



2022-2023

**HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
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 (you may be required to participate in a variety of other events through-out your season)
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 the HTHS Cheer team to be made by the coaching staff.
2. All candidates must meet Hamilton eligibility requirements from the previous 9 weeks to be able to try out (passing 5 academic classes).
E. There will be a 2-3 day clinic preceding tryouts. Attendance is mandatory unless excused by coaches.
3. * If you participate in a spring sport, arrangements will be made for you to try out.
4. 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/coaches
evaluations *tumbling *appearance *attitude/enthusiasm *motions *voice

6. Selections will be emailed the day of tryouts.

ALL DECISIONS ARE FINAL. NO PHONE CALLS WILL BE ANSWERED. ANY EMAILS SENT WILL NOT BE REPLIED TO UNTIL AT MINIMUM THE FIRST BUSINESS DAY FOLLOWING TRYOUTS, BUT MAY TAKE LONGER. COACHES WILL CONSULT WITH THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT PRIOR TO ANY RESPONSE REGARDING CONCERNS WITH TRYOUT RESULTS.

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. ([HT Athletic Code of Conduct](#))
2. **Cheerleaders must be passing FIVE academic classes on the grade card.**
3. 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.
4. **The team member is responsible for notifying their coach of their absence or tardy from school as soon as it occurs. If you fail to do so, this will result in an automatic bench from the following game due to lack of communication.**
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 members 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 fundraisers will be separated per member for camp, camp wear, & shoes. Remaining funds will go to the General Cheer Fund.
3. In the instance that a member quits or leaves the team, all funds will be forfeited. Any money owed for gear/camp fees will be added to the students' school fees.
4. Camp fees are the responsibility of team members and parents unless fundraising monies are available and designated for that purpose.
5. If a member does not attend camp, members will not be eligible to cheer until material is learned and perfected in accordance with other team members.

TEAM TUMBLING

Attendance at team tumbling is **MANDATORY**. Tumbling is designed to improve skills and condition athletes to benefit themselves and the team in all aspects of cheerleading . All

athletes are required to pay for tumbling (\$10 per week). You are more than welcome to attend extra sessions for an additional \$10 per hour session.

ATTENDANCE

****CHEERLEADING TAKES PRIORITY OVER ALL OTHER AFTER-SCHOOL ACTIVITIES (We are willing to work with outside activities by SHARING practice time with proper 2 weeks notice of schedule interferences. Game days/competitions are fully mandatory and you must attend your entire game.)**

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. You must notify a coach with **one weeks notice** if your child will not be at practice or a game. If it is approved (up to the coach's 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 with a doctors note, funeral or family emergency, college visit, school-related activity, religious holiday, court attendance, quarantine of the home. (at the coach's discretion)**
6. Summer vacations are **only** excused through **July 31**. Any absences after **August 1 are considered unexcused for all games**. If you miss practices due to vacation, you will not be permitted to cheer on game day until all material missed is learned and perfected. If you miss a game due to vacation, you must sit the game following your return.
7. Unexcused absences will not be tolerated, and members risk 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. We ask that you try to work around your practice schedule when scheduling all outside appointments.

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-rallies, halftime performances, special cheers, etc.)
10. **RIDES:** It is the responsibility of the cheerleader to make every possible effort to schedule rides to and from all cheer events. You can ask teammates, family/friends to help you with transportation (coaches are not able to transport athletes at any time). Absences due to lack of transportation are not excused.
11. **In case of injury, ineligibility, or medical excuse,** attendance is still mandatory unless a doctor's note is provided to dismiss from practice. Members are expected to attend in uniform, sit with coaches, and cheer with fellow team members. Any lengthy time missed will be made up when recuperated before being allowed to cheer at games/competitions.
12. **End of practice pickup:** It is both the athlete and parents responsibility to communicate about end times for all cheer events. Coaches are required to wait until all athletes have been picked up, therefore if an athlete is picked more than 15 minutes late from practice, this could result in being benched. We understand that emergencies happen, but please communicate! Excessive late pickups could result in removal from the squad.

PRACTICES

1. **BE PROMPT (All arrivals should be 15 minutes prior to practice start time to allow for mat roll-out.)**
2. Practice schedules will be determined by coaches.
3. **All team events are mandatory unless stated otherwise by the coach.** These include summer practices, pep rallies, sign painting, fundraising, volunteering 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. **You must bring proper practice material, poms/signs, etc. 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, members may be asked to sit-out, and risk 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 excessive socializing with the crowd, parents, friends, or each other.**
4. **NO TALKING AND LIMIT MOVEMENT 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. Pushups will be completed for every point earned after each touchdown during football season. After 4 touchdowns, we may use alternatives.
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 from the start of your meet time, during halftime, and at the end of the game until dismissed by the coach. If your team is unable to locate you without notifying a coach, we will proceed without you and bench you upon your return. Any food/drink will need to be purchased by someone else and brought to the athlete.
11. **All members must be ready to resume cheering (1) minute prior to the end of halftime. If you are not present, you will be asked to sit the following quarter.**
12. **Members are responsible for collecting poms, signs, & megas, and putting them away. NO ONE IS TO LEAVE UNTIL DISMISSED BY COACH.**
13. **All themes, or any adjustments made to the traditional uniform must be approved by a coach. If a theme/alternate attire is selected, ALL MEMBERS MUST PARTICIPATE.**

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. Athletes may **ONLY** ride home with the parent/guardian that filled out the release form, unless otherwise

noted/approved on the form. In emergency situations, cheerleaders may ride home **only** with their own parent(s) or guardian(s).

3. You are to arrive at the 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 the bus.
 - d. NO WET HAIR. Hair should be styled **as requested by your coaches** with a 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 you are 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 the coaching staff.
3. All members are **required** to participate in all Spirit Week themes and activities.

COMPETITIONS

Competitions are a very important part of cheerleading at HTHS, and we plan to keep the team active in competitions as well as different divisions. ***extra expenses will occur for each team.**

1. Attendance is mandatory at all practices for the competition squad. Excessive absences will result in removal from your spot, or potentially removal from the competition squad in general. If you are removed, all money paid is non-refundable.

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/team attire 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 the coach. This includes to and from ALL GAMES. You are not permitted to wear street attire to/from any game or with any other part of your uniform.
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.
 - d. Hair must be of a natural color if dyed. (i.e. no pink highlights, etc)
 - e. NO JEWELRY!!! (No new piercings should be done during the season. This could result in injury or improper healing if removed prematurely, and we WILL still require athletes to remove jewelry when cheering.)
 - f. **Natural/nude or clear nail polish only (french tip is also allowed) with no chips. SHORT NAILS** are required for stunting purposes. If any color or length is in question, please consult with a coach **BEFORE** making that choice. Acceptable nails are up to the coach's discretion and your coach can request the color/length be adjusted before returning to participate.
 - 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 and on a hanger when turned in PER YOUR CONTRACT. The school will be contacted if the uniform is not turned-in punctually and in good condition, and you will not be permitted to try out the following year until your uniform is turned in or paid for.**

- 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. All Camp wear or any other team issued gear 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 camp wear or uniform pieces could result in being benched. Pieces may be worn for pep rallies, community events, practices, etc.
- n. Uniforms may be used for Senior Pictures in a classy fashion, but **MUST** be returned asap (1 week after the fact). Uniforms must be clean at turn-in time.

MISCELLANEOUS

1. Please keep all contact information up-to-date. Coaches will refer you to the team communication app for all need-to-know information. This includes having 1 parent in the parent communication group.
2. In the event of a 2 hour delay, we will still have practice, unless notified.
3. In the event that school is canceled or dismissed early due to weather, we will typically not have practice, HOWEVER there will be exceptions depending on the weather conditions after 3pm that day, but these practices are not mandatory.

SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY

websites such as Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, TikTok etc. should be used in a **positive manner when representing self & Hamilton Township Athletics. No inappropriate photos, comments, explicit language, lyrics or negativity may be on these sites, as members are a major representative of HT. Absolutely no bullying, engaging in violence/threats, negative talk about the school or program, or hate speech whatsoever. **THERE IS A NO TOLERANCE POLICY ON THIS.** The athlete will receive 1 personal warning. If the issue occurs we will request a parent meeting. **THIS COUNTS AS YOUR FINAL WARNING.** One more infraction will result in immediate removal from the squad.

1. Profanity is not allowed.
2. Any use of drugs, alcohol, or tobacco, vaping as well as incidents 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 we suspect that drugs or alcohol are being consumed by any athlete, a coach has the right to question the athlete, speak to a parent immediately as well as contact law enforcement. This will likely result in immediate dismissal from the squad.
4. 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.
5. Detention, ISS, and OSS are unacceptable behavior, and will lead to benching throughout the remainder of the suspension, as well as a bench for an unexcused absence.
6. Be advised that the coach may bench/remove a member at any time for breaking any of the handbook rules, being insubordinate (having a bad attitude), or harming a member of the team or coaching staff.
7. If a coach feels that a member is not performing to the best of their ability at practice or a game, the coach may bench and replace said member with a different member. This may or may not be a permanent replacement.
8. If a member has to sit out/misses **THREE** times for either unexcused absences or breaking of any of the following rules, they will be 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 any cheerleading squad 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

A doctor's note for an excused medical reason for dismissing yourself from the squad must be on file for you to be able to try out for the following season, as well as a release from the doctor that you are permitted to return. 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 requesting a private conference. We ask that you do not attempt to resolve a problem without notice before, during, or after a scheduled practice or game, as proper attention cannot be given to the situation at that time unless we are prepared for the conversation. It is important that we reach a solution as quickly as possible, as well as one that is fair to all involved. Parents that have concerns must EMAIL a coach requesting a conference, and we will get back to you in a timely manner. We will not accept phone calls/texts to resolve issues, especially during our personal family time. We will happily set aside time to meet with you at our earliest convenience.
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. We ask if you are unable to do so, you/your child makes every attempt to reach out to teammates to request help for rides.

3. Due to the nature of the sports teams we are cheering for, times may vary substantially for the buses/vans returning 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!

Pandemic Policies and Procedures

1. Athletes must follow all protocols set in place throughout any pandemic.
2. Each athlete must always have their own water, as sharing and use of public fountains is not permitted.
3. Sanitizing frequently during practice is encouraged.

HAMILTON TOWNSHIP
CHEERLEADING

2022-2023 HANDBOOK AGREEMENT NOTICE

I have read, and understand, the rules, guidelines, and expectations of the 2021-2022 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 the Handbook, and give it to a coach.

Thank you!