call extra practices at any time. Cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices.
- C. Each cheerleader shall be on time to practice. Cheerleaders must wear a t-shirt, shorts, socks and gym shoes to practice. Hair must be tied back. No gum will be allowed. ALL jewelry must be removed.
- D. Respect and attention must be given to the coaches and captains at all times during practice.

## **XVII. Games**

- A. Home Games: Squads must be at the school at their designated time before the game to warm up and practice.
- B. Away Games: Squads must be at school in full uniform at least 15 minutes prior to bus departure. If the cheerleader misses the bus, to prevent discipline the cheerleader must have a parent drive her/him to the game, and she/he will sit out with the coach for that game.
  - a. If a cheerleader has to have a parent(s) bring them to a game due to another sport the cheerleader will be able to leave with the parent who brought her/him following the game.
  - b. Under no circumstance is a cheerleader to drive her/himself to an away game.
  - c. Cheerleaders are not permitted to leave school grounds at an away game.
- C. Post Season Games: Cheerleaders must be aware that they are expected to cheer during any regional, sectional or state events as well as school pep rallies, assemblies or parades.

## **XVIII. Transportation**

- A. ALL CHEERLEADERS must ride the bus provided by the school district to and from games and competitions unless approval is granted by the coach to leave with a parent/legal guardian. According to athletic policy, 24 hour written notice is required. Friends or visitors will not be permitted on the bus.

- B. Parents must promptly meet the bus upon its arrival for pickup at the school at the conclusion of cheer events. A coach will not be responsible for waiting for a cheerleader's ride home to arrive to pick her up at the school after cheer events. If a parent is extraneously and/or repetitively late, the cheerleader may be prevented from attending future cheer events.
- C. During the school year, it may be necessary to have early morning or afternoon cheer practices which may be held at any VISD campus. If an alternate campus is scheduled, a bus will be provided for the cheerleaders to be transported to the home campus after practice. Cheerleaders are encouraged to eat breakfast before morning practice to prevent missing school-served breakfast because transportation schedules may result in their missing the school provided breakfast.
- D. Students who drive to morning practices will be allowed to drive themselves to the high school from the alternate campus after practice. **However, after the morning practice, only the cheerleader/driver will be allowed to drive to the high school. All other cheerleaders must utilize the bus transportation provided. Failure to adhere to this or any other transportation policy will result in demerit discipline as a transportation policy violation.**

### **XIX. Dropping Out During Season**

If a cheerleader quits at any time or is dismissed from a squad during the season, the cheerleader must turn in her cleaned uniform within one week of the removal from the squad. Additionally, the cheerleader may not wear any part of the cheer or camp uniform purchased to any school sponsored event during the remainder of the school year. Doing so will be considered a violation of the school's uniform policy. If a cheerleader is removed from a squad for any reason or if they quit during the current year, the cheerleader will not be allowed to try out for the following year. There will be NO refunds issued for any reason.

### **XX. Coach and Administrator Discretion**

All Cheerleading rules will be interpreted and carried out by cheer coaches and campus administrators. Interpretation of these rules is at the strict discretion of cheer coaching staff and the campus administration.

\*\*\*\*\*Please note that the policies in this constitution are subject to change at any time. At said time the cheerleader will receive an updated copy\*\*\*\*\*

I have read the Venus Independent School District Cheer Constitution (2019-2020) above and agree to abide by the rules and regulations stated herein for VISD Cheerleaders.

Cheerleader Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheerleader's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent's Signature \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_