



## **Head Coach**

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## **Mission and Purpose**

The mission of Ojeda Cheer is to create an atmosphere of enthusiasm and pride in our school, student body, and boys and girls sports. Through the accomplishment of this mission, our cheerleaders will become strong athletes, bold leaders, and positive contributors to our community.

## **Eligibility Requirements**

In order to tryout, a candidate must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

1. Enrolled at Ojeda Middle School for the 2016-2017 school year
2. Have a 2.0 cumulative GPA
3. Have a current physical on file
4. Complete and turn in the full application to Mrs. Hutchison.

## **Tryout Information (2018-2019)**

Tryouts will take place in the new year. Returning cheerleaders are required to tryout again for the new squad. A cheerleader must be in good financial standing in order to tryout. Accommodations will be made for cheerleaders who are injured during the week of tryouts.

### ***Selection Process for 2018-2019***

The members of the cheerleading squad will be chosen on the basis of the following:

1. Squad size, limited to a range of 16-20 cheerleaders
2. Judges will score on the following material performed during the tryout:
  - a. Spirit entrance (tumbling is scored on entrance)
  - b. Jumps (three)
  - c. Cheer
  - d. Dance
  - e. Stunt
3. Teacher recommendation scores

Scores will be an average of all three judges' scores and the teacher recommendation score. Squad size will be determined by the largest break in scores within the specified range. Callbacks may be required to make this determination more clear. It should be noted that coaches have no say in the selection of squad members.

Results of the tryout will be posted on the OMS Gator Cheer and school website in the announcement section on Saturday, March 10 at 10:00 a.m. By request, the coach will be available to speak with parents and candidates who did not make the squad starting on March 19. They will have access to their scores alone. No other scores will be released to anyone for any reason.

## **Discipline and Expectations**

OMS cheerleaders are expected to be examples in conduct, athleticism, and leadership. Additionally, they are expected to be faithful in attendance and participation in their required activities and maintain the skills performed at tryouts throughout the year. Failure to uphold these expectations will result in infractions for which there will be consequences. Minor infractions will have consequences of minutes of conditioning or demerits. Minor infractions will be worked off weekly in the form of extra jumps and conditioning. Demerits can also be worked off weekly with extra conditioning, 10 minutes per demerit. Major infractions will have more serious consequences detailed below.

This is a record keeping system that is used to track behavior issues and consequences. Merits/demerits/additional conditioning will be issued and a record will be maintained by coach.

### ***Minor Infractions***

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Minutes of conditioning</b>
Unexcused absence from practice	10
Unexcused absence from a game or performance	20
Tardiness to practice, or leaving practice early	10
Pre-approved, unexcused absence for school activity	20
Improper uniform for practice or game	10
Unsecured hair (out of face)	10
Disrespect to/about coach, officers, teammates, or peers	40
Inappropriate posts and behavior on social media (foul language and gestures)	30
Unapproved cell phone use for talking, texting, or otherwise during practice or game	20

<b>Infraction</b>	<b># of Demerits</b>
Not having grade sheet	2
Wearing uniform anywhere other than game/performance	2
Failure to turn in paperwork/payment by given due date	2
Not notifying sponsor of absence prior to practice	2
Out of dress code at school	2
Defiance	3
Disrespect to a teacher	3
Failure to follow coach's directions	3
Leaving an assigned area during cheer activity	3
Public Display of Affection (Kissing)	3
Using foul language	3
Cafeteria Disruption	4
Late to a performance/game	4
Receiving a referral or bus ticket	5
Receiving ISS	5
Not Following School Rules	1 – 4 (Coaches Discretion)

Excused absences must be pre-approved\* by the coach and include the following:

- Sick from school that day (if you come to school, you come to practice)
- Family emergency (along with communication from parent)
- Tutoring (must not occur regularly and have note from tutor)
- Doctor appointments
- Mandatory field trips or activities for a class grade

Unexcused absences must also be pre-approved\* by the coach and include the following:

- Driver's ed

- Work
- Tumbling class
- Any other reason not listed under the “excused absence” section

The cheerleader or the parent/guardian must communicate directly with the coach preferably in writing. Messages that come through teammates will not be accepted. Cheerleaders must be at school by 10:30 a.m. in order to participate in practices, pep rallies, or games.

\*Pre-approved means that you inform the coach directly, in person, email, or phone call, as soon as you know you are going to be absent. For example: illness or family emergency contact the coach as soon as you know you will be staying home sick or as soon as you can because of the family emergency. Tutoring, doctor’s appointments, and anything else that is at a set day and time, you must notify the coach as soon as the appointment is made but no later than the day before.

### ***Major Infractions***

<b>Infraction</b>	<b>Consequence</b>
Accruing 10 minor infractions/demerits	Sit out 1/2 game
Displaying unsportsmanlike conduct	Sit out game, must attend dressed out
School handbook infraction	Sit out game or pep rally, must attend dressed out

### **Automatic Suspension (3 weeks)**

- ❖ Accumulation of 15 demerits
- ❖ Three major infractions
- ❖ Public Display of Affection (other than kissing and hand holding)
- ❖ Social media\*\* infractions (Incriminating photos or statements depicting: partial nudity, foul language directed at any individual, any remarks that could be considered racist)

While a cheerleader is on probation, he/ she is not allowed to participate in performances but must still attend practice. If a cheerleader is put on probation, his/her parent/guardian will be notified immediately and a conference with school administrators including principal, athletic director, and coach will be scheduled in order to determine your position on the squad.

### **Automatic Dismissal**

- ❖ Accumulation of 20 demerits
- ❖ Fighting or bullying or harassment (including social media)

- ❖ DAEP given as a consequence for a serious infraction in school
- ❖ Performing/participating in any criminal activity punishable by law on or off campus
- ❖ Social media\*\* infractions (Incriminating photos or statements depicting: full nudity; bullying; hazing; violence; underage drinking; sexual harassment; vandalism; selling, possessing, or using controlled substances; or any other inappropriate behaviors, creating a serious danger to the safety of another person or making a credible threat of serious physical or emotional injury to another person; underage smoking; animal cruelty; any illegal activity)

### **\*\*Social Media**

Everything posted in social media is public information even if security settings are listed as “private”. Information (including pictures, videos, and comments) may be accessible even after removed. Once a photo or comment on a social networking site has been posted, that photo or comment becomes the property of the site and may be searchable even after being removed.

Similar to comments made in person, Del Valle ISD will not tolerate disrespectful comments and behavior online.

## **Safety Information**

Safety is of utmost importance when performing cheerleading skills, and in practices, pep rallies, and at games, it will be treated as such. Therefore, all skills included in these activities will be in accordance with NFHS and AACCA safety guidelines. Additionally, all coaches are AACCA safety certified and are familiar with the emergency action plan in order to respond quickly and appropriately in case of injury.

### **Specific Guidelines**

1. No tumbling or stunting skills are to be done until the coach arrives.
2. Coaches and teammates will spot all new stunts.
3. Coaches reserve the right at any time to change out flyers or bases.
4. All bases are to make their flyer’s safety their priority, especially when she is in a downward motion.
5. Every cheerleader is expected to give 100% to a stunt regardless of their position.
6. Spotting requires hands in the air at all times fully prepared to catch while facing the flyer.
7. Stunt groups are created at the discretion of the coach but will be formed by taking into account size, height, and skill of all cheerleaders.



8. Coaches may hold a group accountable for dropping a stunt or performing a stunt unsafely, including extra conditioning or “grounding” a group for a time.

### ***Injury Procedures***

Cheerleaders complete safety training where they learn about adequate nutrition, water, common injuries and ways to avoid injuries. The girls also receive a powerpoint presentation about concussions that is required by the district and UIL. First aid procedures are followed for all injuries. Any head injury must be treated like a concussion and return to play protocols will be followed. Cheerleaders will see the athletic trainer when injuries occur during cheer. Cheerleaders must let a coach know immediately if they are injured.

## **Practices and Responsibilities**

### ***Practices***

In the spring, cheerleaders will have three practices per week (subject to change).

- Monday, 4:00-5:30—Conditioning only
- Tuesday, 4:00-5:30
- Thursday, 4:00—5:30

In the fall, there will be three practices each week (subject to change):

- Monday, 4:00—5:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, 4:00-5:30 p.m.
- Thursday, 4:00-5:30 a.m.

### ***Practice Rules***

Cheerleaders must arrive to practice on time. On time is defined as 5 minutes before practice starts after school. Cheerleaders must have proper practice wear, cheer shoes, no jewelry, and hair up in a ponytail out of their face. Additionally, only approved practice uniforms will be allowed at practice unless otherwise noted. However, all attire worn to practice must be up to the athletic dress code of the school. If practice runs longer than two hours, cheerleaders are encouraged to bring a healthy snack. Gum and drinking caffeinated or carbonated beverages is prohibited at practice or performances. **The use of cell phones is strictly prohibited during practice.** In the event of an emergency, parents may contact the coach or school. Cheerleaders must notify the coach if they will be absent from practice.

### ***Missing Practice***

All cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices unless excused in accordance with

the infraction guidelines. Those who are absent may have consequences also in accordance with the infraction guidelines. Practices are important not only to learn skills and routines but to ensure safe techniques. Team members are required to attend every scheduled practice. **Excused absences include personal illness or accident, death in the family, approved school activities, and weddings or births in the immediate family.** Cheer members need to be aware that OMS cheer commitments will come first. Any outside commitment will not be considered as a reason to miss any cheer event/game including social events or work. Absences related to outside commitments will be considered unexcused. Parents/Guardians are expected to notify the sponsor of any absences before practice starts in writing. Unexcused absences from practice will result in a consequence. For safety reasons, if a cheerleader misses practice including cheer class for any reason the day of or before performance, he/she will be benched for the performance. Missing one or more practices for any reason could result in removal from performance at the discretion of the sponsor. An unexcused absence from a performance may result in your cheerleader forfeiting their spot for the season, depending on the reason for the absence. Example: if you chose to go on family vacation and miss a football game. You will forfeit your spot for the rest of football season. If you miss a competition or mandatory competition practice because of a birthday party, you will forfeit your spot on the competition squad. Schedules will be given out early so that you have months in advance to plan.

### ***Athletics/Band/Tutorials***

The band directors, athletic coaches, and cheer sponsors will work together to decrease schedule conflicts. All students assigned to attend tutorials are expected to attend the tutorials and to notify the sponsor in advance of the tutorial. Each cheerleader is responsible for filling out a weekly Tutorial Log (see attachment at the back of this handbook). Tutorials are considered excused absences for practice. Cheerleaders are expected to report to practice as soon as tutorials are finished with written documentation from a teacher.

### ***Camp***

OMS Cheer camps are mandatory. Failure to attend camp will result in losing the privilege of participating in Ojeda cheer. If a cheerleader is absent for part or all of camp, a doctor's note is required and is the only excused absence.

### ***Games***

In the fall, football games typically occur on Tuesday evenings. Expect to cheer at 6-8 of these throughout the season, one or two of which may be away games. In the winter, basketball games will be played on Thursday evenings for several weeks. Expect to cheer at 6-8 games, one or two of which may be away.

## ***Game/Performance Rules***

Summer camps, games, and performances are considered mandatory. For the safety of all cheerleaders and a strong display of teamwork, cheerleaders must follow attire guidelines provided by the coach for practices, on game days and for specific performances. Appropriate attire means that cheerleaders are wearing a complete uniform, no jewelry including piercings and in complete makeup. Undergarments should not be seen and hair must be neat and out of the cheerleader's face. If the cheerleader's uniform is damaged, it is the cheerleader's responsibility to replace it. The cheer uniform is not to be worn outside of games/performances.

**Cheerleaders will be expected to remain on campus on game days. We will use that time to practice. Food will be provided for each football game.** Water bottles will be required in order to stay appropriately hydrated throughout the entirety of the game. In addition, cheerleaders are to stay with squad/coaches until the end of the game, including halftime. **Cell phones are prohibited during games.** During away games, cheerleaders are required to travel to and from OMS on the bus with the cheer team. A travel release form may be signed by a parent or legal guardian who assumes responsibility for the cheerleader if he/she chooses to ride home with a parent.

**\*\*Jewelry Note:** Do not get any piercings during football or competition season. Cheerleaders may NOT at any time during practice, game, or any cheer event be allowed to wear jewelry (Belly button, ear piercings watch, bracelet, necklace, etc) THIS IS A UIL AND CHEER RULE.

## ***Late Pick Up Policy***

Please arrive on time to pick up your student athlete/cheerleader. Parents are expected to pick up their child no later than 15 minutes after release time. All late pick-ups are documented.

## ***Pep rallies and other activities***

Additionally, there will be ??? pep rallies in which the cheerleaders will perform. For these pep rallies, additional practices may be called. Decorating will also take place before a pep rally.

There will also be opportunities for service projects and social activities that will require participation, but you will be notified of these events well in advance in order to make proper arrangements.

## ***Competition***

Ojeda Middle School cheerleaders may participate in several competitions throughout

the year. The district will pay for a portion of registration fees and we will fundraise for travel expenses. All cheerleaders must be academically responsible so that they can participate in competitions. If the team competes, competitions are mandatory.

### ***Absence from school***

If OMS Gator Cheer is going to miss school for any of the above reasons, each cheerleader is responsible for getting any assignments that they will be missing from their teachers and having assignments documented on the Assignment Sheet for Scheduled Cheer Absence sheet (see attachment at the back of this handbook).

## **Finances and Fundraisers**

Cheerleaders will be responsible for paying all financial obligations by given due dates. If payments have not been made the materials will not be ordered and the cheerleader will not be allowed to participate in performances. If camp has not been paid by deadline, cheerleader may not attend and will therefore forfeit their spot on the cheer team.

Money raised through fundraisers will be credited to the cheer account and earmarked for that student's expenses. All money raised through school fundraisers becomes the property of the cheer program, not the individual cheerleader. If a cheerleader is dismissed, resigns, or leaves the team for any reason, the money remains the property of DVISD.

In order to offset some costs for the program or to purchase new items for safety or spirit, we will hold fundraisers throughout the year.

1. Spirit item sales: These items will be sold at each home football, basketball, and soccer game.
2. Concessions: The date is still TBD.
3. Other fundraisers to be decided.

## **Officer Roles and Selection**

Each team will have at least one captain and co-captain. Captains will serve as leaders of the team during all practices and cheer events. Leaders will be asked to be exceptional role models for their team and student body. Captain/Co-captains shall display exceptional behavior, constantly have a positive attitude, and be ready to take on extra responsibilities as needed by coach and teammates. Additional officers such as Lieutenants will be added as needed by the size of the team.

## ***Captains/Co-Captains/Officers***

Captains will work with the coaches and co-captains to prepare all aspects of cheerleading. They will meet with the coaches at designated times and help plan for the school year and activities. They will lead during football and basketball games and at any time the squad is assembled. Additionally, they will be examples at all times.

## ***Spirit Coordinator (this is a new position for the 2018-2019 school year)***

The spirit coordinator will work with the coaches and captains to lead the team in unity, spirit, and social activities. They will be responsible for presenting some of the character lessons, coordinating big and little sisters, and planning and executing social activities during and outside of practices.

## ***Requirements***

Cheerleaders will have the opportunity to try out for captain/co-captain before the start of the school year. The following criteria that will be used to determine the captains/co-captains are the following: Interview, GPA, Team Vote, Written Essay, and Teacher Recommendations.

All cheerleaders seeking to be officers must have been on the squad for a full year and complete the application and essay questions along with an interview with the coaches. Those desiring to be captains will create a cheer or chant with incorporated skills and teach it to the entire squad as part of their evaluation. Those desiring to be spirit coordinator will prepare ideas for a social event and bring to practice an icebreaker activity and a character lesson.

The team and administration will have input, but final selection will be determined by the coaches.

## **Parent Commitments**

There will be parent involvement meetings throughout the school year. Involvement meetings will take place on the first Wednesday of each six weeks at 6:00 pm. We will try to secure the cafeteria for all meetings. Parents are strongly encouraged to attend the meetings. The goal of these meetings is to collaborate on ways to grow the cheer program. Your input and time is valued. Meetings will start and end on time, meetings will never be longer than one hour after start time, and an agenda will be set for all meetings. This cheer program will not thrive without parent volunteers. All parents are

expected to volunteer at least 4 hours of their time per year. You can volunteer by helping with decorating for or running an event, transportation as outlined by DVISD policy, or participating in fundraisers.

All parents are expected to give support, encouragement and accountability to your cheerleader as they walk out their commitment to our team and the standards expressed in this handbook. Be supportive and constructive toward the school, the cheerleading squad, and its leaders by practicing life-promoting attitudes and action, and by avoiding criticism and complaining.

Parents are also expected to be open in communication with the Cheer Coaches, bringing concerns to them first. OMS cheer coaches can be reached by text between the hours of 8:00 am – 8:00 pm on weekdays through Remind and will only be available on weekends during cheer activities. If for any reason a parent has questions or concerns they should send an email and will receive a response within 24 hours. If you would like to meet in person please schedule a meeting during our conference period or after practice. The school's website will be an excellent resource for parents. Calendar and event details will be posted under cheerleading on the OMS website and [OMSGatorCheer.weebly.com](http://OMSGatorCheer.weebly.com). If necessary, further concern can then be addressed with the Athletic Director, then the administration if necessary.

Additionally, they should be committed to follow through with the appropriate steps of registration, uniforms, camps and competitions, as well as parent involvement and volunteering for fundraisers, social activities, or school events. They must also be willing to provide transportation to and from home and away games (as carpools per DVISD policy) and practices.

Lastly, parents should strive to be an example in sportsmanship and support within the school community—uplifting athletes on all sides and holding themselves and their own athletes to the highest standards.

## **School Policies**

All students are held to the rules and guidelines provided in the Student Code of Conduct and the Parent/Student Handbook. Additional cheerleading consequences may apply to cheerleaders if rules are broken and punishment is handed down from the administration. Cheerleaders are also expected to maintain a 2.0 GPA each semester in order to participate in cheerleading activities in part or in full.

## OMS Cheer Tutorial Log

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Each Cheerleader will keep a record of the times they attend tutorials for any class, especially those with an average below 70 as listed in Skyward. Cheerleaders may attend tutorials during activity time or after school with activity time tutorials being the priority so they do not miss practice, a game, or performance. **Cheerleaders must have a teacher signature for each tutorial, complete with the time in and time out.**

Monday	Date	SUBJECT	TEACHER	Time In	Time Out	Teacher Signature
ATT						
AST						
Tuesday	Date	SUBJECT	TEACHER	Time In	Time Out	Teacher Signature
ATT						
AST						
Wednesday	Date	SUBJECT	TEACHER	Time In	Time Out	Teacher Signature
ATT						
AST						
Thursday	Date	SUBJECT	TEACHER	Time In	Time Out	Teacher Signature
ATT						
AST						

## Assignment Sheet for Scheduled Cheer Absence

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date(s) of absence \_\_\_\_\_

**Teachers, please indicate the expected ASSIGNMENT(S) FOR THE ABOVE DATE(S).** Due to \_\_\_\_\_ the above named cheerleader will be absent from your class on the date(s) listed above. He/she will work during down time and attend tutorials if necessary to complete the indicated assignment(s).

Period	Subject	Assignment	Assignment	Teacher Signature
1st				
2nd				
3rd				
4th				
5th				
6th				
7th				
8th				



## 2017-2018 Acknowledgement of Receipt and Agreement

I, \_\_\_\_\_, have received, read, and understand the  
(Parent/Guardian Printed Name)

DVISD Athletic Handbook and the 2017 – 2018 Ojeda Middle School Cheerleader Handbook which contains the Merit/Demerit System. My cheerleader,

\_\_\_\_\_, and I have discussed the contract and agree to comply  
(Cheerleader Printed Name)  
with all rules and regulations.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheerleader Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

### Liability Waiver

It is understood that even though all reasonable and appropriate safety measures will be followed, cheering is an inherently dangerous activity and the possibility of an accident resulting in serious or catastrophic injury, including paralysis and even death, still remains. I know, understand and appreciate the inherent risks associated with cheering participation. I agree to follow the instructions of my coach. I certify that my child is physically fit to participate in this activity and agree to notify the coach immediately should there be any change in my readiness to perform. I am voluntarily participating in this activity.

The Del Valle ISD, its Board of Trustees, or employees do not assume responsibility for any injury that may occur while participating in cheerleading and will not accept any responsibility for any medical bills that may occur.

We hereby release and forever discharge the Del Valle ISD and its officers, agents, and employees from all liability arising from the participation of our child in cheerleading, from school-sponsored activities related to this activity, and from transportation to and from any such competition or activity.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Parent Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Cheerleader Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date