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# Thomas Downey High School

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## Cheer Rules Guidelines and Informational (RGI)

**Philosophy:** The Thomas Downey High Cheerleaders will serve to lead, direct, and support the spirit of our athletic teams, student body and MCS Officials at all events and games. Cheerleaders shall promote excellence in education, spirit, sportsmanship, physical fitness and positive self-image, and leadership as a way of life. In addition, cheerleaders shall strive to maintain high standards of morality and social conduct.

**Coaching Staff:** The cheer coaching staff are 18 years or older, have been CPR and First Aid certified, CardiacWise and ConcussionWise certified, have completed a criminal background check with the Department of Justice, and have completed district and site training to prepare for instruction. They are volunteers who care about the success of the TDHS Cheer Family. TDHS Cheer is under the direction of Modesto City Schools and all coaches recognize its' governing body. Cheer coaches will model exemplary standards at all times and as outlined in this document. Coaches agree that they will make every attempt to have another adult present when working with a cheerleader. Coaches will be in regular attendance with their teams at all practices, games, events, and outings. Practice times are Monday through Wednesday with games on Thursday and participation on Friday for freshmen and Monday through Thursday with games on Friday for JV and Varsity throughout the football season or unless directed otherwise. Basketball season practices are held Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday with games on Wednesday and Friday. Coaches will keep regular attendance and dress checks on each cheerleader to insure their safety and track progress. Coaches will be available via phone, text, and/or email.

**TDHS Cheer Standard:** The TDHS Cheer program requires the very highest standard of RESPECT, DISCIPLINE, SPORTSMANSHIP, TRUSTWORTHINESS, RESPONSIBILITY, and GOOD CITIZENSHIP. Therefore, our appearance, including hair and attire, and conduct will reflect our TRADITION OF PRIDE & EXCELLENCE.

**As a cheerleader and as a parent of a cheerleader, we recognize and agree by signing to the terms listed in this document and upon registration. I also understand that any player who fails to comply with these terms WILL result in immediate disciplinary action which could include suspension and/or termination:**

### Requirements:

- Cheerleaders will be selected by judges at the official TDHS Cheer Try-outs held yearly. Previous experience does not guarantee placement on any future team.
- Cheerleaders will complete a sport packet and obtain a physical examination obtained as directed by the MCS District from a personal doctor or one suggested by the district.
- Cheerleaders will adhere to the MCS Student Handbook and MCS Athletic Code of Conduct.
- Cheerleaders must be in good physical condition and capable of strenuous activity which may include but is not limited to running, jumping, stretching, and relays designed for strengthening and conditioning as determined by his/her medical doctor. There are no excuses for non-participation due to physical health issues except those deemed by a doctor. A coach may choose to excuse a temporary issue such as a common cold or flu but has the right to refuse a formal excuse.
- Cheerleaders will be required to complete 10 hours of conditioning prior to participation in the regular practice season. All practice sessions include 20 minutes or more of warm-up stretches, cardio and strength training, and dance. Cheerleaders should have healthy eating habits which include a balanced diet and drink plenty of water to remain hydrated during long workouts.
- Cheerleaders must maintain a 2.0 GPA or higher with no more than 1 "F" and 1 "U" in order to participate in our program. Report cards may be collected throughout the season to monitor GPA.
- The cheerleader's parent must agree and sign the Parent Conduct Code and both the cheerleader and the Cheer RGI.
- It will be the responsibility of the parent to work out transportation to and from **all** practices and games according to the required meeting time delineated by the coach. Practice is from 2:30-4:30pm and cheerleaders are expected to be in place

at least 5 minutes prior to the start of practice. Parents must be on time for drop-off and pick-up. Coaches are not responsible for transportation nor are coaches expected to supervise cheerleaders until a parent arrives to pick up his/her cheerleader. Therefore, parents must be sure never to be late.

- Parents and cheerleaders are responsible for participating in all fundraising for uniform, camp, and misc. expenses if all agree in advance to participate.

#### **Conduct:**

- All cheerleaders must adhere to the MCS Student Conduct Code.
- All cheerleaders must demonstrate sportsmanship at all TDHS Cheer practices, games, and events.
- All cheerleaders must follow the high standards and goals of the team and coaching staff.
- Cheerleaders who are caught drinking alcohol or doing drugs will be removed from the program. This may include pictures or videos of activity which may give appearance or insinuate participation in such activity during and outside of the season, as well as on and off campus, which is identified as in opposition of the program, MCS Student Handbook, MCS Athletic rules, or Code of Conduct, Cheer Rules, Guidelines, and Informational.
- All cheerleaders must turn off their cellular devices during practice and games and put them in a safe location. No cell phones are allowed during cheer events.
- Cheer practices and games are a time of fun yet serious focus. A cheerleader may raise her/his hand to respectfully make a suggestion or to ask a question of the coach(s) but must wait until the end of practice to discuss problems should they arise.
- All cheerleaders must follow the rules and guidelines set forth in the TDHS Cheer program.
- All cheerleaders shall demonstrate behavior that is in accordance with the TDHS Philosophy.
- Failure to comply with the rules and guidelines set forth will result in disciplinary action and may include dismissal from the program.
- Every cheerleader will learn at a different pace therefore, each cheerleader must be willing to invest time at home reviewing dances, chants, or cheers, etc.
- If asked to help create a routine, a cheerleader should be eager to accomplish the task and to lead with a positive, spirit-lead attitude.

**Parking Lot:** Due to the possibility of theft and vandalism, your vehicle and personal property should be kept locked and valuables out of sight. Downey and Modesto City Schools both will not be held responsible for any lost, stolen or vandalized property. Please note that there is no free re-entry into games so secure your items before entering the MCS activity field or facility. Once a cheerleader enters the game, he/she is not allowed to come and go freely. Cheerleaders are to remain within the facility to insure safety.

#### **Pre-Conditioning and Regular Practice Schedule:**

- Pre-conditioning, beginning Monday following the 4<sup>th</sup> of July, is mandatory and recommended for individual training and team-building. Our training schedule will change when school begins.
- Cheer camp is mandatory and is part of the pre-conditioning and the TDHS preparation program. Because cheerleaders are expected to attend camp, fundraising will be available. Parents will need to schedule vacations so that they do not interfere with camp. Camp will likely be mid-July. Notice will be given just as soon as the camp options are posted so families are informed months in advance. A cheerleader who chooses not to go to camp, chooses to remove him/herself from the cheer program.
- Practice times will be announced but may vary on occasion based upon the changing school schedule and are typically are from 2:30-4:30pm. Practices are Monday-Thursday with games on Friday for JV and Varsity and Monday-Wednesday for Freshmen with games on Thursday and Friday. Freshmen are encouraged to attend Varsity games and to participate in Blue

Crew; note that at times may be required to do so on occasion. Junior Varsity cheerleaders are also encouraged to participate in Blue Crew and may be required to do so on occasion.

#### Attendance:

- Prompt and regular **attendance is mandatory!** Cheerleaders are expected to be in formation and participating in warm-up at the designated site no less than 5 minutes before time arranged by a coach to insure that everyone is prompt. Roll will be taken promptly upon the start of practice. If a cheerleader is not in formation, dressed according to code, and focused on the warm-up chant at the time of roll call, he/she will be marked “tardy”. If he/she arrives later than the start time, he/she will be noted as “tardy” up until 20 minutes, and then will be considered “absent”. This same standard applies for those choosing to leave even 20 minutes early.
- Cheerleaders are encouraged not to participate in any other extra-curricular activities that conflict with the TDHS Cheer program. Absences and **tardiness will not be excused** for practices or games missed due to other sporting events or other activities. Excessive absenteeism or tardiness, unless previously arranged with the cheerleader’s Head Coach, will result in loss of cheering at game time or inability to cheer altogether.
- All cheerleaders are required to be present at all assigned games. Attendance at all games, events, trainings and activities is mandatory. Do not schedule appointments or family trips during football, basketball and pre-season trainings.
- Three tardies equal one absence. (3 tardies = 1 absence).
- Tardies accumulate each quarter. At the semester, it will be at the discretion of the Head Coach to help determine the final citizenship of the cheerleader. A cheerleader should never be tardy. Six tardies in a semester may result in an unsatisfactory citizenship. Note: (3 tardies = 1 absence. Tardies may be issued at any time after the official meeting time for practices, games, events, scrimmages, or competition. Three (3) unexcused absences = 1 Saturday school).
- Absences or tardiness, other than those prearranged with the Head Coach or due to an illness, may not be excused. If a cheerleader is ill up to 3 days, a doctor’s note will be required before she/he is able to return.
- **EXCUSED ABSENCE** – Absences, at the discretion of the coach, are excused for school functions, religious functions, and absences due to illness accompanied by Doctor’s note. Absences, excused or not, may result in a cheerleader being pulled from a routine.
- **UNEXCUSED ABSENCE**–This is an absence that is not preapproved through the Head Coach or assisting coach if Head Coach cannot be reached, when due to illness or family emergency. Issues regarding transportation, or other extra-curricular activities are considered unexcused. Although homework and tutoring is a priority, it cannot be a reason for absence.
- **HOMEWORK, TUTORING, MEETINGS WITH A TEACHER, etc.** – These are not considered as an “excused absence” therefore, all players should make every effort to complete their assignments prior to coming to practice.
- **JUSTIFICATION** - Cheerleaders should never compare their situations with another. Every person has his/her own challenges whether it is social, mental, emotional, spiritual, or circumstantial. Your cheer leadership will work diligently to have one rule which applies in all circumstances however, but on occasion, there may be discretionary alternatives. Make every attempt to be gracious and continue to maintain that which is expected regardless of the actions of others.

**Disciplinary System:** Our disciplinary system will be enforced on all violations of the guidelines set forth by the TDHS Cheer coaching staff. Regular attendance and behavioral issues, including bullying, rolling of the eyes, complaining, and improper dress on game days, at events, practices, etc. will not be tolerated thus, will be noted by the Head Coach and may lead to a step in discipline and affect the eligibility to participate. **All tardies and absences need to be communicated asap with the Head Coach.**

If a cheerleader at any time during practice and/or game reports to a coach that she/he is not feeling well, a parent will be called. The parent will make the determination if the cheerleader’s illness warrants picking him/her up from practice or a game. If a parent decides that the cheerleader can remain at the practice or game, the cheerleader will be required to sit out and watch for the remainder of the session with the coach.

**Tardies:** 1= warning, 2=warning plus additional time conditioning before or after practice to make up minutes, 3 tardies = 1 absence. Tardies may be issued at any time after the official meeting time for practices, games, events, scrimmages, or competition.

### Missed Practices:

- **Step 1: If one practice is missed = Verbal Warning.** The cheerleader will show up at the next scheduled game in full uniform and sit out the 1st quarter with her/his coach.
- **Step 2: If two practices are missed = Verbal Warning.** The cheerleader will show up at the next scheduled game in full uniform and will sit out the 1st half of the game and will not perform in the half-time routine.
- **Step 3: If three practices are missed = Verbal Warning.** The cheerleader will show up at the next scheduled game, in full uniform, and will sit out the entire game, including half-time, with the coach.
- **Step 4: If four or more practices are missed = Written Notice of Probation** will be given and cheerleader will be issued a Saturday School. At this time the Cheer Coordinator, Head Coach, Parent, and Cheerleader may meet to discuss on what terms continued participation will be permitted. A signed agreement will be made if any breach of the agreement is made; in such case, the cheerleader may face possible termination. Termination will be based upon the recommendation of the Head Coach and Cheer Coordinator and upon the decision of the Athletic Director.

**Dress Code: Please note that it is imperative for safety and uniformity that cheerleaders stick to the appropriate dress code. Any cheerleader who is not dressed in the proper and clean attire forfeits her/his chance to participate and will be given an unexcused absence. Proper dress insures that a cheerleader will have full opportunity to participate on game day.**

- All cheerleaders must wear plain black athletic shorts, bike shorts, capris or leggings. No color, designs, or large logos allowed. Shorts/skorts must have a drop of at least 3 ½ inches and cover fittingly over the buttocks during all forms of movement. After two verbal warnings, a cheerleader will not be permitted to participate in practice but will be asked to sit and observe yet the cheerleader will be granted an unexcused absence. Please keep all shorts modest!
- One cheer shirt will be distributed per cheerleader to wear at every practice. Cheerleaders are encouraged to purchase any of the other designated cheer shirts, tank tops, or sweatshirts. All must be free of rips, tears, and cuts.
- Cheerleaders are allowed to wear a plain grey t-shirt, tank, or sweatshirt. These may not contain any patterns or logos and may not be V-neck or loose fitting. All tops must be conservative and not expose any part of the chest, stomach, or belly. Tank tops should be at least two finger widths wide and go no lower than two fingers from the neckline. If a cheerleader wears an inappropriate tank (esp. in which cleavage is visible), she will be noted unexcused by the Head Coach and forfeits her chance to wear a tank at any future time during that year.
- Sports bras should be worn under all tanks and **not visible** for participants. Bra straps should be secure and not dangle down the shoulder. Bras must be supportive.
- During practice, any color athletic shoes are acceptable (white preferred) but must be worn with low to no-show socks; this is a requirement. No Vans, Keds, Converse or recreational shoes permitted.
- **No jewelry including piercings**, except medical I.D. tags may be worn to practice or at any time during cheer.
- **Hair must be pulled back into a pony tail and bangs removed from the eyes** at all times during team activities including practice, homecoming, games, team picture day, competitions, and camp. Attempt to avoid bobby pins.
- **No long or fake nails permissible. Nails must be sport length** and polish in clear or natural French only. No other colors are allowed. No nail logos or tips allowed. No fake nails allowed. Gel or acrylic are permitted.
- **No hair of unnatural dying or bleaching nor unnatural colored hairpiece is allowed.**
- Hair accessories must be in TDHS colors. Clips, pins, and hair ties may be in neutral, black, or brown. No other colors are permissible.

- **No hair designs, tattoos or special piercings allowed.** Team members promote a common visual image so to avoid dismissal from the team, cheerleaders shall not get any of those mentioned during the season. A Head Coach may choose to ban face adornment.
- **No tendrill hair curls.**
- Braiding is at the discreción of the Head Coach.
- Once cheerleaders receive pom-poms, poms are required at all games and practices. Full uniforms are required at every game. Unused pieces should be placed in a cheerleader's duffle bag. The cheer uniform includes hair ribbon, cheer socks, briefs, skirt, shell, cheer shoes, body-liner, warm-up suit, and poms.
- No substitutions to the team ribbon, including competition or captain ribbons, Homecoming ribbons, Cancer Awareness Ribbons, etc. are allowed unless approved through the Cheer Coordinator.
- Dress Codes violations result in an unexcused absence and the cheerleader will not participate until a change of TDHS Cheer acceptable attire is provided.

#### **Game Days:**

- Uniform and practice attire must be clean. White uniform shoes should be cleaned before game day.
- All cheerleaders are expected to arrive one hour before her/his scheduled game, fully dressed and ready to cheer.
- If a cheerleader arrives early to his/her game, he/she must be in full uniform. No half-uniforms allowed. Hair must be up and ready for participation as a team.
- After his/her game, a cheerleader may swap out his/her bottoms for designated warm-up bottoms. Otherwise, a cheerleader must change all items of clothing. Warm-up jackets may be worn at any time.
- We recommend that the cheer uniform be laid out the night before all games and that cheer bags are checked for pom-poms, body-liners, warm-ups and water. The cheer uniform includes hair pulled in a high pony tail, bangs removed from the eyes, no tendrill curls to impede vision, the team hair ribbon secured at the top of the pony tail, cheer socks, briefs, skirt, shell, cheer shoes, body-liner, and warm-up suit.
- Make-up must appear natural but may include sparkle or shiny accents as approved by the Head Coach.
- All cheerleaders shall do no less than 15 minutes of warm-up before each game.
- All cheerleaders are responsible for learning game chants, cheers, side-line routines, and assigned dances.
- All cheerleaders must welcome visiting cheerleaders with hospitality and sportsmanship.
- If a cheerleader arrives 10 minutes late, he/she will sit out the first quarter of the game and may not be allowed to perform in the half-time routine if last minute changes were necessary. He/she may also forfeit the opportunity to be a "Captain" for her/his squad.
- **If a cheerleader arrives later than 10 minutes but not surpassing 30 minutes, she/he will sit out the first half of the game and not be allowed to perform in the half-time routine.**
- **If a cheerleader arrives at a game beyond 30 minutes tardy, a cheerleader will be asked to sit out the remainder of the game but remain in uniform with the cheerleaders so long as she/he is not a distraction.**
- **Tardiness and absences will be noted and will be counted against the cheerleader when considering your GPA and citizenship.**
- **Any absence will result in the cheerleader having to sit out of the next game attended by the squad per the Head Coach. She/he will be required to sit in uniform with the coach without a phone and without the company of another person.**

- **Tardiness and absences on more than two game days may result in termination. Termination will be based upon the recommendation of the Head Coach, Cheer Coordinator, and approved by approval of the Athletic Director.**

**Cheer Camp:** Attendance at cheer camp is expected and fundraising available for participants. Usually camp is held in July. Cheerleaders will not only learn more about the spirit of a leader but will also learn dance and cheer moves, leadership, and safety. Cheerleaders are expected to arrive promptly at the location directed. Regardless of circumstances, any cheerleader who is not present at roll-call will not be allowed entrance into camp. Cheerleaders are required to wear designated camp apparel, white athletic shoes, and hair must be pulled back into a pony tail with bangs secured out of the face. Cheerleaders are encouraged to bring her/his personal water and sunscreen. Parents are not allowed to stay throughout the day, therefore, must leave after the cheerleaders are signed in. Cheerleaders will be supervised by his/her coaches. However, parents may be invited back at the end of camp to watch the cheerleaders perform what they have learned.

**Cheer Clinic:** The TDHS Cheer teams may participate in a clinic and may even put on a clinic as a fundraiser. Specific details will follow.

**Rallies:** Rallies are traditionally held two times a year proceeding homecoming games. During rallies, cheerleaders perform team half-time dances and cheer routines. Cheerleaders are asked to wear full uniform attire on rally days. Other lunch rallies may be scheduled and every cheerleader is expected to cheer. Absences are counted just as a practice.

**Homecoming:** Homecoming week is filled with enthusiasm. All cheerleaders will be expected to participate in the dress-up activities promoted at school throughout the week. All cheerleaders perform at JV and Varsity half-time. Parent attendance at games is vital to promoting team spirit. Parents have fun dressing in Downey colors for added spirit.

**Team Photos:** Professional photos will be taken of the team and individuals sometime before the start of the season. Cheerleaders must be in full uniform with no additions or deletions of any kind. Full uniform must be clean and includes liner, team bow secured at the top of the high pony, bangs removed from the eyes, and poms. Because of mass numbers and limited time, a traditional team and yearbook pose will be used throughout all squads. The team photo will be used in the Downey yearbook. Photo packages are an affordable way to obtain professional photos of your daughter or son. More details will follow.

**Senior Send-off:** Each year we will participate in a Senior Send-off event to celebrate those girls who will graduate and especially honor those who were icons and have completed 4 years of cheer.

**Cheer Competitions:** TDHS Cheer will not participate in cheer competitions at this time.

**Work Detail:** All families asked to assist with fundraisers that are a collective event supporting the general fund. However, parents may opt to pay for the cheerleader's supplies or optional uniform through a donation or personal commitment. More information on fundraising and uniform costs will be provided at a later date.

**Parent Participation:**

- The Downey Cheer program needs the financial and physical support of parents for optional uniforms, activities, and even for some events.
- Parents must sign the Parent Code of Conduct and abide by the standards set forth by TDHS Cheer.
- Parents are encouraged to attend games, and activities of TDHS Cheer with the purpose to support cheerleaders, players, coaches, staff, students, administration, etc.
- Parents are invited to participate in leadership and volunteerism throughout the season. Please contact the Cheer Coordinator or Head Coach of your team if you questions.
- Parents are asked to follow the specific Grievance Protocol for concerns that arise during the season. Parental concerns are taken seriously, as parents are a vital part of the Downey Cheer family.
- Parents must sit away from the practice or performance area and avoid interrupting their child or the coaching staff during practice, games or performances.
- Parents must monitor public media sites in which cheerleaders participate (ie: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked In, and any all all sites of similar nature to insure that all conversations regarding the Knights and participants of the cheer and football program are kept in positive regard.

- Parents are expected to avoid and dispel gossip should it arise and are asked to maintain exemplary conduct. Together, "We" can be #1.

**Grievance Protocol:** Any complaints from parents/guardians and or cheerleaders must follow the proper grievance protocol as outlined below:

1. The cheerleader must first meet with a coach or specifically a Head Coach of that girl's squad.
2. The cheerleader must meet with the Head Coach and Cheer Coordinator.
3. The Parent/Guardian, and cheerleader, must meet with the Head Coach.
4. Parent/Guardian must meet with the Cheer Coordinator to understand and a meeting with the TDHS Athletic Director.

**Uniform and Fees:**

- If all of the team members elect for an optional uniform rather than the short and t-shirt supplied by the district, each cheerleader and her/his parent are responsible for fundraising or paying for the optional uniform and expenses. A complete budget will be distributed to help with decision-making. Cheerleaders are given the options of fundraising, obtaining sponsors, or purchasing these items out of pocket. All of the optional uniform must be paid before the time of order at the first of June. This is about \$700. Once all funds are collected, optional uniforms may be purchased.
- A parent or guardian must accompany the cheerleader during the time of optional uniform measurements. Once the cheerleader has been fitted for the optional uniform, and he/she has paid for it, it belongs to her. There is no returning the uniform.
- Each cheerleader is responsible for maintaining her/his uniform and is responsible for the replacement of lost or stolen items. And, each cheerleader is responsible for showing up in full uniform when requested regardless of whether it is lost. Lost items must be replaced promptly as a cheerleader cannot participate without it.
- Each cheerleader must have hair neatly pulled back in a pony and curled or neatly straightened with bangs pulled back securely. A cheerleader must follow his/her coach's request regarding hair.
- All other rules regarding dress as outlined in this document are required.

**Community Service:** Some fundraisers will also contribute to community service hours. Participants are expected to donate 5 hours of time to his/her community, Cheerleaders are encouraged to find opportunities for our cheer teams to participate in activities that serve our community beyond the service you provide each day by being an amazing asset to the people at our school.

I have read and agreed to the terms set forth in the TDHS Cheer Rules, Guidelines and Informational.

**Parent Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_

**Cheerleader's Name (print)** \_\_\_\_\_

**Signature** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date** \_\_\_\_\_