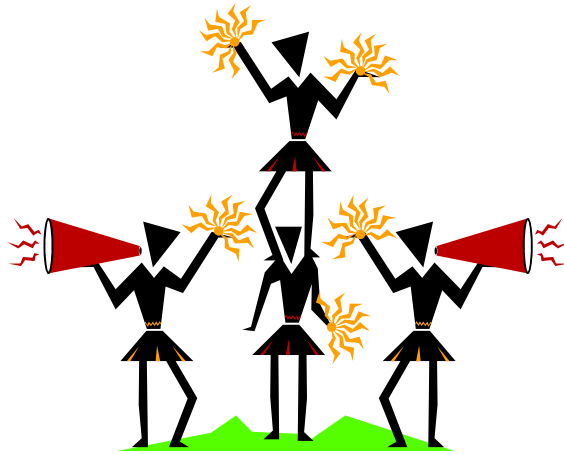


Independence High School

Varsity
Cheerleading
Handbook

2010-2011
SCHOOL YEAR



**WILDCAT CHEER PROGRAM
CODE OF ETHICS:**

- **Ensure equal opportunity to all students without regard to gender, race, religious creed, color, national origin, ancestry or economic capability.**
- **Emphasize the ideals of sportsmanship, ethical conduct, integrity, accountability, and fair play.**
- **Abide by all school, district and MHSAA rules.**
- **Show courtesy to all visiting teams, competitors, hosts and officials.**
- **Respect the integrity and judgment of all sports and competition officials.**

Go Wildcats!!!

WILDCAT CHEERLEADERS EXIST

- To encourage school spirit and pride in Independence High School.
- To promote physical and mental development.
- To develop lifelong values and skills.

WILDCAT CHEER PROGRAM MISSION IS TO:

- Promote and uphold school spirit, unity and pride.
- Represent the school to the highest degree.
- Set an example of good behavior and sportsmanship at all times **(whether in uniform or not)**
- Promote friendship **with each other** and with schools with whom we compete, perform and go to camp.
- Promote the development of lifelong values and skills.
- Support and perform at pep rallies, games & competitions.

EDUCATIONAL VALUE TO INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

Membership on a cheer squad offers a unique opportunity for personal growth, leadership, and involvement in diverse activities. The attitude, dedication, and enthusiasm of the squad members are just as important as the skills involved in spirit leading. Members of the cheer squad are committed to the highest level of athleticism, performance, self-discipline, respect for the school and others, personal exemplary conduct and the performance of all responsibilities related to the pursuit of school spirit and pride. Furthermore, cheerleaders demonstrate a proven ability to balance academic requirements and demands with extra-curricular and personal activities.

GOALS

- Cheer at varsity football and girls' & boys' basketball games
- Participate in & support Homecoming Week.
- Compete in MHSAA & UCA Competitions
- Organize and Oversee Wildcat Pride Cheer Camp

WILDCAT CHEER PROGRAM RULES AND REGULATIONS:

Cheerleaders understand that team work and the maintenance of discipline are keys to the success of the spirit program. Cheerleaders are dedicated to promoting spirit, enthusiasm, and a positive winning attitude through example. Adherence to the Cheer Program Rules and Regulations is vital to achieving these goals. All members realize that the manner in which they conduct themselves, in or out of uniform, directly reflects on the entire team and school.

It is the duty of the cheerleader to follow sponsors directions, as well as captain and/or co-captain directions. Cheerleaders must also keep a good attitude and abide by all rules and regulations set forth in this handbook along with **all rules dictated in the school handbook and school administration.**

It is recognized that these rules and regulations are necessary to maintain squad morale, squad and individual discipline, and effective learning. Consistent enforcement of rules and regulations is also necessary to ensure the safety and general well-being of each individual spirit leader. **Participation in cheerleading is voluntary, not mandatory. It is a privilege, not a right, and may be revoked by the school personnel when a cheerleader violates the rules and regulations.**

ELIGIBILITY

All students must maintain a 2.0 in the 6 main credits towards graduation to be eligible for cheerleading.

- Members must maintain good discipline records, attendance, class performance and teacher recommendations during the time on the squad and for try-outs.
- All members must have a physical and signed contract on file with the athletic department before practices involving stunting begin.
- Cheerleading must take priority over all other extracurricular activities **(including jobs)** for the **entire time** of commitment. The only exceptions are Softball and weight lifting and that will be worked out on an as needed basis with the coach.
- All practices, camps, competitions and games are mandatory.
- All members are expected to take part in fund-raisers.
- If you were a member of the squad during the previous season and you chose to drop you will be ineligible to participate during the next season.

ABSENCES

- One person being absent affects the entire squad. It is important not to inconvenience the practice time of the entire squad by being absent. Absences should always be avoided when possible.
- Absences must be excused by a note from a doctor or an obituary notice. They are the only acceptable excuses. Otherwise it is 1 point off your average each occurrence
- Missing a scheduled practice the day before a game will result in the individual not performing during the first quarter at the game.
- **Absences due to work schedules are unexcused. Jobs must work around the cheer squad schedule.**
- Attendance at a game or practice without proper shoes, clothes or uniform will result in a demerit.

PRACTICES

- NO SPONSOR, NO PRACTICE!
- Be serious. Horseplay gets people hurt!
- Cheerleaders must arrive to practice on time, wearing proper shoes and clothing. You will not be absent from practice without a doctor's excuse.
- Hair needs to be out of the eyes and in a secured ponytail if shoulder length or below.
- There is no chewing gum or eating during practices.
- Cell Phones are prohibited during practice (and games)!
- No jewelry (no bellybutton rings!), no visible tattoos and nails must be sport length.
- Safety is our first priority, so you must follow safety rules.
- You will NOT leave early. You must have your own transportation to and from practice.
- If the sponsor feels that excessive absenteeism is preventing a cheerleader from performing effectively with the squad, the cheerleader will be removed from the squad.
- **Even if you are injured, you are still expected to attend practices to see what we learn!!**

GAMES

- All games are mandatory.
- Members are required to arrive at least 30 minutes before the game time. You will not be late! During this time, signs will be put up and stretching exercise will be done. **During the game you will remain in performance formation.** This time will not be spent talking to friends over the fence. Your job is to cheer for the team and that is what is expected to be seen and heard from the sidelines. Half time is for you to visit family and friends, go to the restroom and support the band. You must be back on the sideline before third quarter starts. After the game all cheerleaders must remain until all signs and equipment have been properly taken care of and you are dismissed by the sponsor. All spirit squad members must know all the cheers and routines for the game. Sitting out is unacceptable. Members are required to dress in full uniform.

- Hair must be pulled back away from the face and secured in a ponytail if shoulder length or below. Hair ties need to be uniform.
- Make-up should be worn in moderation.
- No jewelry and nail color must be light in color. Nails MUST be athletic length.
- There is no chewing gum or eating while on the sidelines.

Socializing with friends while the game is in progress is not allowed.

UNIFORMS

Uniforms are required for participation on the spirit squad. Cost of the uniform is the responsibility of each cheerleader. All money must be turned in by set deadlines or the uniform will not be ordered and the cheerleader will be dismissed from the squad. The sponsor will take the opinion of the squad, the cost and the need into consideration when uniform choices are being made. The sponsor will make all final decisions on uniforms. Uniforms must be cleaned and pressed. Team athletic shoes must be clean. All Spirit Squad members must have the same uniform look.

- **No jewelry is allowed during practices, performances or games. Not even bellybutton rings!!!!**
- Fingernails must be sports length. Nail polish, if worn, must be clear or natural color.
- No gum chewing during practices, performances or games.
- Hair must be in a secured full ponytail if shoulder length or below. Bangs must be out of the eyes.
- Cheerleaders will not loan out any piece of their uniform to anyone. **Sweat suits and sweatshirts are considered to be part of your cheer wardrobe and should not be worn by anyone other than you or for anything other than cheer activities. This was a real issue this past school year.**

TRANSPORTATION

Cheerleaders are not allowed to drive to away games or competitions. All parents will participate in providing transportation or pay fuel cost to away events on bus trips. Provided there is space, parents and other guests or students may ride the bus. A small fee may be charged to offset the cost of fuel.

CONDUCT AND DISCIPLINE

Promoting good sportsmanship by way of example is required at all times. Members must not use foul language at practices, in school, at games, camp or competitions, etc. Excessive public displays of affection are never considered appropriate, especially in uniform, at games or in school. Proper appearance is required at all times, with clothing appropriate to the occasion.

By being part of the spirit squad, you are accepting the fact that your actions are more prominent than those not associated with such an activity. **Because of this, exemplary behavior is mandatory at all times, anywhere in the community and at all school functions where you are recognized as a representative of Independence High School (Believe it or not, people DO call me).** A demerit system has been established to address conduct issues and is detailed on page 11.

- Members must cooperate with all faculty members, squad members, game officials and coaches. Cheerleaders must display proper behavior in class, including being on time, not skipping or not cheating. The sponsor and administration reserves the right to PERMANENTLY dismiss any cheerleader for the following reasons:
 - * marriage
 - * pregnancy
 - * suspension, or expulsion from school
 - * stealing
 - * act or deed that harms the reputation of the school

- * undesirable behavior (fighting, drinking, smoking, drug use and undesirable language – not necessarily profanity)
- * failure to maintain academic standards
- * failure to attend a scheduled event
- * **CONTINUAL DISRESPECT TOWARDS THE SPONSOR**

For breaking the following rules, the sponsor and/or administration have the right to suspend you from the squad one week for the first offense and permanently dismiss you from the squad for the second offense.

- * unsportsmanlike conduct
 - * uncooperative or disrespectful attitude with ANYONE
 - * sloppy appearance or habits
 - * improper attire
 - * tardiness to a scheduled event
 - * breaking any rule in the student handbook
- Members should be present at all scheduled practices. Other activities must be scheduled around these practices.
 - Missing practices that have doctor's excuses can still lead to being removed from a routine position or stunt, due to not physically being available to practice.
 - During game suspensions the squad member will sit in uniform with the coach/advisor for the entire game.

Each case of discipline will be judged individually. The advisor/coach, with the assistance of the administration if deemed necessary, has the final decision in any discipline situation. Every attempt will be made to discipline fairly/equally, and to make consequences of actions known ahead of time. Possible consequences could be – extra conditioning during practice (laps, sit ups, etc), ISS, removal from the squad. Parents will be kept informed of problem situations. Severity of, or repeated offenses may dictate harsher action.

CHEERLEADING FINANCES

- Cost of the uniform is the responsibility of each cheerleader.
- Uniforms/poms ruined, lost or stolen will be replaced by the individual at their own expense.
- Camp attendance is mandatory in order to participate on the cheer squad. Camp fees are the responsibility of the member.
- If a member is removed from or chooses to quit the squad, they are still responsible for payment of all items ordered.
- Deposits made for uniforms and/or camp are non-refundable.

Additional expenses such as hair ties, camp clothes, and team sweats are the responsibility of the squad member. If competitions are attended, including regional's and nationals, the financial costs are the responsibility of the squad and team member. Fund-raising opportunities are available; however it is the individual's responsibility to pay all expenses.

FOOTBALL PROGRAM

It is not REQUIRED that cheerleaders sell ads for the football program. This is just the only fundraiser that we do, so if girls want lower their costs, this is the way to do it.

INSURANCE

All cheerleaders must have medical insurance. If needed, you may purchase insurance through the school.

PHYSICALS

Each cheerleader will have to have a physical on file before any practices that involve stunting will begin. If they are not turned in by the set deadline, the cheerleader will be removed from the squad.

Demerit System

If a cheerleader reaches 40 demerits total, or exceeds more than 15 demerits within 30 days, they will be dismissed from the squad. ½ point will be deducted from the cheerleader's 9 weeks average for each demerit earned. Demerits will start over each nine weeks. The following will highlight the most common demerit penalties. Please note that I may add or remove penalties throughout the year as necessary.

5-15 minutes tardy or early leave ("on time" to practice requires that the cheerleader is dressed and ready to stretch at the designated practice time. Not getting dressed, not in the hallway, not putting on lotion, not putting on shoes, not talking to friends.	2 demerits
15-30 minutes tardy or early	3 demerits
Greater than 30 minutes tardy or early leave	4 demerits
Missed CLASS	2 demerits
Missed practice	4 demerits
Missed scheduled events	5 demerits
Unexcused missed game (football, basketball and POSSIBLY baseball; baseball will be determined at a later date)	10 demerits
Not wearing appropriate shoes during after school practice.	6 demerits
Wearing jewelry at a practice, game performance or appearance. This includes everything from studs to belly button rings. All jewelry must be removed before the designated practice time.	3 demerits, double after every repeated occurrence.
Talking on a cell phone once practice or game has started without a coaches' approval. This has gotten ridiculous!! No Cell Phones during practice!	5 demerits, doubles after every repeated occurrence.
Not wearing designated practice attire	2 demerits
Forgetting a uniform accessory.	3 demerits
Inappropriate fingernail length.	5 demerits, double after every repeated occurrence.
Talking to friends during practice or games without a coaches' approval.	3 demerits

INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL

***Principal:
Cory Blaylock***

***Athletic Director:
Jerome Martin***

“Wildcat Expectations” Athletic Policy

Athletics is a very important part of the educational process for students who wish to participate at Independence High School. We encourage all students to participate in as many sports as they like. Athletes have the privilege of representing Independence High School throughout the state. With that privilege comes responsibilities and expectations that are not placed on other students. The following is expected of our student athletes.

1. The student handbook will be followed at all times, whether on our campus or another school’s campus.

2. Academic Responsibilities

- A. All students must pass 6 credits to be eligible to participate in any activities under the control of the MHSAA.
- B. To be eligible for athletics and activities, students must pass the number of courses required by their local district in order to stay on graduation track. The units will be averaged as a whole and the GPA must be 2.0 or better each semester in order to maintain eligibility. A student athlete may become eligible for the second semester only once during his/her high school career if he/she fails the year end average the previous year, by passing the

required number of units with a 2.0. This will be done in order to keep the student on track for graduation.

- C. Athletes and other participants that desire to participate in athletics at the college level must meet requirements that exceed those needed to graduate from high school. Your coach, athletic director, or guidance counselor will give you more information.
- D. **SEVENTH, EIGHTH AND ENTERING NINTH GRADE PARTICIPATION:** Pupils in the seventh grade, eighth grade, and entering the ninth grade participating in high school extra-curricular activities must have a 2.0 overall average (computed numerically or by GPA) for the four core courses (English, math, science and social studies) from the preceding semester. The year-end average for the spring semester will be used to compute averages for the fall semester. Students must be on track to be promoted to be eligible.

3. **Appearance** – Our student athletes are expected to be dressed properly for the activity or occasion.

- A. No jewelry will be worn by any athlete - male or female - during time of athletic events. That includes practice, travel to and from the event, or time at site of the event while waiting to participate.
- B. Dress code applies at all times when representing our school.
- C. The coach will give specific instructions on the attire needed at a specific time and they will be followed.
- D. No bandannas or do rags worn on head.

4. **Attendance Policy** – Being part of a team requires that athletes be at school to fulfill their obligations and responsibilities to their teammates and coaches.

- A. Be here with a good attitude, and be on time.

- B. Athletes are expected to be at school and practice. When events happen that cause an athlete to miss school, the coach needs to be notified if possible. Other people are counting on you.
- C. If at school and you have to be checked out, make sure you tell your coach.
- D. Even with injury, you are expected to be with your teammates unless the injury prevents you from doing so.
- E. Players are evaluated during practice and preparation for the next game are made during this time. Failure to be at practice may effect playing time.
- F. Not being at practice does not relieve you of your responsibilities to your teammates and coaches.
- G. Missed practice time will be made up. Your coach will decide how.
- H. Excessive missed practices may result in dismissal from the team. The number of missed days resulting in dismissal will be determined by your coach. The athlete will be told when this point is being reached and an attempt to contact parents may be made.

Students who participate in any type of extra curricular activity associated with the school must be present 75% of the day or 1st thru 5th period in order to participate in that activity for that day. The MHSAA also requires that students be present 75% of the day to participate in any activities associated

with them. If this is not met by the student, then the student will not be allowed to participate in that activity. Ex. - athletic games, drama plays, band contests, cheerleading, homecoming, etc.

5. Behavior – All of our athletes will behave in a manner that will make Independence High School, their parents, and community proud.

- A. Don't cause problems in the halls or class room.
- B. Excessive referrals to the office will result in possible dismissal from the team.
- C. Any student dismissed from a team may or may not be allowed to try out for the team the following year. That decision will be made by the coach. The coach's decision will be based on the circumstances surrounding the dismissal and behavior of the student between the time of the dismissal and the time of the decision, may be taken into account.
- D. Be respectful to fellow teammates, coaches, and staff.

6. Drugs and Alcohol – A student/athlete found in violation will be punished according to the handbook and will also be punished beyond that from athletics. Dismissal from athletic participation will occur. Length of dismissal may extend beyond expulsion. Circumstances surrounding the violation and past behavior will be taken into account.

Please keep in mind that changes could be made to this handbook if district or state changes are made.

Shelly Scott
Cheer Sponsor

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