



Howell High School Cheer Team Handbook

I. Purpose of Cheerleading

A. The Program

1. Increase and promote the educational value of interscholastic athletics.
2. To promote lifetime skills and values including confidence, responsibility, integrity and respect for others.

B. The Team

1. To promote and uphold school spirit, develop a sense of good sportsmanship among the students and better relationships between schools during all athletic events.
2. To set an example to the student body of qualified leadership (including attendance, grade, behavior and attitudes).
3. To set an example of sportsmanship to the student body by displaying positive values and attitudes including respect, fairness, courtesy and graceful acceptance of the results of a contest.

II. Membership

A. There will be one varsity team for football season and one for competitive season.

1. To earn a VARSITY LETTER for cheerleading the following criteria must be met.
 - a. MUST attend EVERY practice and game.
 - b. MUST attend ALL team functions.
 - c. MUST be academically eligible.
 - d. MUST be in good standing with ALL team rules and policies.

Other circumstances may be taken into account. The coaching staff will determine final decision.

B. There will be one junior varsity team for football season and one for competitive season.

C. There will be one freshman team for football season and one for competitive season.

D. Football Cheer Team Tryouts will be held in the spring each school year. Competitive Cheer Team Tryouts will be held in the fall each school year. Former senior cheerleaders are responsible for assisting at the clinics and tryouts.

E. The cheerleaders chosen at tryouts will remain on the team until one week after the last game or competition of their respective season(s).

F. Freshmen are eligible for the freshmen team. Sophomores and juniors are eligible for the junior varsity team. Juniors and seniors are eligible for the varsity team. Freshmen and sophomores may be pulled up to positions on higher teams, only at the discretion of the varsity coach.

G. The coaches will decide the final listing of students chosen for each team.

H. No changes will be made to the coaches' final decision.

I. Once the new team members have been named, all students chosen become subject to all rules and regulations herein described.

J. All students that tryout for a cheer team will be notified by the coach as to whether or not they have made one of the cheer teams.

K. Students may not tryout for cheerleading if they plan to be involved in a sport or activity which will interfere with cheerleading practices, games or competition.

- L. Academic Eligibility – all team members must maintain at least a 2.0GPA or better to be eligible to cheer. If a team member falls below the minimum grade point average, she is considered ineligible and will be removed from the team immediately.

III. Practice

- A. All practices are mandatory.
- B. Everyone must come to practice dressed appropriately: gym shoes, shorts/skorts and t-shirt without spaghetti straps (NO Cami's) and one that doesn't expose any part of the midriff. Hair must be pulled up (bangs pinned back) during practices.
- C. No Gum may be chewed.
- D. No jewelry may be worn (including, necklaces, bracelets, rings, earrings, nose rings, belly button piercings, anklets, toe rings, etc..)
- E. All rules are in accordance with the MHSAA guidelines. Violation is subject to dismissal from practice as unexcused.
- F. Practice shall be conducted in an orderly manner at all times.
- G. Full participation is expected from every cheerleader from the start of practice to the dismissal of practice.
- H. Additional practices, which are frequently scheduled notice of homecoming and competitions, are mandatory. Advance notice of additional practice will be provided as soon as it becomes available.
- I. Gymnastics is an integral part of our program. All gymnastic practices are mandatory. Each cheerleader is responsible for attending all gymnastic practices as a team at High Flyers. No exceptions will be made.
 - a. Each cheerleader is responsible for making payments to High Flyers per session.
 - b. Full payment is due to High Flyers at the beginning of each session.
 - c. High Flyers reserves the right to not allow a cheerleader to participate in gymnastics practice due to non-payment. It is up to the coach's discretion to consider non-participation an unexcused absence.
 - d. If a cheerleader is unable to make a mandatory gymnastics practice, "Make-up days" will be offered. (There will not be any negotiation on payment for missed gymnastics practice. You must pay for the full session).

IV. Attendance

- A. Cheerleading is to come first, before work and other extracurricular activities.
- B. Attendance at all practices and gymnastics is mandatory.
- C. Attendance at all football games, basketball games and competitions is mandatory.
- D. Please try to schedule all appointments around practice. However, if you miss a practice due to a doctor's appointment, we will require a note from the physician. If you fail to supply a note your absence will be considered unexcused.
- E. If a cheerleader is absent from school, the cheerleader must not attend that evenings practice or game. The cheer team member must inform the coach of the absence prior to the scheduled practice or game that must be missed. Arrangements may be made with the Athletic Director or your coach for a written excuse and permission to practice in some instances.
- F. Dismissal from practice due to misconduct will be considered an unexcused absence.
- G. Attendance at summer camp is extremely important.
- H. The first of August and November (MHSAA determines) are the official start dates for football and competitive seasons, respectively.
- I. If a cheerleader is unable to attend or is going to be late to a mandatory practice, gymnastics, game, or competition, the cheer team member and/or parent/guardian must inform the coach by phone or in writing at least 2 hours prior to the absence. This does not guarantee an excused absence.
- J. Unexcused absences can result in dismissal from the team. Please see Demerit Guidelines.

V. Conduct

- A. Cheerleaders must conduct themselves properly at all times. This means acting like ladies, using appropriate language in and out of uniforms.

- B. While in and out of uniform, in school and at games, a cheerleader shall show only appropriate displays of affection...if it is questionable, don't do it!
- C. All cheerleaders are to remember that they are highly visible representative of their high school and should display good sportsmanship at all times.
- D. Classroom conduct should be of caliber that sets a good example to other students. Cheer team members should be passing all classes in order to participate at games and competitions. It is our hope that all teams will strive for academic all-state status. We will have a team goal of a 3.25 team cumulative gpa.
- E. The Howell High School Cheerleading Rules and Regulations are to be followed and enforced in conjunction with the Howell High School Code of Conduct and the Student Athlete Handbook.

VI. Games

- A. All cheerleaders must be ready to cheer at all times. All cheerleaders will be required to arrive early, dressed in full uniform, ready to stretch and practice prior to start of the game. All cheerleaders must be ready prior to boarding the bus for all Away games.
- B. All cheerleaders must be ready to cheer before the start of the game and before the start of the second half. (At least two minutes prior to the start of the second half of the game). Violation is subject to an unexcused tardy.
- C. In the event a cheerleader's or team's conduct and performance at an athletic event is judged by the coach to be poor and thereby reflective on the team, school and coach as a whole, the cheerleader or team will be subject to suspension of a game.
- D. No gum chewing during any athletic event or competition.
- E. No jewelry shall be worn during a game or competition.
- F. Cheerleaders must be in full uniform. Hair must be pulled up (bangs must be pinned back).

VII. Uniforms

- A. Excellent care of the uniform should be taken at all times. This includes washing at least every other game. All uniforms may be washed in cold water and air-dried. Please do not wash the uniforms with any other clothes-damage to the uniform might occur.
- B. Uniforms shall not be bought, made or remodeled without the permission of the head coach. You may NOT make any changes to the uniforms without the permission of the head coach. This includes cutting material, adding material or modifications of ANY kind.
- C. Uniforms are to be worn for athletic games, pep assemblies and competitions only, unless your coach has granted permission.
- D. No pins or additions should be worn on the uniform.
- E. Only socks and should be approved by the coach may be worn with the uniform.
- F. Hair MUST be pulled back or worn out of the eyes and off the face while in uniform.
- G. No jewelry of any kind will be worn while in uniform. No new piercing of any body part once chosen for a cheer team. Tongue, nose or belly button rings are not permitted at any time.
- H. Make-up is optional and is to be worn in good taste. The coach will decide when make-up excessive. NO GLITTER IS TO BE WORN WITH UNIFORM.
- I. No nail polish is to be worn while in uniform. Acrylic nails are not allowed, as they are a safety hazard while performing stunts.
- J. Cheerleaders are not permitted to wear sweat pants or any other type of pants under skirts at any time. Cheerleaders should all wear the same uniform, with no deletions or additions. For instance, cheerleaders may not wear sweatshirts over the shells. If it is decided to wear sweaters on a game day, the whole team must wear sweaters. Everyone should be uniform.
- K. School uniforms must be returned to the coach at the end of the season, which is one week after the last game or competition. The uniform must be CLEAN. A \$5 per day late fee will be imposed for late uniforms.

- L. In the event that a cheerleader is dismissed from the team, the uniform must be turned in to the coach within TWO DAYS of dismissal. The uniform must be CLEAN. A \$5 per day fee will be imposed for late uniforms.
- M. The uniform may include up to: skirt, shell, pants, jacket and rain gear.

VIII. Transportation

- A. Cheerleaders must travel to and from away games and competitions on the bus provided by the school. Students may only ride home with their own parent/guardian (no other parent) and may not drive themselves or drive with another cheerleader and/or friend home from any away game or competition. Exceptions are given only if an administrator or athletic director signs a note from the parent.

IX. Team Discipline

- A. In order to remain consistent in discipline, we will institute a system of demerits. Guidelines for demerits include but are not limited to the following:

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| 1. 10 minutes late to practice or game | .5 demerit |
| 2. 20+ minutes late to practice or game | 1 demerit |
| 3. Unexcused absence from practice or game | 1 demerit |
| 4. Not wearing proper uniform to school on game day | 1 demerit |
| 5. Improper conduct towards an authority | 1 demerit |
- B. Earning two demerits means the cheerleader will be benched for one game.
- C. Earning four demerits means the cheerleader will be removed from the team.
- D. Coaches reserve the right to assign demerits based on a cheerleader's actions or attitude.
- E. The Howell Cheer Team will follow the Howell Public School Athletic Rules and Guidelines regarding smoking and drinking alcoholic drinking. This is: 1st offense you will be benched for 10% of the season. The 2nd offense you will be benched for 25% of the season. The 3rd offense you will be out for the remainder of the season. (This can include time the student is not in school because of suspension).
- F. Suspension from school for any reason will result in suspension from games equal to the number of days suspended from school.
- G. The coach and/or administration have the final say as to whether or not a team member is suspended from games or dismissed.

I have read and understood the above Howell Cheerleading Rules and Regulations. I agree to abide by their contents.

Parents Signature Date

Student Athlete's Signature Date