

Round Rock Independent School District

**HIGH SCHOOL
CHEER PROGRAM
HANDBOOK
2023-2024**



Round Rock Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disabilities in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs, in accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title XI of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended and Title II of the American with Disabilities Act. For information on compliance with these, contact Round Rock ISD Athletic Department, Round Rock Independent School District Administration, (512) 464-5480. Each parent and cheer/mascot candidate will be provided a current copy of the Round Rock ISD Cheer/Mascot Handbook. An electronic copy of the current handbook will be accessible on the Round Rock ISD Athletic Department web page under Cheer.

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PREAMBLE

The Cheer Program Handbook has been developed to outline the expectations and accompanying procedures for each Round Rock Independent School District high school cheerleading program. This handbook was designed and prepared as a basic operating instrument to define and explain the qualifications and responsibilities of the cheerleading programs.

All extracurricular activity participants will be subject to and abide by the provisions of the Campus Expectations Addendum, Round Rock ISD District Cheer Handbook, Round Rock ISD Student Code of Conduct, Round Rock ISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, University Interscholastic League (UIL) regulations, and the Texas Education Agency's (TEA) Side by Side guidelines for cheerleading. The UIL and TEA do permit a school to impose stricter standards than those in the UIL or TEA requirements, but the district shall not impose more lenient standards. Additional cheer program expectations may be established. Therefore, in case of a conflict between this handbook and a campus expectations addendum, this handbook will prevail.

The Round Rock ISD Athletic Department will review and evaluate campus decisions for district-wide consistency and continuity in following the intent and spirit of this handbook. The handbook guidelines and procedures are reviewed annually and revised when warranted by the Athletic Department. The contents of this handbook are not contractual, and do not give rise to a claim of breach of contract against Round Rock ISD. Furthermore, the contents of this handbook apply to all students of the district as the contents now appear in the handbook or as they are amended in the future.

Disclaimer: Unfortunately, not all situations that arise can be anticipated or accounted for in the manual. Should events occur that are not covered in the Round Rock ISD Cheer Program Handbook, they will be reviewed on a case by case basis by the Assistant Athletic Director, Campus Administration, and cheer coaches and will be dealt with according to what is fair and just. Furthermore, Round Rock ISD reserves the right to alter the rules according to the situation at any time.

I. PURPOSE

The purpose of cheerleading is to create, promote, and uphold school spirit and a positive school environment by participating at athletic events and extracurricular activities as deemed appropriate by the campus administration and coach. Participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student while participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct.

II. EXPECTATIONS

A. Leadership

1. Being a cheerleader/mascot is an honor and special privilege and therefore he/she is held accountable to a greater standard than that of the general school population.
2. The cheerleader/mascot is a recognized representative of the individual school, as well as the district, and as such, must demonstrate the highest levels of character and behavior.
3. Cheerleaders/Mascots are expected to promote and maintain good relationships with faculty, administration, student body, and work cooperatively with all school organizations and the community.
4. Cheerleaders/Mascots are high-profile representatives of the Round Rock ISD, and behavior is subject to scrutiny by peers, the campus, the community, and the media. The actions of a single student-athlete can reflect positively or negatively not only on the individual student-athlete, but also on his/her team and coaches, the entire school campus and the Round Rock ISD Cheer community. Therefore, cheerleaders/mascots are expected to represent Round Rock ISD with honor, dignity and integrity at all times –including when interacting on social networking websites and in other online environments.
5. Cheerleaders/Mascots should exemplify both individual and group behavior suitable to the position and in accordance with the rules as stated in
 - a. Rank One/Online paperwork
 - b. District Cheer/Mascot Handbook
 - c. Campus Expectations Addendum

B. Physical Functions - A cheerleader/mascot must uphold the skill level demonstrated at tryouts while striving for continuous improvement while focusing on our primary concern...SAFETY. Physical functions include but are not limited to:

1. Athletic conditioning (running, weight lifting, stretching)
2. Jumps
3. Stunts & Tumbling
 - a. Members are expected to do proper progressions.
 - b. Members will only stunt or tumble with the coach's permission.
 - c. A coach must be present in order for members to stunt or tumble.

C. Academic

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots who receive a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period or who fail to meet the standards in the Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time set by the Round Rock ISD UIL Athletic Eligibility Schedule.
2. Cheerleaders/Mascots who become ineligible will not be allowed to perform, travel with the squad, or wear his/her uniform.
3. Cheerleaders/Mascots who have been ineligible for two grading periods during the cheer season (from the date of tryouts to the end of the following school year) will be dismissed from the squad.
4. Cheerleaders/Mascots who receive a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period in an approved “advanced” course, as determined by Board Policy FM (Local), must have a grade average of at least 60 to apply for a participation waiver once per semester.
 - a. A waiver affects participation eligibility only. It does not change the failing grade on the grade report.
 - b. The first semester waiver is not transferable to the second semester.
5. If a current cheerleader/mascot fails two grading periods and is removed from the program, they will be eligible to tryout for the following season but will be placed on probation should they make the team. *Any additional failure will result in immediate dismissal from the team, and the student will be ineligible to tryout for the following season.*
6. If a candidate fails two grading periods, they will be eligible to tryout for the following season but will be placed on probation should they make the team. *Any additional failure will result in immediate dismissal from the team, and the student will be ineligible to tryout for the following season.*

D. Participation

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots must be enrolled in the cheerleading class.
2. Cheerleaders/Mascots must attend all scheduled practices and performances.
 - a. The cheerleading activity class credit may serve as a physical education substitute for the state high school graduation plan.
 - b. Cheerleaders/Mascots absent from a practice, performance, or scheduled event will be subject to discipline.
 - c. Cheerleaders/Mascots selected by Round Rock ISD will not be allowed to represent the school and/or cheer program without coach approval.
3. Summer camps are mandatory.

E. Grading

1. Class grade will be determined by a daily grade consisting of uniform, participation, and a required semester final exam.
2. In conjunction with UIL basics of no pass/no play, failure to pass all classes (including Cheerleading) will result in a three-week probationary period and the loss of eligibility.
3. If after the three weeks the member is passing *all* classes, probation will be lifted and eligibility is reinstated.
4. If after the three weeks the member is failing *any* class, the probationary period will continue until the end of the grading period.
5. If the cheerleader/mascot fails a second grading period, he/she will be removed from the squad and will be eligible for tryout the following year.
6. During the ineligibility period, the member must practice but will not be allowed to participate in any cheerleading functions outside of practice, per UIL rule.

III. **PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS**

A. Campus Procedures

1. Cheer coaches manage daily decisions regarding the program. They may develop and enforce standards in addition to, or higher than, Round Rock ISD expectations. Round Rock ISD expectations are defined as:
 - a. Student Code of Conduct
 - b. Extracurricular Code of Conduct
 - c. Campus Expectations Addendum
2. Cheer coaches are required to follow the National Federation High School Spirit Handbook.

B. Medical

1. Round Rock ISD Concussion Protocol - Due to state law, any student athlete diagnosed with a concussion must obtain physician clearance before beginning Round Rock ISD Return-to-Play protocol.
2. Coaches must be apprised of any medical conditions, whether temporary, permanent, or recurring.
3. Withholding pertinent medical information could result in immediate dismissal from the program.

C. Misconduct

1. Violations of all Round Rock ISD Code of Conduct will be addressed in accordance with UIL Rank One paperwork, District Cheer Handbook, and Campus Expectations Addendum.
2. RROC placement results in an automatic dismissal from the program.

- D. Communication - If a concern should arise, the following chain of command must be followed and an appointment scheduled at an appropriate time
1. Coaches
 2. Campus Administration
 3. Round Rock ISD Assistant Athletic Director

IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

A. Performance Uniforms

1. Uniforms will be considered school property and will be worn only when instructed by the coach.
2. Cheerleaders/Mascots will be responsible for any missing and damaged uniform pieces and will be expected to pay reimbursement or replacement costs.
3. Cheerleaders/Mascots must ensure the uniform is always clean and in good condition.

B. Personal Presentation

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots will wear hair and nails as designated by the coach.
2. Cheerleaders/Mascots may not chew gum or eat during practice, pep rally, game, or performance.
3. Members may not wear any type of jewelry while in uniform, practicing, or performing.
4. All visible tattoos shall be covered.

V. FINANCIAL EXPECTATIONS

- A. There will be a maximum out-of-pocket expense of \$1,200 per member (not including tax and/or shipping costs) incurred for required cheerleader related activities, clothing, and equipment.
- B. Per district policy, members with an outstanding invoice will not be allowed to participate in any future Round Rock ISD cheer/mascot tryout.
- C. Cheerleaders/Mascots with unpaid invoice balances are not eligible to participate in games/performances until the balance is paid.
- D. Any member dismissed, removed, or who resigns his/her position in the cheer program is responsible for all financial obligations for non-returnable/non-refundable merchandise. They must also turn in all school-owned property, including uniforms.
- E. Members who are unable to meet financial obligations will be handled on a case by case basis at the campus level.
- F. Funds will not be used to purchase gifts of any type for athletes (UIL.480/2).

VI. PRACTICE EXPECTATIONS

A. Attendance

1. Practices are mandatory and each member is expected to attend. Arriving late or leaving early is unacceptable.
2. Coaches must be given advance notice, in writing, if a member is expected to miss.
3. The following activities may not interfere with practices:
 - a. Work
 - b. Family activities/vacations
 - c. Tutoring must be scheduled around practice times
 - d. College classes
 - e. All-star practice
 - f. Driver's Education/Tests
 - g. Doctor/Dentist appointments
 - h. Any other activities, while encouraged, will not be an excuse to miss practice
4. Members must be dressed and in a designated area assigned by the coach.
5. Before and after school, summer and student holiday practice/meetings may be required.
 - a. Saturday and extra practices may be held throughout the year.
 - b. Members are accountable for all planned events.
 - c. Members will be required to attend sporting events, such as playoff games, which little notice may be given.
 - i. Rare impromptu practices may be needed.
 - ii. Playoff games may occur during holiday breaks.
6. If knowledge, execution, or effort is lacking, the coach reserves the right to remove any member from the routine or event.
7. No cell phones or other distractions are to be at practice.
8. Due to safety reasons, all practices will be closed to the general public.
9. Safety is a priority!!! Cheerleaders/Mascots may be stunting or performing potentially dangerous activities.
 - a. Cheerleaders/Mascots must be present, attentive, and focused.
 - b. Any side conversations, laughing, and goofing around is not acceptable as serious injury may occur.

B. Practice Uniform

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots must be dressed in appropriate workout uniform.
 - a. Applies to practices both during and outside of the school day
 - b. Must wear designated practice clothes and cheer shoes
 - c. Hair must be securely pulled back and away from the face
2. Jewelry is not permitted during practices.

VII. GAME AND PERFORMANCE EXPECTATIONS

A. Attendance

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots are expected to attend all scheduled games, playoff games, pep rallies, performances, competition, and any event scheduled for the school and/or community.
2. Excused absence is allowed in cases of funeral, Doctor's note, or special school activities with advanced approval from the coach.
3. Prior written notification must be received if a member can not attend a game/performance. This does not make the absence "excused."
4. The following activities may not interfere with games/performances:
 - a. Work
 - b. Family activities/vacations
 - c. Tutoring must be scheduled around game/performance
 - d. College classes
 - e. All-Star practice
 - f. Driver's Education/Tests
 - g. Doctor/Dentist appointments
 - h. Any other activities, while encouraged, will not be an excuse to miss games/performances
5. Parents are asked to arrive for pick up within 15 minutes of notification.

B. Uniform

1. Cheerleaders/Mascots must wear designated outfit to school on game days and designated uniform to the game.
 - a. Uniform must be complete upon arrival. NO UNZIPPED SKIRTS.
 - b. Uniforms must be clean and fit appropriately.
2. Complete uniform includes:
 - a. Correct skirt and shell
 - b. Correct undergarments that are not showing
 - c. Socks and cheer shoes
 - d. Bow
 - e. Hair/Nails as designated by coach
 - f. A uniform may also include pom poms, backpack/bag, and any other approved equipment.

C. Spirit

1. The purpose of Cheerleaders/Mascots are to lead the crowd in cheers and to motivate the team.
2. Cheerleaders/Mascots are to listen and follow the direction of the coaches and leadership to ensure an optimal game day environment.

3. Socializing during the game is not encouraged. Cheerleaders/Mascots need to stay focused in order to ensure the safety of all involved.

D. Conclusion of game/performance

1. Each cheerleader/mascot has an assignment before, during, and after a game/performance. Each is responsible for placing equipment in the proper location. Cheerleaders/Mascots will all be dismissed after all equipment is properly stored and the area is clean.
2. Coaches will dismiss cheerleaders/mascots as a group.
3. At the conclusion of an event, the cheerleaders/mascots must change out of uniform and wear school attire, per coach discretion.

VIII. CONSEQUENCES AND DISCIPLINE

- A. All cheerleaders are expected to follow all the rules of conduct as outlined in the Round Rock ISD Student Code of Conduct, Round Rock ISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, District Cheer Handbook, Campus Expectations Addendum, and other rules that may be developed by the coach with approval of the Campus Principal.
- B. Discipline may include, but is not limited to:
 1. Physical Conditioning
 2. Strikes
 3. Community Service
 4. Benching (not being permitted to perform)
 5. Suspension
 6. Dismissal from the squad
- C. Discipline Policy and Consequences are effective the day after tryouts and continues until the last school day of the following year.
- D. Situations that are not mentioned in the Round Rock ISD Student Code of Conduct, Round Rock ISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, District Cheer Handbook, or Campus Expectations Addendum will be handled at the discretion of the coach and the campus and/or District administration.
- E. If a Cheerleader/mascot has been dismissed from the squad, he/she will be responsible for any money still owed.
 1. Cheerleader/mascot must return any school issued uniforms.
 2. Failure to pay dues and/or return uniforms will result in being placed on the campus obligation list.

- F. Cheerleaders/Mascots must display appropriate behavior both in and out of school. The following is a list of behaviors, although not limited to, that could lead to suspension and/or dismissal, whether the behavior occurs on or off campus:
1. Involved in the possession or use of tobacco/vaping/e-cigarettes/JUUL
 2. Involved in the use or possession of, or under the influence of, a controlled or illegal substance
 3. Involved in the possession or use of alcohol
 4. Public nudity
 5. Stealing/Shoplifting
 6. Chronic misconduct
 7. Chronic absences
 8. Truancy
 9. Bullying/Cyberbullying
 10. Harassment/Slander
 11. Forgery
 12. Assignment to RROC (Round Rock Opportunity Center)
 13. Assignment to JJAEP (Juvenile Justice Alternative Education Program)
 14. In-School Detention
 15. Disciplinary action involving any law enforcement agency and/or security guards, on or off campus
 16. Any offense deemed severe by the coaches and/or administration

IX. TRYOUTS

The Round Rock ISD Athletic Department is responsible for all aspects of the Round Rock ISD Cheer Tryout process. All tryout results are declared final by the Round Rock ISD Athletic Department.

A. Membership Structure

1. Varsity
 - a. Varsity positions are open to students currently enrolled in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade.
 - b. Campus and district administration will work together to determine the appropriate team size that maintains the integrity of the program and the District standard for safety.
 - i. A natural break will be used to determine the varsity squad.
 - ii. Varsity squad numbers not to exceed 20 members.
 - iii. If campus enrollment dictates the need, squad size may exceed the maximum number of members.

2. Junior Varsity
 - a. Junior Varsity positions are open to students currently enrolled in 8th, 9th, or 10th grade.
 - b. Campus and district administration will work together to determine the appropriate team size that maintains the integrity of the program and the District standard for safety.
 - i. A natural break will be used to determine the junior varsity squad.
 - ii. Junior Varsity squad numbers not to exceed 16 members.
3. Mascot
 - a. Each Varsity team may have one mascot.
 - b. The mascot position may be filled by a student currently enrolled in 9th, 10th, or 11th grade.
 - c. Candidates must meet a minimum of 50 points on their rubric.
- B. If a cheerleader/mascot leaves the program before May 31st, the next candidate scoring above the natural break for the designated team may move into the vacant position.
- C. In extenuating circumstances, special consideration may be given to students that move into Round Rock ISD after the tryout process but prior to August 1st.
- D. Squad membership will exist from the tryout date to the last day of the following school year.

X. TRYOUT GUIDELINES

- A. Candidates must be physically present to be eligible.
- B. Candidates are prohibited from possessing any type of technology during the campus tryout hours. In the event of an emergency, staff will be responsible for communicating with the parent.
- C. Tryouts are closed to the public.
- D. Parents/Guardians are to remain outside the building and may not be in the warm-up area or call-back room.

XI. TRYOUT QUALIFICATIONS

- A. Mandatory Parent/Candidate Meeting
 1. Candidate and a parent/guardian must attend one Round Rock ISD Cheer Tryout Mandatory meeting.
 2. A sign-in sheet will be used to verify attendance at both the general session and campus breakout.
 3. If a parent is unable to attend due to extenuating circumstances, they must name a proxy, in writing, to the Head Cheer Coach at the high school campus. The parent must make arrangements to obtain all written and verbal information from the meeting.

4. Failure for **BOTH** the cheer candidate and the parent/guardian to attend the **same meeting** will result in ineligibility to tryout.
 5. The Candidate and a parent/guardian are expected to ***attend the full meeting and are not permitted to leave early.***
- B. Tryout paperwork submitted by specified deadline.
 - C. Candidates must be a student in Round Rock ISD in order to participate in tryouts.
 - D. All candidates must be clear of all campus financial obligations by the Monday prior to tryouts.
 - E. The candidate must have exhibited appropriate conduct in accordance with the Round Rock ISD Student Code of Conduct and Round Rock ISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct.
 - F. Current cheerleaders/mascots who have been removed for violating the campus and/or District policies/regulations will be eligible to tryout for the following school year.
 1. If the Cheerleader/mascot makes the squad for the following school year, he/she will be placed on immediate probation.
 2. Any other violations will result in permanent removal from the program and he/she will no longer be eligible to tryout.
 - G. Current cheerleaders/mascots who have resigned will be ineligible to tryout for the following the school year. This includes current eighth grade cheerleaders/mascots.

XII. ROUND ROCK ISD CHEER TRYOUT CLINIC

- A. Occurs the week of tryouts
- B. Athletic attire is required
- C. Closed to the public
- D. Candidates must have a current RRISD physical on file with the Head High School Cheer Coach in order to participate.
- E. Day 1 and Day 2 (see below) are mandatory days

XIII. TRYOUT SCHEDULE

- A. Tuesday, March 7
 1. Clinic Day 1 - Mandatory (Round Rock HS)
 2. 5:00-8:00 PM
- B. Wednesday, March 8
 1. Clinic Day 2 - Mandatory (HS Campus)
 2. 4:45-6:15 PM
- C. Thursday, March 9
 1. Clinic Day 3 - Optional (HS Campus)
 2. 4:45-6:15 PM
- D. Saturday, March 11 - TRYOUT DAY

XIV. TRYOUT ATTIRE

- A. Must provide a solid white shirt and solid black shorts
- B. Must wear white cheer or athletic shoes
- C. Hair must be worn in a ponytail away from the face
- D. Natural makeup and nails
- E. No jewelry, bows, or ribbons are permitted

XV. REQUIRED FORMS

- A. All candidates must complete the Round Rock ISD online tryout form, and have a current physical on file with the high school Athletic Trainer.
- B. Required forms include:
 - 1. Online
 - a. Round Rock ISD cheer tryout form
 - b. Teacher Recommendations
 - 2. Physical
 - a. Must be a hard copy
 - b. Round Rock ISD Physical Form
 - i. CANNOT be on any other physical form
 - ii. Must be turned into the high school Head Cheerleading Coach and/or Athletic Trainer.

XVI. CANDIDATE CHARACTER EVALUATION

- A. Candidates will be evaluated on the following criteria:
 - 1. Grades (Course Failures)- maximum of 5 points
 - a. 0 failures= 5 points
 - b. 1 failure= 3 points
 - c. 2 or more failures= 0 points
 - 2. Behavior (Discipline Referrals)- maximum of 5 points
 - a. No referrals= 5 points
 - b. 1 referral= 3 points
 - c. 2 or more referrals= 0 points
 - 3. Attendance- maximum of 5 points
 - Only unexcused absences and tardies (3 tardies=1 unexcused absence)*
 - a. 0-2 days with an unexcused absence= 5 points
 - b. 3-5 days with an unexcused absence= 3 points
 - c. 6-7 days with an unexcused absence= 1 point
 - d. 8+ days with an unexcused absence= 0 points

4. Teacher Recommendations - maximum of 5 points
 - a. Minimum of 4, but no more than 8 **current** teachers and/or Round Rock ISD school sponsors
 - b. Scores will be calculated by averaging the received recommendations
 - c. Missing recommendations will be averaged as a zero
 - d. Recommendation forms will be emailed to all faculty and staff
 - e. If a Teacher Recommendation form is forged the candidate will be **DISQUALIFIED** from the tryout process. The form must be submitted directly from a teacher account, not from a student account.

XVII. JUDGES

- A. The judging panel will consist of five judges selected by the Round Rock ISD Athletic Department
 1. Four Independent Cheer Judges
 2. One Campus Cheer Coach
- B. All scores and decisions are final
- C. Call-backs are permissible upon judges' request

XVIII. CAMPUS EXPECTATIONS ADDENDUM

Campus Expectations Addendums are available through the specific campus cheer programs.