

Saugus Cheer Program Handbook

PART I – PROGRAM OVERVIEW



PHILOSOPHY

The Saugus High School Cheer program shall serve as a support group for the yearly interscholastic athletic program for both male and female athletes. Each squad shall strive to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, develop good positive crowd involvement, and help student participants and spectators achieve the most worthwhile educational objectives of the interscholastic program.

Being the most visible and recognizable representative of a school, cheer squads are in a position of great influence; therefore, high standards of conduct are essential. Positive personal behavior and squad cohesiveness demonstrate these standards. Appropriate behavior will help earn the respect of the student body, which is the core of developing effective school spirit and student involvement.



PROGRAM ELIGIBILITY

Cheerleading is from June - March commitment in which participants must maintain an overall 2.0 GPA. Students must meet the eligibility standards and rules/regulations set by the William S. Hart School District.

Freshman Squad:

- 9th grade only
- Incoming freshmen with less than a 2.0 GPA will be monitored and asked to submit their final 8th grade GPA to the advisor at the start of the summer. If a student fails to raise his/her GPA, they will be benched for the 1st grading period (5 weeks) of high school until their grades improve.

JV Squad:

- 10th grade only
- Mandatory toe touch jump, pike jump

Varsity Squad:

- 11th or 12th grade only
- Mandatory standing backhand spring, toe touch jump, pike jump

Competition Squad:

- Mandatory standing backhand spring, toe touch backhand spring, running tumbling, double toe touch jump, pike jump
- **A \$100 non-refundable check due at September Booster Meeting.**
- Our competition squad practices are in addition to the school squad and may claim many weekends for travel.

- If you make the Comp squad, skill level, behavior/attitude, attendance, coachability, and sportsmanship will be noted throughout the year and determine your place on the squad.
- Depending on the circumstances, not all Comp squad members will be used for each scheduled competition.
- Failure to attend any competition or complete payment dues in a timely manner will result in automatic release from the squad.

If you cannot fulfill the standards presented in the handbook, the Cheer staff may place you on probation, demotion, or dismiss you from the program.



TIME COMMITMENT

Please be aware that dedication from each team member is necessary in order to have a successful practice, performance, game, and year! The team cannot function properly without every member present. Please be aware of this when planning family events.

- **Summer Practice:** Participation in the summer program is **MANDATORY**. Practice will be: _____.
- **Summer Camp:** Participation in the cheer camp is **MANDATORY**. Camp sets up our routines for the football season and intensifies skills learned during summer practice. Camp will be: _____.
- **Football and Basketball Season:** During these seasons, in addition to weekly game(s), practice hours/day will be at the Advisor's discretion. Schedules will continually change especially for playoff games and weather conditions.
- **Off Season Sports:** Attendance to these events will be determined by the Advisor, but are still part of the student's grade.
- **Fundraising/Community Events:** There are **MANDATORY** events to raise money to help pay for the high cost. Dates will be scheduled and noted on the practice calendars and the website.
- **Competitions:** These will be determined at the beginning of the season. Dates/places will be given in advance.
- **Outside Commitments:** These should not conflict with any student's cheerleading duties. Please consult the website and the practice calendars **BEFORE** making personal appointments. Outside commitments that conflict with any student's cheerleading duties may result in a deduction of his/her class grade

Potential Cheer Interruptions: Weddings, family vacations, jobs, SAT classes, COC classes, all-star team, driving lessons, etc.



GYMNASTICS TRAINING

With the strenuous demands imposed from stunts in our routines, we strongly encourage everyone who is participating to get involved in an extracurricular gymnastics class.



RISK

Cheerleading incorporates acrobatic, tumbling, stunt, and precision movements that are very difficult and could potentially be extremely dangerous. Moderate to severe injuries, including death can occur in any activity involving motion and increased height or force. Please be aware that each individual can maximize her own safety and the safety of others by following our Saugus Cheerleading rules. Staying focused and living a healthy lifestyle such as eating a well-balanced diet, drinking plenty of water, staying physically fit, and getting plenty of rest also aids in injury prevention.



HEALTH

Cheerleading is a rigorous activity, which requires its participants to be in top physical and mental shape.

- Cheerleading is a performance-oriented class; full participation is expected.
- Students with serious health problems that are aggravated by exercise and/or which limit full participation for a substantial amount of time should not tryout and may be grounds for dismissal by the cheer staff. This policy has been enacted in order to protect both the potentially ill member as well as other squad members from injury.
- Cheerleaders are responsible for self-medication such as inhalers, braces, athletic tape, and Tylenol.
- Ongoing injuries limiting participation will be assessed on an as-needed basis. Removal from the squad may be a possibility depending on the severity and limitations of the injury.
- Medical clearance is required for all levels of injuries in order to resume full participation.
- Each squad member will be required to have a physical examination at their own expense prior to the start of summer practice.



FINANCIAL CONCERNS

Cheerleading involves a huge financial commitment on the part of the parents. Be responsible for your commitment – avoiding deadlines or refusing to clear accounts is unacceptable and hurts everyone involved.

- Cost breakdown provided on the estimated budget handout
- For any previous cheerleader, it is **MANDATORY** that any outstanding booster bills have been cleared in order to tryout, banquet, or banquet DVD.
- First financial payment will be due after tryouts (mandatory \$800 at uniform fitting). Remaining regular squad payments due in July, September, and October.
- The competition squad will have an additional payment plan along with regular squad starting in September.
- If a member bounces a check with the organization, they will be unable to write another check to the organization. A check handling fee of \$25 will be charged. All future funds must be in cash or money order.
- If you are unable to attend a meeting in which a payment is due, please mail a check to the following address:

**Saugus High School Cheer
P.O. Box 802442
Santa Clarita, CA 91380-2442**

PART II- TRYOUT GUIDELINES AND REGULATIONS



TRYOUT PERFORMANCE REQUIREMENTS

Students will be taught the order which they will demonstrate these requirements during the clinic. They will see a judges' score sheet and the points assigned for each requirement listed.

If you tryout for one of the school squads, you will need to demonstrate the following:

- Overall Appearance/Attire
- Attendance/GPA/Teacher Evaluation (application)
- Spirit Entrance
- Dance (taught at clinic)
- Cheer (taught at clinic)
- Chant (taught at clinic)
- Jumps – One toe-touch, One pike
- Tumbling – Highest ability level (safely)

If you tryout for the competition squad, you will need to demonstrate the following items:

- Jumps – Double toe touch, pike
- Tumbling - Standing backhand spring, toe touch backhand spring, running tumbling



CLINIC AND TRYOUT ATTIRE

Please follow the guidelines below for dressing during the clinics and tryouts; otherwise it will be taken into consideration during your tryout performance. In general, please avoid wearing jeans, street shoes, and jewelry, exposing tummies, or chewing gum during clinics and tryouts.

Clinic attire: Wear comfortable school-appropriate workout clothes, tennis-type shoes with backs, and socks. Hair must be up and out of face in a ponytail.

Tryout attire: Blue shorts (navy), plain crewneck white T-Shirt with sleeves (no embellishments/SHS lettering), tennis-type with backs or cheerleading shoes, socks, and natural make-up (no glitter or rhinestones). Hair must be up and out of face.



CLINIC AND TRYOUT DATES/TIMES

- Clinic dates/times are as follows:
 - 1st Clinic: _____
 - 2nd Clinic: _____
- Tryout times are as follows:
 - Varsity Squad Tryout: _____
 - JV Squad Tryout: _____
 - Freshman Squad Tryout: _____

***Please try to arrive 30 minutes prior to your tryout times for stretching and warm up.

***If interested in trying for the competition squad, you will demonstrate the required skills during the regular squad tryout.



CLINIC AND TRYOUT RULES

- Sign in for every date listed above.
- Daily attendance at the clinics is **MANDATORY**. Check in will be on the cheer field.
- The order of tryout candidates will be established randomly per squad.
- Judging will be done by a panel of professional cheerleading coaches
- Applicants will tryout in groups of 3 or more in front of the judging panel.
- Tryouts are closed to all observers. Only the cheer staff and administration will be present during tryouts.
- Any photography and/or video taping during the clinics will result in automatic disqualification from tryouts.
- All necessary paper work must be completed before the clinics begin (application form, tryout agreement letter). If paper work is not turned in **you cannot participate.**



TRYOUT RESULTS

- Squad lists will be posted on www.sauguscheer.com by your tryout # on _____
- Unsuccessful candidates are encouraged to work on skills and tryout for the following year. Please note that you will not have an opportunity to view score sheets.



MANDATORY UNIFORM FITTINGS/PHYSICAL EXAM

After tryout results have been posted, the students will need to meet one night to be sized for their uniform, spirit wear, and physical exam.

- **Date/Time:** _____
- **A parent will need to come in order give the first booster payment of \$800**
Without this payment, students will still be fitted that evening for a uniform/spirit wear; however, we will not order it until the amount due is paid in full. You may be subject to additional S&H charges if this occurs.
- When the uniforms/spirit wear come in and is ready to be distributed, another cheer payment will be due; however, we will not distribute the items until the amount due is paid in full.
- **Ordered uniforms/spirit wear for games or practices may be withheld until late dues are completed**
- Cheerleaders will also be evaluated for the district physical. Please bring an additional \$_____. ***Student who opts out of this must have their physician complete the form prior to June 1st.



MANDATORY PARENT/CHEERLEADER MEETING

A separate meeting for cheerleaders and one for parents will be held following tryouts.

The parent meeting is will be a time for us to review required paperwork and answer uniform fitting questions.

- **Date/Time/Location:** _____

A cheerleader meeting will be held to review the final section of the handbook. It will be a time for the entire squad to meet each other, Q&A, and finalized roster information.

- **Date/Time/Location:** _____

PART III - CHEERLEADER GUIDELINES AND EXPECTATIONS



DEDICATION

In and out of uniform, SHS Cheerleaders will behave in a way that exemplifies the good standing of the school. **The dedication level of each squad member is a vital part in the operation of our program.**

- If at any time you terminate or removed from your position as a Saugus cheerleader, for whatever reason, you may not wear your uniforms/spirit wear at anytime thereafter or be involved in any cheer program scheduled activities. You may not also attend the cheer banquet at the end of the year.



ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION

- William S. Hart District policy requires that students **MUST** attend all classes **on the day of games or performances.**
- Cheer Program policy requires that students **MUST** attend a full practice **before game day to fully participate or member will be benched for that game.**
- **Parents/cheerleaders must also notify the attendance office and the advisor to clear absences to avoid grade deductions.**
- Any cheerleader on suspension, grade ineligibility, or probation will not be allowed to wear their uniform to school or attend games/practice until cleared through the advisor.
- The entire squad must be at practice, games, performances, events, and rallies on time as stated by advisor/coach.
- Individuals must provide transportation to events in which school transportation is not available.

Ways to communicate: email, written notes, voicemail

Mandatory participation: games, community events, fundraisers, rallies, Burger Bash, Back-to-School Night, Open House, and other events deemed mandatory by the Advisor/Coaches.



UNIFORM GUIDELINES

The Cheer staff or captains will make the decision on dress for cheer events. Therefore, the purchase of uniforms, spirit wear, and other accessories are **MANDATORY**.

All squad members must be dressed alike during school, practices, games, performances, rallies, spirit days, and other cheer events.

1. Hair must be pulled back away from face and secured in a full ponytail. No bobby pins, metal/plastic clips, or hairpieces. Natural hair color ONLY.
2. Chewing gum is prohibited.
3. No jewelry in or on any part of the body including toe, belly, ear, and tongue rings.
4. Nails must be kept at a sport length. No acrylics. (When looking at palm, nails must not be visible above tip of finger). Clear nail polish only may be worn.
5. Team athletic shoes must be clean/white at all times.
6. Natural make-up.

- **Practice Days:** sports/supportive bra, cheer shoes, socks, briefs, no jewelry, cheer folder, and required practice shorts/T-Shirt.
- **Game Days (at school):** Full uniform. “Being in uniform” entails an assigned hairstyle and ribbon, shoes, socks, no jewelry, and briefs. Uniform jackets should be used for layering ONLY.
- **Games:** Full uniform. This includes arriving/departing events in full uniform as well (i.e. no flip flops/Uggs in place of shoes and socks etc.) Poms, bodyliners, and warm-ups need to be brought also.
- **Spectator Days (at games):** Spirit wear TBA
- **Rally Days:** Full uniform unless otherwise notified.
- **Spirit Prep:** School clothes. Bring your cheer folder.
- **Other Events:** You will be notified on what to wear since everyone must look the same.

Presence at a school, practice or games without dress code will result in a deduction of the student’s grade.



BEHAVIOR GUIDELINES

1. Squad problems and conflicts should be discussed only with the Advisor/Coaches, not with people outside the squad.
 - **Parents should not get involved with squad problems nor involve squad members in parental problems.** This can be very damaging to the unity of the team.
 - **Ways to communicate parental concerns regarding the program only to the Advisor:** email, written notes, phone
2. Cellular phones and/or pagers should be turned off for the duration of cheer practices, games, spirit preps, and cheer performances at any cheer related event
3. Cooperation and teamwork are imperative in building a great team.
4. Control profanity, fighting, gossiping, and other forms of rudeness.
5. **Use of alcohol, drugs, or tobacco will not be tolerated. A student will be automatically dismissed.** Students suspected of substance abuse can be suspended until investigation of the matter is cleared/confirmed by administration.
6. Any disrespect or defiance shown to teachers, coaches, rules, administrators, or school officials, which results in an action form of a disciplinary referral, will result in possible squad dismissal.
7. Excessive public displays of affection are never considered appropriate, especially in uniform/spirit wear at games or at school.

Remember – you are school representatives at all times. You represent not only yourself, but also those who support the program.



PRACTICE GUIDELINES

1. Practices will be held during 7th period. You are to arrive promptly and immediately begin stretching.
2. For safety reasons, the Coaches will designate practice areas. Mats or a grassy area will be used for mastering stunting and tumbling techniques.
3. All stunts and tumbling must be practiced under the supervision of the Coaches. Safety guidelines set forth by the National Federation of State High School Associations should be followed.
4. Be aware that the tumbling and stunting performed is at an accelerated level, but will in **no way be permitted at games unless mastered in practice.**

5. Any additional practices scheduled by the students are not mandatory. They cannot be held on school property and the Advisor/Coaches will not be in attendance. Saugus High School, the Advisor, and/or Coaches will not assume liability for injuries resulting from student-scheduled practices.
6. Taking part in a stunt without the cheer staff's approval or presence is prohibited. If a student stunts outside of practice, she is violating policy and therefore releases the coaches, advisors, administrators, school, and district from any responsibility of injuries, etc.



GAME GUIDELINES

1. Family and friends may sit behind the students in the stands only during games and avoid interrupting performances. If emergency occurs, please make contact with coaches rather than interrupting cheerleaders during games.
2. For games, students are to arrive 1 hour prior to the start of a game, unless told otherwise. Once you arrive, you should be ready to begin stretching with the captains/coaches.
3. Students should be in position 2 minutes prior to start and half time.
4. Students should be in full uniform and hair/makeup done before entering the stadium/gym.
5. There may be occasions when the squad is split to cover numerous events scheduled on the same day.
6. All levels of performance (stunting, cheers, chants, dances, etc...) will be monitored by the Cheer staff and will only be allowed for performance with their approval.



DISCIPLINE

If at any time a SHS Cheerleader acts inappropriately, fails to obey handbook rules, or causes harm to another student, the coaches/advisor reserves all rights to choose the appropriate consequences.

- Benching (sitting out at games, and/or practices), grade reduction, additional conditioning, practice removal, suspension, and dismissal from teams are all actions that could be deemed necessary.



GRADE POINT SYSTEM

You are expected to follow the dress code, attendance, appearance, and behavior guidelines listed above. Each aspect contributes to your overall grade.

Excused Absences

- Due to illness (absent from school)
- Injury-related appointments
- Funeral
- Religious holiday
- Religious ceremonies
- Religious retreats

Unexcused Absences

- Truant
- Personal appointments
- Serving Detentions
- COC classes
- Job
- 2 weeks prior to a competition

Practice, Rallis, and Spirit Prep

- **10 points** = Full attendance/participation. This means fulfilling dress, behavior, and practice guidelines.
 - Spirit prep takes place during 7th period and begins promptly at 2pm on the days you do not have practice. Your attendance is **MANDATORY**.
- **0 points** = Truant or not fulfilling dress, behavior, and practice guidelines.

*****Injured Students –Official notification of injury and clearance to participation from the doctor must be given in written form to the advisor BEFORE full program participation is resumed.**

Games (cheering/spectating) and Fundraising/Community Events

- **30 points** = Full attendance. This means fulfilling dress, behavior, and game guidelines.
- **15 points** = Infraction of any of the dress code, behavior, or game guidelines
 - If you miss a full day of school on game day or the last day of practice before a game, you will be benched.
- **0 points** = Truant or no communication to the advisor explaining absence.
 - If this occurs, you will be benched for the following game and receive only 15 points.

Absent Notification Procedure: Phone, email at ctolisa@hartdistrict.org, and/or written notes.



PARENT RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Forms:** Sign any mandatory forms before the start of summer practice.
- **Financial:** Financial responsibilities as stated in the estimated budget handout. Deadlines will be set for financial dues. If these obligations are not fulfilled, consequences for cheerleaders may result in limited participation of cheer events and competition.

*****Please contact the Booster treasurer for all financial concerns**

- **Communication:** It is imperative that the lines of communication between parents and advisor remain completely open. **Open lines of communication allow for a better cheerleading program.**

Notification procedures: Phone, email at ctolisa@hartdistrict.org, and/or written notes. Please allow a grace period to address concern, unless it is an emergency.

Other forms of communication: website, practice/game calendar, email, verbally at practices/games

Complaint Procedure: Advisor

- **Parents must positively support, enforce, and cooperate with decisions made by the Advisor/Coaches regardless of personal feelings/opinions.** Without positive support of the program, parents may cause unintentional damage to the morale at all levels of the program.

YELL WITH US AT GAMES! GO CENTURIONS!!!