

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
LOCAL SCHOOLS
CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK**

OBJECTIVES

1. To encourage and uphold good sportsmanship on and off the site of competition
2. To strive to create and maintain strong school and team spirit
3. To develop good crowd control and response
4. To be helpful and dedicated to all athletic teams, the school and the community
5. To develop and sustain good leadership qualities within all team members
6. To develop the ability to lead as well as follow within school, community, & life
7. To be an outstanding representative & ambassador of Hamilton Township in both verbal and non-spoken actions by always putting our best foot forward

SELECTION/TRYOUTS

1. Selection of cheer teams to be made by the coaching staff.
2. Students trying out as Seniors CAN make either JV or Varsity at the discretion of the coaching staff.
3. All candidates must meet Hamilton eligibility requirements from the previous 9 weeks to be able to tryout (passing 5 academic classes). If selected for cheer team, member must maintain an all A's and B's during the cheer season, or attend study tables and until improvement is shown.
E. There will be a 3-5 day clinic preceding tryouts, with graduating cheerleaders acting as staff instructors at said clinics. Attendance is mandatory unless excused by coaches.
4. * If you participate in a spring sport, arrangements will be made for you to try out.
5. Tryout criteria is at the discretion of the coaches and may include, but is not limited to any of the following:

*cheers *chants *dance *jumps *teacher evaluation
*tumbling *appearance *attitude/enthusiasm *motions *voice
projection
6. Team rosters will be posted the day of tryouts.

ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL. NO PHONE CALLS PLEASE.

The official cheerleading season begins with tryout selections, continues through the summer, and ends with the last contest of spring competitions.

YOU MUST UPHOLD ALL ATHLETIC RULES AND CONTRACTS THROUGHOUT THIS ENTIRE PERIOD. FAILURE TO DO SO WILL RESULT IN DISCIPLINARY ACTION.

ELIGIBILITY/PARTICIPATION

1. Weekly academic and conduct eligibility requirements must be met as stated in the Hamilton Twp. High School Player Agreement Contract. Study tables may be required in the instance that grades are in danger of slipping.
2. **Cheerleaders must be passing FIVE academic classes on the grade card at the end of the 2019 school term.**
3. If selected for cheer team, member must maintain all A's and B's during the cheer season. If a member has below a 70% in a class, they will be required to have a teacher fill out an evaluation and/or attend a mandatory study table.
4. Team members must attend ½ day of school on the day of a contest, and a full day before **AND** after a contest to be eligible to participate at a game/event that day/night, as well as the following week's game(s). Exceptions must be approved by the principal.
5. A current Physical, as well as all required participation forms on FINAL FORMS must be signed and on-file with coaches/administration for team member to be able to participate.

CAMP

Attendance at camp is **MANDATORY** as camp is designed to teach new material, improve skills, and build team unity. Those unable to attend camp are still required to pay for camp, learn all new material on their own time and will not be permitted to cheer until they do so.

1. All cheerleaders who choose to participate in fundraising activities and are responsible for their own money collections and turn-ins, if applicable.
2. Funds from summer fundraiser will be separated per member for camp, camp wear, & shoes. Remaining funds will go to General Cheer Fund.

3. In the instance that a member quits or leaves the team, all funds will be forfeited.
4. Camp fees are the responsibility of team member and parents unless fundraising monies are available and designated for that purpose.
5. If a member does not attend camp, member will not be eligible to cheer until material is learned and perfected in accordance with other team members.

ATTENDANCE

****CHEERLEADING TAKES PRIORITY OVER ALL OTHER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (We are willing to work with Hamilton affiliated activities by SHARING time)**

1. Do not join or volunteer for any other organizations, sports, etc. without first checking into all of the hours and meeting dates involved for that project. After you have all the details, check with the coach.
2. **WORK SCHEDULES MUST BE SET UP AROUND CHEER HOURS.**
3. Parents must fill out a written request with **one weeks notice** if your child will not be at practice or a game. If it is approved (up to the coaches discretion) you will be excused from that event. If it is not excused, you will be asked to sit at the following game. **(REMINDER, 3 sits = removal from the squad)**
4. If you are running late to practice, please call a coach to let them know **BEFORE SCHEDULED PRACTICE TIME.** Excessive tardiness, for any reason, will increase chances of being benched.
5. **EXCUSED ABSENCES INCLUDE BUT ARE NOT LIMITED TO: personal illness, funeral or family emergency, college visit, school-related activity, religious holiday, court attendance, quarantine of the home. (at the coaches discretion)**
6. Summer vacations are **only** excused through **July 31**. Any absences after **August 1** that are unexcused will result in disciplinary action until coaches believe you are prepared. **YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO CHEER ON GAMEDAY UNTIL ALL MATERIALS LEARNED AND PERFECTED!**
7. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated, and member risks being benched for 1 or more games. Unexcused absences are those not in-line with the above-mentioned EXCUSED ABSENCES, as well as absences that are not requested with a note 1 week prior to said absence. **(REMINDER, 3 sits = removal from the squad)**

8. Written proof from a doctor or dentist, in regards to appointments, must be provided to be considered an excused absence. A written doctor's permission slip is required to once again begin practicing/performing after recovering from illness or injury.
9. If a member misses any practices during one week for any reason, they will not be permitted to perform any newly learned material from that week. (Pep-rally's, halftime performances, special cheers, etc.)
10. **In case of injury, ineligibility, or medical excuse**, attendance is still mandatory unless a doctor's note is provided to dismiss from practice. Member is expected to attend in uniform, sit with coach, and cheer with fellow team members. Any lengthy time missed will be made up when recuperated before being allowed to cheer at games/competitions.

PRACTICES

1. **BE PROMPT, STRETCHED, AND READY TO PRACTICE!!!**
2. Practice schedules will be determined by coaches.
3. All practice sessions are mandatory unless stated otherwise by the coach. These include summer practice, pep rally, sign painting, fund-raising, and other social events.
4. Additional practices may be scheduled to prepare for competitions, Homecoming, Senior Night, etc. Coaches will notify members as soon as possible.
5. **Bring Handbook, pen, paper, poms, and megs to all practices.**
6. **Please be ready to practice in practice attire and cheer shoes BY THE START OF PRACTICE. Hair must be pulled up, out of the face. NO JEWELRY OR GUM! If unable to meet this requirement, member may be asked to sit-out, and risks being benched.**

GAMES

1. Cheerleaders are to maintain dignity and will conduct themselves in an honorable manner at all times as a representative of HT. NO cheerleader will participate in unsportsmanlike gestures, cheers, etc. **YOU ARE CROWD CONTROL!**
2. **SMILE!!!**
3. **No socializing with crowd, parents, friends, or each other.**
4. **NO TALKING DURING NATIONAL ANTHEM!**

5. **Pay attention to the crowd & the game!** YOU are the cheerleaders, keep them pepped up, & know what's going on in the game.
6. **Always use poms, unless otherwise directed by the coach.**
7. Jumps, tumbling, &/or stunting are required after every touchdown or basket.
8. **YOU WILL CHEER THE ENTIRE GAME.** This is not the time to socialize.
9. You will not leave the field or gym during a game unless excused by the coach.
10. Members are **not allowed** to leave the field or court during halftime.
11. **Teams will be ready to resume cheering (1) minute prior to the contest.**
12. **Members are responsible for collecting poms, signs, & megs, and putting them away. NO ONE IS TO LEAVE UNTIL DISMISSED BY COACH.**

GAMEDAY PROCEDURES

1. **Home Games:** Transportation to ALL home games/functions is the responsibility of each member and their parents. Arrival times will be announced each week at practice.
2. **Away Games:** All team members will travel to and from all away games via school transportation, bus or van. Any exceptions to this must be requested **24 hours** in advance, and approved by the coach and Athletic Director. In emergency situations, cheerleader may ride home **only** with their own parent(s) or guardian(s).
3. You are to arrive at designated meeting place 15 minutes before transportation is scheduled to leave. This will be announced at practice.
4. If you miss the bus you are **not** permitted to cheer.
5. **Game-day Ready Appearance**
 - a. **NO JEWELRY WHILE IN ANY PART OF ANY HT UNIFORM! This includes during school hours.**
 - b. Tattoos must be covered at all times.
 - c. Makeup and hair should be GAMEDAY READY upon arrival to get on bus.
 - d. NO WET HAIR. Hair should be styled **as requested by your coaches** with proper bow in place.
 - e. Please bring all major uniform pieces to every game. This includes: uniform shell, body liner, skirt, all spankies, all bows, all poms, sports bra, shoes, megaphone. If missing a uniform piece, you may be asked to sit out. **TEAM MEMBERS ARE ONLY REQUIRED TO SHARE ITEMS**

AT THE REQUEST OF THEIR COACH, NOT YOUR TEAMMATE. If you borrow any uniform item from a team member, you must return it THAT SAME DAY, or you will be benched for your following game.

- f. If a member chooses to not wear the correct items whether during a game or at school, she will run the risk of being denied participation.

PEP RALLIES

1. Pep rally dates will be determined by administration/coaches with format to be set by the coaching staff.
2. All squads will participate in pep rallies unless otherwise decided by coaching staff.
3. All members are **required** to participate in all Spirit Week themes and activities.

COMPETITIONS

Competitions are a fairly new but very important part of cheerleading at HTHS, but we plan to keep the team active in competitions. When a competition team is in the works, a separate tryout selection will take place for the “competition team”. ***extra expenses will occur for this team.**

1. Attendance is mandatory at all practices for competitions.
2. NO OTHER ACTIVITY IS TO TAKE PRIORITY OVER COMPETITION.
One person missing completely messes up the entire team. If you feel you may have too many conflicts, do not participate in competition cheerleading.

UNIFORMS: Wear your uniform proudly!

1. Your uniform is your responsibility! Keep it clean!
2. Uniforms will be worn to school on all game days unless otherwise instructed by the coach.
3. Warm-up suits are only to be worn when instructed by coaches. Loaning warm-ups out or wearing them when not instructed to may result in denial of participation.
4. Only team-issued coats and jackets will be allowed over uniforms at any time unless otherwise stated by coach.

5. General Uniform & Appearance Guidelines:

***not adhering to the following guidelines may result in being benched.**

- a. Cheerleaders are expected to have a neat and clean appearance at all times.
- b. Personal hygiene is a must!
- c. Hair should be off the face. NO long bangs-cut them if longer than the eyebrow or secure them with a bobby-pin or barrette.
- d. Hair must be of a natural color if dyed. (i.e. no pink highlights, etc)
- e. NO JEWELRY!!!
- f. Natural nail polish only, and short nails are only acceptable for stunting purposes.
- g. NO gum while cheering.
- h. Makeup should be flattering, natural, and in an All-American fashion.
- i. All combing of hair and application of makeup will be done in restroom/locker room-NOT IN FRONT OF THE CROWD!
- j. NO PDA (this includes kissing, hickeys, close body contact, etc.)
- k. **Uniforms must be cleaned when turned in PER YOUR CONTRACT. The school will be contacted if the uniform is not turned-in punctually, and you will not be permitted to try out the following year until your uniform is turned in.**
- l. **Any lost, misplaced, stolen, or damaged items are the sole responsibility of each team member. You will be held financially responsible to replace each item. (broken warm-up zippers, stained uniform, missing poms)**
- m. Camp wear is considered part of our uniform, and must be clean and available for use throughout the school year, in place of traditional uniform pieces. Inability to produce these camp wear uniform pieces could result in being benched. Pieces may be worn for pep rallies, community events, etc.
- n. Uniforms may be used for Senior Pictures, but MUST be returned in a timely fashion (1 week after the fact). Uniform must be clean at turn-in time.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Please keep all contact information up-to-date.
2. In the event of a 2 hour delay, we will still have practice, unless notified.

3. In the event that school is canceled/dismissed early due to weather, we will not have practice. (there will be exceptions depending on the weather conditions after 3pm that day, but these practices are not mandatory)

SOCIAL MEDIA

websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc. should be used in a **positive manner when representing self & Hamilton Township Athletics. No inappropriate photos, comments, language or negativity may be on these sites, as member is a major representative of HT. **THERE IS A NO TOLERANCE POLICY ON THIS.** The athlete will receive 1 warning. If the issue occurs we will request a parent meeting. **THIS COUNTS AS YOUR FINAL WARNING.** One more infraction will result in removal from the squad.

1. Profanity is not allowed.
2. Any use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, as well as incidences involving any law enforcement (excluding minor traffic violations) will be an automatic denial of participation from the HT Cheerleading Team-whether it is on school property or not.
3. If a member becomes pregnant, it is her responsibility to request a conference to inform the coach. Participation will only be allowed with a doctor's written authorization and parental consent.
4. Detention, ISS, and OSS are unacceptable behavior, and may lead to benching.
5. Be advised that the coach may bench/remove a member at any time for breaking any of the handbook rules, being insubordinate (having bad attitude), or harming a member of the team or coaching staff.
6. If a coach feels that member is not performing to the best of their ability at practice or a game, coach may bench and replace said member with a different member. This may or may not be a permanent replacement.
7. Attendance is mandatory to all banquets unless approved by a coach. An unexcused absence will result in an after-school detention.
8. If a member has to sit out **THREE** times for either unexcused absences or breaking of any of the following rules, she will run the risk of being dismissed from the squad.
9. Giving blood is absolutely not permitted before a game or practice. If a participant chooses to do so, she will be asked to leave the

scheduled event for the day and risk being benched the following game.

QUITTING THE TEAM

1. If you choose to quit cheerleading at any time, the following must be filed with the coach:
 1. A letter explaining why you are quitting
 2. Signature of parent/guardian on the letter
 3. Signature of cheerleader on the letter

Anyone who leaves or is removed from the team must return all parts of the school owned uniform to the coach within 2 weeks – cleaned!

****IF YOU QUIT FOR ANY REASON, YOU WILL NOT BE PERMITTED TO TRY OUT THE FOLLOWING YEAR.**

BULLYING

The Hamilton Township Cheerleading Program is committed to maintaining an environment where athletes are free from bullying and cyber-bullying and the effects thereof. Bullying (which includes cyber-bullying) is prohibited (i) on school grounds, at a school-sponsored or school-related activity, function or program whether on or off school grounds, at a school bus stop, on a school bus or other vehicle owned, leased or used by the school district, or through the use of technology or an electronic device owned, leased or used by the school district and (ii) at a location, activity, function or program that is not school-related, or through the use of technology or an electronic device that is not owned, leased or used by the school district, if the bullying creates a hostile environment at school for the victim, infringes on the rights of the victim at school or materially and substantially disrupts the cheerleading program or the orderly operation of the program.

Retaliation against a person who reports bullying, provides information during an investigation of bullying, or witnesses or has reliable information about bullying also is prohibited. If you are caught taking part in any type of bullying, you will risk either being benched a game(s) or be dismissed from the squad.

DISCIPLINE

Disciplinary action will be administered on an as-needed basis at the coach's

discretion. Any problems arising and noticed by the coach will warrant a verbal warning first, unless it is a flagrant violation of the said contracts and agreements.

1. If a member has to sit out **THREE** times for either unexcused absences or breaking of any of the following rules, she will run the risk of being dismissed from the squad.

PARENT GUIDELINES

1. If you or your child have any concerns pertaining to cheerleading throughout the year, please contact the coach immediately for a private conference. We ask that you do not attempt to resolve a problem before, during, or after a scheduled practice or game, as proper attention cannot be given to the situation at that time. It is important that we reach a solution as quickly as possible, as well as one that is fair to all involved.
2. For those members that need rides, we hope that we will have your complete cooperation with helping to get them to practices and games on time, and making sure we are notified if for some reason that is not possible. We also need your promptness in picking them up after practices and games. Coaches do not give rides to any member on the teams.
3. Due to the nature of the sports the teams are cheering for, times may vary substantially for the buses/vans return to school after a game. Your understanding with this is greatly appreciated.
4. We ask for your support throughout the year. Attending as many games as possible, wearing green and gold. Helping us cheer will be greatly appreciated. Any ideas you may have to help us boost spirit and enthusiasm are always welcome, too!

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
LOCAL SCHOOLS

HANDBOOK AGREEMENT NOTICE

I have read, and understand, the rules, guidelines, and expectations of the 2019-2020 Hamilton Township Local Schools Cheerleading Handbook. I will uphold this handbook to the best of my ability, and understand that violation of said handbook may result in suspension and/or dismissal from the team.

Member

Name: _____

Member

Signature: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Parent

Name: _____

Parent

Signature: _____

Date

Signed: _____

Please remove this sheet from Handbook, and give to coach.

Thank you!