

CONSTITUTION OF THE ALTO ISD CHEERLEADERS

2021-2022

ARTICLE I – Name

The name of this organization shall be the Alto Varsity/JV/Middle School Cheerleaders.

ARTICLE II – Purpose

The purpose of the cheerleaders shall be to promote spirit throughout the school year.

ARTICLE III – Membership

All students are eligible for membership upon the completion of the established requirements for entrance. However, if after being a cheerleader one quits for any reason other than illness or moving out of the district, he or she will not be allowed to try out that spring. If some unforeseen circumstance arises, the final decision will rest with the sponsor and principal.

ARTICLE IV – Meetings and Commitment

Attendance is required for all practices, assigned games and called meetings by the sponsor. Jobs, vacation, personal appointments, etc. are not to interfere with the cheering season and scheduled events. Candidates selected to be a member of the cheerleading squad are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full cheerleading year. Any cheerleader who purposely chooses another activity in place of practice or a cheering event (other than school sponsored activity) will be given demerits accordingly. If a student is involved in many school activities and conflicts arise, cheerleading **MUST** be a top priority. Students who wish to try out need to keep this in mind before making a commitment.

CHEERLEADER BY-LAWS

I. Qualifications

A. Grades and Citizenship

1. All cheerleaders are subject to all UIL eligibility requirements.
2. Each cheerleader must maintain a 70 average in all classes as set by the UIL in order to participate in cheerleading activities. Should a cheerleader fail to maintain this average, the cheerleader will be placed on probation for three weeks during which time he or she may not practice nor participate in any cheerleading activities. Demerits will also be assigned. At the end of the three weeks, if the cheerleader is passing all classes he or she may return to cheering. Academics must be a cheerleader's first priority. A cheerleader should be an example of a conscientious student.
3. Must be enrolled by the end of the first week of the spring semester.

B. Physical Fitness

1. Each cheerleader must be physically able to participate in long periods of vigorous activity without undue fatigue. Practices will include running, strength-training exercises, stretching, stunting, and jumping. Cheerleaders also need to have a basic knowledge of the game and rules of football and basketball or a willingness to learn.

C. Attitude and Leadership

1. Each cheerleader must maintain desirable attitudes and a spirit of cooperation in all classes with all teachers and sponsors.
2. Each cheerleader must realize the commitment he/she makes to the school and student body to be a school representative and leader when he/she is elected.
3. Each cheerleader must be able to control to the best of the squad's ability any unsportsmanlike conduct of fans. An example of this would be to start a positive, supportive cheer to discourage the crowd from any negative conduct.
4. Each cheerleader must be willing to cooperate fully with the sponsor and with the rest of the squad and perform duties as assigned by the sponsor.
5. EACH CHEERLEADER MUST BE WILLING TO POSSIBLY PARTICIPATE IN A UIL SPIRIT CHAMPIONSHIP. (Varsity only)

D. Other Activities

1. Each cheerleader is expected to help plan, coordinate, and work at fund-raising activities which will provide the financial backing for all members of the group to buy necessary items or to assist in camp or other cheerleading fees.
2. Each cheerleader MUST attend the training camp that is held during the summer. If there is a conflict with other activities, it will have to be resolved, as the importance of camp to the group as a whole is of prime consideration.
3. Mini Cheer Camp is a required fundraiser for Varsity and JV. Each Varsity cheerleader is required to be at school at 7:00 A.M. on Friday mornings to help with the selling of tattoos. Varsity cheerleaders will also be required to sell football spirit shirts prior to the beginning of football season.
4. Each cheerleader is required to help plan and carry out pep rallies on Thursdays or Fridays during football season. Weekly jobs will be assigned, including making of banners and signs.

II. Rules and Regulations

A. Home Games

1. Each cheerleader must attend all pep rallies (Varsity and Middle School), football games, and all basketball home games (Varsity only) unless a valid, written excuse is provided to and approved by the sponsor in advance. A note from a doctor will be required for absences to be excused if a cheerleader is ill and misses more than one function. Demerits will be assigned for unexcused absences.
2. All cheerleaders should be prepared to attend all championship play-off games in ALL team sports, as well as the end of the year athletic banquet. (Varsity is mandatory-JV is optional)

B. Away Games

1. Cheerleaders must attend all out-of town games during football season.
2. Cheerleaders will not be required to attend out-of-town basketball games during regular season play. Play-off games will be required for Varsity.
3. All away games will be supervised by a sponsor. Cheerleaders are to ride to and from games in a school bus or sponsor driven vehicle.

C. All Games

1. Game duties will be assigned to each cheerleader at the beginning of the year. These duties will be for every game, both home and away, and will include

things such as getting the cheer signs, getting megaphones, picking up trash after the games, getting the flags, etc.

2. Flag running duties will rotate between girls and games. Please see the flag runners section of this constitution for the responsibilities of the flag runners and how to properly care for the flags.

3. Not doing any of your assigned duties will result in demerits accordingly.

4. Phones will be given to the sponsor when the cheerleaders exit the bus at away games and upon arrival of homes games.

D. Practices

1. Practice sessions may begin after elections are held in the spring. Practice sessions may be held during the summer as well. Each cheerleader must attend all scheduled practices unless he/she has an excuse validated in advance by the sponsor. Summer camp is a requirement to be a part of this organization. It takes the entire squad to be an effective, successful group. If cheerleaders have jobs, then they need to make sure their work schedules are worked around cheer practices, fundraisers, and games. Summer practices and camp dates will be announced as soon as scheduled to allow for planning of vacations around those dates.

2. Special practices may be called by a sponsor as deemed necessary. Failure to attend practice will result in suspension from participation in the next game and pep rally, unless otherwise specified by the sponsor. Demerits will be assigned.

E. Tardiness to Games

1. Each cheerleader will be dressed in his/her complete uniform and ready to go no less than 30 minutes before the scheduled start of a game. This will allow time for warm-ups and getting all equipment ready. For home games, Varsity cheerleaders will report to the cheer building by 6:30. For away games, cheerleaders must report at the time announced by the sponsor prior to the game.

2. Demerits will be issued as follows:

a. One or two unexcused tardies-one demerit each

b. Three unexcused tardies-suspended from the next game and pep rally.

- c. Four unexcused tardies-dropped from the squad.

F. Absences

1. Any cheerleader, who has **three unexcused absences from scheduled practice or two unexcused absences from a game, will be dismissed from the squad**. Any cheerleader dismissed from the squad may not try out the following year.
2. Seniors or any other cheerleader dismissed from the squad will not be considered to have fulfilled their obligations for the year. They will not be recognized for their participation in cheerleading for that year in the yearbook nor at the Sports Banquet.
3. A NOTE FROM A DOCTOR OR OTHER PROFESSIONAL will be required for an absence to be excused if a cheerleader is ill and misses more than one function. A note from a parent or an employer will NOT be sufficient for excuse from a game or practice.
4. A cheerleader must realize that being an elected cheerleader is a full-time responsibility!

G. Uniforms/Fees

1. Each cheerleader's portion of fees will come to \$700.
2. The amount of money needed for uniforms depends on the uniform and other cheerleading items selected by the sponsor. These uniforms must be approved by the principal and the superintendent.
3. Uniforms shall be black, gold, white or any combination of these colors. They shall consist of one or two shells, one skirt, one bodysuit, and one pair of shoes. Each cheerleader will also have a pep rally uniform consisting of one pair of shorts and a t-shirt. If money permits, the sponsor will order additional shorts and shirts for pep rallies or camp, bags, and bows.

H. Basketball

1. Varsity Cheerleaders will cheer for all Varsity boys' and girls' district home games unless involved in another school sponsored activity.

I. Transportation

1. Cheerleaders will ride the bus or official transportation provided.
2. Cheerleaders will ride to and from the game on the bus.
3. Failure to abide by these rules will result in four demerits. Any subsequent repetition of the violation will result in dismissal from the squad.

J. Dismissal

1. A cheerleader may be dismissed from the squad at the discretion of the sponsor and school administration.
2. All cheerleader behavior must conform to school policy and will be dealt with according to school policy.
3. When 4 demerits are received, a cheerleader will be placed on probation for two weeks. When a cheerleader is on probation he/she will miss any school event during their probation period. If a cheerleader receives a total of 8 demerits, he or she will be automatically dropped from the squad. While on probation, a cheerleader must attend all scheduled events and must sit with a sponsor.
4. Any cheerleader who has three or more unexcused absences from scheduled practices or two unexcused absences from a game will be dismissed from the squad.
5. Smoking, drinking, and immoral conduct are reasons for immediate expulsion from the squad.
6. Assignment to AEP is cause for immediate dismissal.
7. Any cheerleader dismissed from the squad may not try out the following school year.
8. Health risks must be signed off by a doctor.

K. Demerit System

Demerits will begin the date of election and end the last day of the school year. The cheer sponsor, along with the high school principal (Varsity & JV) or middle school principal (Jr. High), have final say on demerit numbers and reasons that may not be listed specifically in this constitution.

Demerits will be issued for the following and are NOT LIMITED TO:

1. Absolutely no gum chewing during practices, games or pep rallies...1
2. Failure to maintain all parts of uniform or wearing incorrect uniform or outfit that has been assigned.....2
3. Uniforms to be worn only during assigned activities.....2
4. All parts of the uniform to be worn from the time you leave home until you return unless otherwise approved.....1
5. Lack of respect or cooperation with other squad members.....2
6. Failure to clean up after cheerleading activities or complete assigned job duties.....2
7. No eating or cell-phone use during games on field or track or practices (water or sports drinks are acceptable).....1
8. Missing any functions, games, pep rallies, etc. without prior approval or doctor's note.....4
9. Unexcused tardies (practices, fundraisers, pep rallies, and other functions) (Game tardy penalties listed in "Tardiness to Games" section).....1
10. Unseemly conduct, language or behavior (on or off campus) as determined by sponsor and principal (including internet use).....2
11. Assignment to After School Detention.....2
12. Failure to maintain academic eligibility.....2
13. Failure to use school transportation to and from a game without prior written notification from parent and sponsor.....4
14. Unexcused absence from practice.....2
15. Unexcused absence from an assigned game.....4
16. Lack of respect or cooperation with sponsor, school teachers, administration, and officials.....3
17. Assignment to ISS.....4
18. Cell phones must be turned off during practices and games/ failure to abide1
19. Practice clothing (shorts, t-shirt, cheer shoes, poms, and bags are required at all practices) No borrowing to avoid punishment!.....1

20. Must be present for run thru at beginning of game and at half time...2

21. Cheerleaders will maintain proper sideline behavior at all times.....1

Example... No excessive or inappropriate talk among cheerleaders

No inappropriate dancing during games/ pep rallies (2)

Pay attention to the game and SMILE

Cheer, chant, spirit, jump, and tumble the entire game or
pep rally

No standing with arms crossed during games/pep rallies (cheer
“stance” required)

No talking to fans by the fence or the stands

22. Failure to turn in permission slip to ride with parents by deadline (unless
you decide to ride the bus.....2

23. No public displays of affection while in uniform or at a cheer function
(“excessive” displays refer to #10).....2

III. Try-Out Procedure for Varsity/JV/Middle School Cheerleaders

A. Training Program

1. The training program prior to trying out in front of judges will be approximately a two-week program. It is the responsibility of each contestant to attend each training session. No separate training will be provided by a school employee in the event of a contestant's absence.

2. Each contestant is responsible to be dressed appropriately and in the gym promptly at the designated time.

3. All students in good standing are eligible to try out for cheerleading. UIL and district eligibility rules will apply. Students who have been assigned to AEP in the current school year, OR students who have more than one ISS assignment for the current school year, OR students who have been dismissed from the squad in the current school year, OR students who have not met their financial obligations to the school district in the current year or from any previous year, OR students who had quit the squad in the current school year, OR students who are not passing every class on the current report card/progress report when try-outs occur are not eligible to try out.

4. Top qualifying Sophomores, Juniors and Seniors will be considered for the Varsity squad. The remaining qualifying candidates consisting of Freshmen, Sophomore, Junior, and Senior candidates will be considered for the JV squad. Candidates may opt out of being considered for the JV squad if they do not make the Varsity squad. Top qualifying 6th & 7th graders will make up the junior high squad for the upcoming school year. The number of candidates chosen will be determined after sign-up sheets are pulled and the numbers are reviewed.
5. All practice sessions will be closed to the public so as to allow the contestants to concentrate on the practice and not experience any distractions. The same will apply to try-outs.
6. Should a candidate for Cheerleader have an injury at the time of try-outs that prevents participation in one or more elements of the try-out process, the Judges may consider alternative evidence of skill and/or revise the scoring rubric so as to give all candidates a proportionate score on an equal playing field. Any decision to modify a try-out component, as well as the means of such modification or revision will be at the sole discretion of the judges.
7. All contestants will be taught a new cheer for tryouts.
8. If elected the cheerleader/parent will have two weeks to view the child's scores.

B. Judges

1. Will be at least:
 - a. Two cheerleader instructors from a recognized cheerleader association, and/or
 - b. Three cheerleaders from a nearby college or two cheerleader advisors from other schools in the area.
2. Will observe and judge the performance of all the candidates
3. No names will be submitted to the committee. All participants will wear numbers to designate who they are.
4. Will submit to the principal the rating sheets of all candidates.

C. Criteria

1. Judges will be given a rating sheet for the candidates. The candidates will be rated on:
 - a. Entrance-tumbling, enthusiasm, voice, jumps
 - b. Individual cheer/chant- motions, voice, enthusiasm, jumps
 - c. Jumps-height, difficulty, variety, technique
 - d. Group cheer-rhythm, motions, voice, enthusiasm
2. Each category will count 25 points for a maximum possible score of 100 points. This rating will count 60% of the candidate's overall score.

D. School Performance Record

1. A school performance record will be generated for each candidate reflecting the following areas:
 - a. tardies
 - b. absences
 - c. detention points
 - d. academic average
2. Each category will count 25 points for a maximum possible score of 100 points. School performance record will count 40% of a candidate's overall score.
3. School performance records will be available through the sponsor before try-outs.

IV. Mascot

1. Tryouts will be conducted for the position of mascot the same day as cheer tryouts. Those trying out should possess an energetic, outgoing, enthusiastic personality.
2. All high school level students are eligible; except for elected cheerleaders.
3. Candidates will try out in front of judges selected by the sponsor. Mascot candidates will perform a skit of their own design, lasting no longer than 3 minutes

while wearing the Mascot costume. Candidates may enlist the help of 1 or 2 other students. Candidates will be judged on:

- a. creativity
- b. enthusiasm
- c. animation
- d. motions

4. Judges' scores will count 60% of a candidate's overall score.

5. Mascot candidates will also have a School Performance record. School Performance records will count 40% of a candidate's overall score. (attendance, tardies, discipline, and grade average)

6. In the event that the Mascot is unable to perform, a JV cheerleader will fulfill the Mascot duties. If the Mascot must be replaced, either a JV Cheerleader or student who had the next highest try-out scores will take his/her place.

7. The Mascot will purchase camp wear, warm-ups, and spirit shirts. The mascot fee is \$400. The Mascot must attend summer camp and Wednesday practices. More than one unexcused absence from camp or practices may result in dismissal.

8. The Mascot will attend all football, basketball, and any championship play-off games. He/she must remain academically eligible. More than one unexcused absence from a pep rally or football game may result in dismissal. An excused absence would be an illness (requiring a doctor's note) or a death in the immediate family. The Mascot must inform the sponsor no later than Wednesday before the Friday football game if he/she is unable to attend the game. Failure to do so may result in dismissal or replacement.

9. The Mascot is required to be in character at all times. This means when at the games and at pep rallies. While in character, the mascot should be very enthusiastic and focused on pumping up the crowd.

10. If only one student is interested in serving as the Mascot, he/she must have the approval of the high school principal and the sponsor.

11. The Mascot should represent our school in a positive manner—in or out of costume and in or out of the classroom. The Mascot may be dismissed at the discretion of the sponsor or principal for any unseemly, negative, disrespectful conduct.

12. The Mascot will not be allowed to be on his/her cell phone except during halftime of the game. He/she will not be allowed to eat or drink (except for water) while in uniform.

13. The Mascot will perform, cheer, dance, hold up signs, “work the crowd” during the entire pep rally or game, with LOTS of enthusiasm. He/she will not visit with flag runners, cheerleaders, or fans during the game. (except for halftime)

14. The Mascot will be responsible for the care of the mascot uniform. The uniform is to be hung up in its place in the cheer building after every game, and the head of the uniform is to be handled very carefully (this means no carrying it by the antennas, nose, etc., and making sure it is placed properly in the Mascot box).

V. Flag Runners

1. Flag Runners must be physically able to hold up the heavy flags and run fairly quickly. They must not have any physical condition that would impede them from running sometimes many times back and forth in front of the stands.

2. Flag Runners will be responsible for the proper care of the flags.

3. At home games, Flag Runners will be responsible for carrying the flags from the cheer building to the football stadium and returning them in a prompt manner following the game.

4. For away games, Flag Runners will be responsible for loading the flags onto the bus (not on the floor—next to the windows on top of the seats) and making sure the flags are promptly returned to the bus as soon as the game is over. They will then be responsible for unloading the flags to store in the cheer building upon returning to the school. Flags must be spread out on the cheer building floor so they can dry.

5. Flag Runners will not be allowed to have food or drinks on the track or field during football games. Water is allowed. (No sports drinks that could stain the flags will be allowed.) Flag Runners may eat in the stands if they wish during halftime of the football game.