

MADERA SOUTH HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK

I. Philosophy: Character Leadership Academics Sportsmanship Service

Being a cheerleader is a privilege and an honor. Cheerleaders have the responsibility to serve as a support group for the various interscholastic activity programs within the school. The squad should strive to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, and develop positive crowd involvement. These activities should serve to develop leadership, confidence, and skill.

Cheerleaders are in a position of great influence, and high standards of conduct are essential. Appropriate behavior will help earn the respect of the student body, and this is the core of developing effective school spirit and student involvement.

II. Purpose

The primary purpose of cheerleading is to promote school spirit at athletic events, community events, and to positively represent Madera South High School. In fulfilling this purpose, cheerleaders will:

- Raise the level of fan support for MSHS athletics, lead in positive support for all teams, and project and solicit support from fans.
- Embrace the athleticism of cheerleading by incorporating gymnastics, jumps, tight arm motions, pyramids, and dance in an effort to keep the crowd's attention and direction focused on the field/floor where the athletic contest is taking place.
- Serve as public relations ambassadors of athletics at MSHS and uphold and project the goals and ideals of the institution (C.L.A.S.S.)
- Create an atmosphere of spirit and support throughout MSHS and the community by combining the aesthetic, social, and communicative elements of cheerleading.

III. Expected Behaviors and Standards

1. All cheerleaders are expected to present themselves as respectable citizens of Madera South High School **at all times**, this includes respect towards the coaches, cheer coordinator, and fellow squad members, MSHS students, staff, and Administrators.
2. Cheerleaders will not partake in drinking, smoking, or drug usage on or off school grounds. If any member chooses to disregard these rules or any others set by the Madera Unified School District (student/parent handbook) or Federal & State law, he or she will compromise his or her position as a member of the team.
3. Uniforms must be kept neat and clean. Any damage must be reported and repaired immediately. All polyester uniforms are machine washable. Do not dry clean uniforms. Cheerleaders must return uniforms and equipment clean and in good condition either immediately at the end of their eligibility, after basketball season is over and before tryout clinics begin, or immediately after expulsion from the squad. Failure to do so will result in placement on Loss of Privilege list.
4. Damaged or lost items/uniforms must be paid for and/or replaced in full.
5. Cheerleaders must remain in good academic standing by maintaining a 2.0 cumulative GPA for two consecutive quarters. If a member's GPA drops below a 2.0 they may be placed on academic probation, not be eligible to tryout or continue on the squad. (See CIF rules and MSHS Athletic handbook)
6. Cheerleaders are expected to remain in good physical condition.
7. All cheerleaders must wear the designated uniform from head to toe (bow/hair to shoes) on the designated day, both to school and to the game.
8. All cheerleaders must abide by ALL expectations listed in the MSHS Cheerleader handbook at all times or they may compromise their position as a member of the team. *Students who were removed from their cheer squad (middle or high school), will not be eligible to tryout again depending on the severity of the incident at the full discretion of the MSHS coaching staff.*
9. Cheerleading at Madera South High School requires a MAJOR TIME COMMITMENT. Cheerleaders are required to cheer at both home and away football games, home Boys/Girls Basketball games, other sporting events if scheduled, perform at rallies, attend all practices, participate fully in our competition team if selected by the coaching staff, participate in fundraisers and attend scheduled community events. Cheerleaders should anticipate having **10-20 hours** of cheer related activities per week. This time commitment is ***NOT*** compatible with work, musical theater, drama, choir, band, or other team sports. However, if a student is involved in more than one activity they must manage their time effectively or they may not be able to participate in a number of cheer related events if they are not prepared. Also, they may not qualify to receive their Athletic Letter at the end of

the year. This decision will be left to the coaches, advisors, in consultation with the Athletic Director.

10. Cheerleaders must finish the Fall, Winter, and Spring season (including cheerleading competition (Varsity) & if selected) in order to receive an Athletic Letter. In order to be eligible to receive this award/recognition s/he must maintain a 2.0 grade point average, attend practices, attend all required sporting events and perform at required activities throughout this time period.

11. At any point coaches and advisors may use any necessary consequence from any unforeseen or unprecedented actions.

12. At any point the coaches and or advisor have the right move a girl between squads as they deem necessary or if needed.

IV. Game Day

1. Cheerleaders must **arrive AT MINIMUM 30 minutes (basketball)-1 hour (football)** prior to game time, **game ready**. This means in appropriate uniform/shoes & bow, hair up, make-up done, jewelry off (ear studs ok), and **food digested**. Any changes to this policy are at the discretion of the coaching staff.
2. All squads and squad members must stretch and warm up stunts and practice cheers prior to cheering.
3. If a cheerleader brings any unnecessary items or leaves trash on the sideline area they may be assigned laps or other physical conditioning at practice or event.
4. You may only bring ONE cheer bag. All bags must be lined up (single file), neatly, in the designated area. Any cheerleader that does not put their personal items in the designated area may be assigned laps.
5. 20 min prior to the game, the cheerleaders will be on the sideline ready to move to their appropriate place on the field/court and in formation for the singing of the National Anthem and/or set up for the tunnel.
6. See section on **Absences, Late Arrivals, and Early Departures**.
7. Abusive language and/or criticism of officials, coaches, fans, other cheerleaders, etc. is prohibited and will result in punishment according to MSHS Cheer Discipline Plan and/or benching at coach's discretion.
8. Cell phones are strictly prohibited during the games. Approval must be granted by coach or advisor to waive this rule.
 - a. If a parent must speak with their student during game or event they should call the Advisor and/or coaches. The Advisor and/or coaches will allow the student to call their parents in case of an emergency. However, parents understand that coaches are utilizing this time to work with the cheerleaders and may subsequently be unavailable.
9. The cheerleader must ride the bus to and from away events—unless otherwise approved by coaching staff under exceptional circumstances. If a cheerleader misses the bus, he or she will not cheer for a designated period at the discretion of the coaches. A cheerleader may leave an away game only if checked (signed) out by a parent or guardian as recognized in their transportation contract.
 - a. During transportation students are expected to act like respectful young adults and abide by all transportation and other indicated rules. Failure to act appropriately may result in disciplinary action to the individual, squad, or entire program.
10. **Other duties:** Members will alternate decorating the stadium or gym and cleaning up after games. Each member will sign up in the beginning of the Season for the game/games that they will be responsible for. All members must participate in at least one set up/clean up.

V. Performances

1. If a member misses any practice or fails to complete an assigned or volunteered duty in relation to a performance the coaches and/or advisor may remove that individual from the routine or summon alternative consequence.

VI. Practices

1. The cheer coaches and/or advisor, prior to the last day of school will determine mandatory summer practices (90%) and camp dates and communicate that information to cheerleaders and cheer parents.
2. Practice will be held after school and on weekends (Saturdays and Sundays if necessary).
3. Any changes to the practice schedule will be communicated to the parents and cheerleaders as soon as change is made.
 - a. Coaches may assign additional afternoon practices. However, all parents and students must have notice. If an additional practice is required prior to a performance and notification has not been given the practice may only take place with the consent of the cheerleader's parent. If the parent does not want their child to participate the cheerleader will not be subject to any discipline.
4. All practices are closed to the public. Parents may come to the last 15 minutes of practice in order to provide transportation for their cheerleader. Practice time will not be a time to discuss issues and/or concerns with the coaching staff. All issues/concerns should be addressed at a prearranged time to avoid misuse of valuable practice/event time.
5. No cell phones are to be used by cheerleaders during practice without prior permission from the coaching staff.
6. Participants must attend **all** practices in order to perform at an event (game, pep rally, competition, etc.) Members will

- be held accountable for an absence, and may be removed from any performance by the coach and/or Advisor.
- Cheerleaders are expected to arrive on time to practice and may suffer consequences or other disciplinary action for failure to comply.
 - Summer Practices: Coaches will set practice days and times during the summer. **Each member must attend 90% of practices** during the summer. Practices will be held 2- 3 times a week depending on coaches' schedule. The majority of material will be introduced during summer practices, that is why it is imperative that the students make it to all the practices. If a student fails to attend the practices they will be suspended from the first performance event and/or home game and may be removed from the program altogether (depending on the severity of the situation).

VII. Absences, Late Arrivals, and Early Departures

- Absences from a practice, game, performance, or fundraiser are not permitted and are excused only in the event of death of an immediate family member, illness, religious events, or a required school function when prior timely communication of said excusable absence has been communicated to the coaching staff. The cheerleader must submit a doctor's excuse to his or her coach in cases of illness, supportive documentation if the event is for church or school, and a written note from a parent and/or teacher is mandatory in the other cases listed above. Documentation must be submitted at the following practice, event, or encounter with a coach. Any other absences, such as vacations, must be cleared with the coach at least two weeks prior to the event in order for an excused absence to be considered. The coach will then determine if the absence(s) will be excused or not. All absences should be communicated to staff within a timely manner (no less than 72 hours for planned events). A written note from a parent or communication of an absence **does not** always constitute an excused absence.
- Any time a member is absent or leaves school early, he or she must report to his or her coach prior to the game and/or practice. Cheerleaders not at school/in class for a minimum of 4 periods in a day are not eligible to cheer and/or practice that day. **ABSENCES AND EARLY DEPARTURES FROM SCHOOL DO NOT EQUAL EXCUSED ABSENCES FROM CHEERLEADING FUNCTIONS.** Unless your absence from a cheer function falls within one of the categories listed above and has been communicated to coaches in a timely manner, it will not be excused.
- Missed **AWAY** games will result in a **HOME** game suspension (Unless permitted otherwise by a coach or the advisor).
- If a student is suspended/benched from a game or performance event they **MUST** attend the scheduled game/event, in uniform, and support their team and school from the bench sitting next to their coach. Student who are suspended/benched are to follow all regular guidelines—meaning no phones, no talking or other distractions.
- At any point coaches/advisor have full authority to handle any situation as they feel necessary based on the circumstances of the situation.

VIII. Misconduct-Subject To Discipline or Removal From Team

- Any conduct resulting in an arrest by law officials. (See Student/Parent Handbook or California State Law requirements)
- Any disciplinary action resulting in suspension from school previously or currently. (See Student/Parent Handbook)
- Any disciplinary action resulting in behavior contract (ex. Harassment, gang, bullying, etc. via Campus Security and/or Administration)
- Inappropriate media (phone pictures/videos, Snapchat, Instagram, Facebook, Myspace, etc.) related to school, the program, coaches, teammates, etc. The final decision for this action will be determined by the Coach, Advisor and Athletic Director.
- Defiance or disrespectful behavior toward Coaches, Advisor, and any other adult in a supervisory role.
- Any disciplinary action that results in assignment to SRC or On campus suspension
- Unladylike conduct at anytime (disrespect toward the coaches, Advisor, other cheerleaders, or any other adult in a supervisory role including teachers, administrators, staff, etc.). (In uniform or not) This could include back talk, rude interruptions during meeting or class, eye rolling, etc.
- Any inappropriate Public Displays of Affection on campus, in or out of uniform.
- Inappropriate, foul, language used at practice or events (in or out of uniform)

SEE: MADERA SOUTH STALLIONS CHEERLEADING DISCIPLINE PLAN

IX. Safety

1. Because of the increased athleticism of today's cheerleaders and the complexity of some stunts performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic endeavor, of serious injury.
2. All participants must have a current physical form on file prior to participate, including an updated Family ID. If a student fails to turn in the physical, physical is expired, or student does not maintain an updated status on Family ID student will be asked to attend practice but MAY NOT participate until cleared. If no action to resolve the issue is taken by the Cheerleader within 1 week of notification the student may endure consequences including suspension, benching, release from the team, or other action at the discretion of the coaching staff.
3. All participants must be trained and qualified for proper landing and spotting techniques before they are allowed to stunt.
4. All participants must go through proper stunt progressions.
5. No tumbling or building of stunts is permitted unless a cheer coach is present.
6. No horseplay, laughing or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt/practice session due to an increased risk of injury and improper use of practice time.
7. Absolutely no jewelry will be worn during practices, games or events, including body piercings.

X. Fundraising

All cheerleaders will be asked to participate in all fundraising events. All monies collected will be deposited in the MSHS Cheer Booster Account. Each cheerleader does not have an individual account.

If members do participate in a fundraiser where they "Check out"/Sign-out items to sell they must understand that the items are property of the MSHS Cheer program. If the student does not turn in the money for the items sold or the unsold items on the designated day a student's/parents will be responsible for reimbursing the program. If product or funds are not turned in as indicated, student will be placed on the Loss of Privilege list and will be suspended from all school and athletic activities until the items and/or money is returned. (See student/parent handbook)

**Fundraisers throughout the year can include but are not limited to: Grub downs, Car washes, Snack Sales, fireworks script, candle sales, popcorn sales, etc.

XI. Communication

Communication is vital for a successful cheer program.

Coaches will communicate:

1. Requirements for students and the squad
2. Locations, dates, times of practices, games, and events
3. Squad requirements including special equipment, uniform, squad rules/regulations/expectations, travel arrangements, and off-season expectations (summer)

Parents should communicate:

1. Concerns regarding a son/daughter directly to the coach at the appropriate time and place (not practice, game or other event)
 - a. Issues appropriate for discussion:
 1. Student plan for success
 2. Student behavior/ concerns
 3. Student safety
2. Issues not appropriate for discussion with a coach:
 - a. Any situation that deals with other students/cheer members

Communication between parent, school and coach:

1. If at any time a cheer member or parent feels he/she needs to discuss a problem or complaint, please follow the appropriate channels in the following order:
 - a. Cheer coach(es)
 - i. Do not confront coach(es)/advisor before, during, or after any event. All concerns should be addressed

in a pre-scheduled meeting.

If a meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, parents should then contact the following in this order (and only progressing after unsatisfactory but attempted resolution):

- b. MSHS Cheer Advisor- Samantha Elam samanthaelam@maderausd.org
- c. MSHS Activities Director- Justin Potter justinpotter@maderausd.org
- d. MSHS Athletic Director- Andrea Devine andreadevine@maderausd.org
- e. MSHS Principal – Oracio Rodriguez oraciorodriguez@maderausd.org
- f. Director of MUSD Athletics- Marty Bitter martybitter@maderausd.org

XII. Captain(s):

Captain duties (for each team) may include, but are not limited to the following:

Captain responsibilities:

- Creating calendars
- Selecting uniforms for events/activities and ensuring all teammates are prepared and informed
- Communicating pep rally ideas (Varsity only) and develop agendas for events
- Composing cheer, chant and game plans
- Demonstrating a positive and motivating attitude at all times
- Being dependable and cooperative
- Having good organizational skills
- Being on time to all events
- Reporting all problems, conflicts and concerns to coaches
- Keeping communication open and flowing with all team members
- Using authority when necessary, but not abusing it

Process of choosing captains/co-captains:

- Coaches and administration will set cheer captain selection dates.
- Captain candidates may be required to give a speech to his/her team about leadership qualities, etc. that they should offer the program. This may be followed by a group question and answer session that will be directed by the coaches.
- Any additional requirements will be made prior to selecting captain(s).
- Squads may have the opportunity to vote on captains, but coaches will make final determination.

***Role of captain can be revoked at any time if coaches feel captain is not acting in a “captain manner.”

MADERA SOUTH STALLIONS CHEERLEADING DISCIPLINE PLAN

Cheerleaders will be notified by the coach when consequences are given. Benched means sitting on the sidelines in uniform without communication (cell phones included) to anyone except the coach. All community service hours are chosen by the coach and must be served at school. The head coach/ advisor will approve all discipline forms to ensure consistency within the program

Level One Offense

- Late for practice, meeting or game for unexcused reason
- Leaving a practice, meeting or game for an unexcused reason or without notifying a coach
- Vulgar language or inappropriate behavior, including on social media
- Forgetting any part of uniform for practice or game
- Chewing gum at practice or game
- Being late for deadlines
- Wearing jewelry at practice or games, except studs
- Wearing a Stallion uniform improperly

Level One Consequences

****The coach may decide to issue one or all of the consequences below depending on the severity...**

- Step 1 – Physical conditioning and/or Community Service
- Step 2 – Benching for part of a game as determined by coach
- Step 3 – See Level Two Offenses

Level Two Offenses

- Missing a game/event or practice for an unexcused reason
- Not showing up for a game/event or practice without prior notice to a coach
- Teacher/Administration/Staff complaint about behavior/grade in classroom
- Being disrespectful to any coach or staff member
- Being disrespectful to any teammate
- Altering a uniform/outfit without prior approval from coach
- Continuously committing level 1 offenses (2+)

Level Two Consequences

****Step one and two are mandatory, and the coach may decide to issue the other consequences below**

- Step 1 – Physical conditioning and/or Community Service (if no other previous infractions)
- Step 2 – Benching from one game – required if a team member misses a game for an unexcused reason
- Step 3 – Loss of letter
- Step 4 – See level Three Offenses

Level Three Offenses

- Breaking ANY major MSHS rules
- Continuously committing level one or two offenses

Level Three Consequences

****Step 1-3 of the consequences listed below must be given to the cheerleader for level three offenses**

- Step 1 – Conditioning and/or Community Service
- Step 2 – Benching from games
- Step 3 – Loss of letter
- Step 4 – Release from team

I understand and will comply with the above disciplinary plan. I understand that all consequences and their severity are up to the coach's discretion. In case of extenuating circumstances, appropriate consequences will be determined by the cheer coaches/ advisor and all decisions are final.

Cheerleader _____

Date _____

Parent _____

Date _____