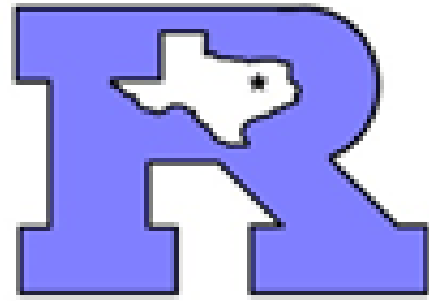


Rice ISD



**Cheerleading &
Mascot
Constitution
2024-2025**

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RISD CHEER CONSTITUTION

Rice ISD does not discriminate on the basis of sex, disability, race, color or national origin in its educational programs, activities, or employment as required by Title IX, Section 504 and Title VI.

ARTICLE I. MISSION STATEMENT

Being a cheerleader/mascot is an honor and a privilege. The purpose of cheerleading is to promote and uphold school spirit, to encourage good sportsmanship among students and adults, to promote unification of the spectators, involvement during athletic events, to strive to build better relationships between schools and to uphold the highest personal and cheerleading standards. Through the development of leadership, cooperation, self-discipline, and teamwork in each individual member, the organization shall fulfill its purpose for the benefits of RHS and its students and community.

ARTICLE II. ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to tryout for cheerleader and/or mascot, all members of the Rice High School varsity and/or junior varsity squads must be:

- Enrolled in Rice ISD the prior nine weeks to tryouts or has received transfer/registration approval by administration prior to tryouts
- An incoming freshman through incoming senior classification
- Must have a GPA of 80 (3.0) the semester prior to tryout in all subjects
- May not have excessive absences or attended Saturday school for attendance purposes
- May not have been suspended, expelled, put on probation, assigned to ISS or DAEP in the current school year, without a review of circumstances by the coach and/or administration
- May not have been dismissed or resigned from a previous squad by coach and/or administration, without a review of circumstances by the sponsor and/or administration
- All candidates must be in good financial standing with the district, and have no outstanding debts.
- Returning candidates must follow the same guidelines and submit the completed paperwork. No one can be automatically reinstated.

Eligibility to remain a part of the squad is determined by meeting U.I.L. guidelines and the following requirements:

- The cheerleader must maintain a grade average of 70 or above in each of the academic or elective subjects, and at least a 70 in athletics or physical education
- Maintenance of high standards of behavior and leadership in all classes, as evidenced by citizenship grades

ARTICLE III. COMMITMENT

Cheerleading is a year-long commitment, beginning with spring tryouts and ending in March of the following year, with the exception of any playoff games, which will be determined by University Interscholastic League.

You must also enroll in the fall semester cheer class **when it is available**. Attendance is mandatory in the class. Excessive absences in the class may result in demerits and/or dismissal from the squad. In the event that a fall semester class is not offered, each cheerleader will be expected to attend practices after school at the discretion of the cheer coach.

You must be willing to make cheer practices and performances a priority. There will be mandatory summer practices.

You must also attend summer camp, which will be chosen at the sponsor's discretion. The cheerleader will be financially responsible for any costs associated with camp, uniforms, supplies that the district does not provide.

It is the duty of the varsity squad to help conduct the summer junior high camp.

There may arise the need to practice or perform on weekends and/or school holidays/breaks. Work and vacations do not qualify as excused absences. A calendar of events will be given to each squad member as soon as possible. Cheerleaders are expected to adhere to the schedule and plan family vacations, work events and appointments accordingly.

You will also be expected to adhere to a diet and workout regime, which will include, but is not limited to, running and lifting weights. Failure to comply with the coach's expectations may lead to demerits and/or dismissal from the squad.

Work and/or appointments will not be considered excused absences.

ARTICLE IV. TRYOUT GUIDELINES

The sponsor will be responsible for the preparation and distribution of a packet of information to be made available to all candidates.

The candidate and at least one parent/guardian will be required to attend the tryout information meeting and **sign in**. **This meeting is mandatory.**

All candidates must attend a clinic, which will be held at the discretion of the sponsor and the principals. Absences will only be excused for school sponsored extracurricular activities.

The candidate must have all necessary paperwork, including but not limited to parent permission, teacher evaluation, copy of the previous semester's report card, medical release and concussion form turned in by the specified date, or they will not be allowed to try out. **There will be NO EXCEPTIONS to this.**

Teacher evaluations will count as a percentage of the overall score (15 points). If a candidate scores low on teacher evaluation, the sponsor reserves the right to discuss the circumstances with an administrator and decide whether the candidate is eligible to try out.

Principal evaluations will also count as a percentage of the overall score (10 points). A principal will fill out the form, numbering the times the hopeful has been in ISS, OSS, DAEP, Detention, etc). They will then reason why or why not they recommend the hopeful for the cheer squad.

Candidates will be expected to perform specific cheers, sideline chants, jumps, stunts and a dance at tryouts. Each girl must also participate in an interview process.

Attitude and commitment during the tryout clinic may factor into the overall score of a candidate at the coach's discretion.

Tryouts will be closed to the public, including parents and families. Only candidates, coaches and/or administration are allowed in the gym during the tryout process and clinic. **All tryouts decisions are final.**

Cell phones, bags and communication devices are prohibited in the tryout and clinic.

Try Out Attire

Each candidate trying out for varsity or junior varsity squad will wear the following for tryouts:

- Solid white tee with no visible logo or writing
- Black shorts
- Athletic shoes with white no-show socks
- Hair needs to be in a ponytail (bows in blue, black or white are optional)

Adjudication

Each candidate will be evaluated by a panel of qualified judges selected by the sponsor and/or administration. Judges scores are final.

Callbacks may occur at the discretion of the judges and administration. Should a call back situation occur, the judges will determine what portion of the tryout process will be repeated.

ARTICLE V. FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Parents must be willing to meet all financial obligations involved in having their child as a squad member.

Failure to make timely payments will result in demerits, which may lead to probation, suspension, or dismissal from the team.

A payment calendar will be made available as soon as the cheerleader is selected and must be followed.

When given the opportunity to fundraise, it is mandatory that the cheerleader participate, as it is to offset any costs accrued for cheerleading. Parents are strongly encouraged to participate as well. Any refusal to participate that results in lack of timely payments may result in dismissal from the squad at the discretion of the coach and/or administration. Any allowances for non-payment or late payment due to extenuating circumstances must be approved by the coach, building principals and financial administrators.

All payments are final and no refunds will be given to any cheerleader who is dismissed or resigns from the squad.

If a check is returned insufficient, it is the responsibility of the cheerleader and/or parent/guardian to contact the financial administrators of RISD to correct the situation as soon as possible.

ARTICLE VI. SIZE OF SQUAD AND SPECIAL POSITIONS

The cheerleading organization at the high school level will consist of two squads: varsity and junior varsity.

Varsity can consist of eight to fifteen girls based on judge's recommendation, grades, interview and teacher evaluations. Those whose final score falls behind the natural point break will not be considered a varsity cheerleader. Seniors who have been on the squad for two consecutive cheer seasons, and is in good standing, may have a secure position on the varsity squad for their senior year, at the coach's discretion. The varsity cheer squad may consist of sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

Junior varsity can consist of six to ten girls based on judge's recommendation, grades, interview and teacher evaluations. Junior varsity will contain the next set of girls based on scores from required criteria. Junior varsity may consist of freshmen, and sophomores.

Should the occasion arise that there are not enough students to tryout for the junior varsity squad, the sponsor reserves the right to eliminate the junior varsity squad. The sponsor and administration will determine the number of spots to be filled on the varsity squad and will hold tryouts accordingly.

The coach reserves the right to move a cheerleader to a different squad at **any time** throughout the season. Reasons may include but will not be limited to an increase in skills, a reduction in skills, an injury that prohibits performing at full capability, or a need or a specific position on another team.

The coach reserves the right to bench a cheerleader at any time, for an amount of time at their discretion, due to disciplinary reasons or for rule infractions.

Mascot

Candidates wishing to try out for mascot will try out at the same time as varsity cheerleaders. The same judges who judge cheer candidates will also judge mascot candidates. If no one tries out for mascot, the sponsor may offer the position to a cheerleader candidate with the highest score not making varsity cheerleader. If no one on varsity wants the position, the sponsor has the option of moving to the list of JV candidates that did not make cheerleader.

Alternates

Alternates will not be named. If in the event that a cheerleader is dismissed or resigns, the vacancy will not be filled.

Captain/Co-Captains

Anyone interested in captain or co-captain must apply and may be subjected to an additional interview process during tryouts at the coach's discretion. This may include but is not limited to completing a captain's notebook and teacher recommendations.

A captain may consist of any veteran senior who has been on the varsity squad for the previous season. If for any reason there are no senior candidates, a veteran junior may try out for captain. The captain candidate with the highest score is named captain, and the next highest is co-captain.

In addition to the captain and co-captain positions, there will also be leadership positions for a spirit leader. This position may consist of a veteran junior or veteran senior that did not make captain, or co-captain or any veteran junior, or veteran senior that only wants to try out for spirit leader. This position will have multiple responsibilities alongside assisting the captain and co-captain. In order to be considered for this position, a candidate may be subject to having a cheer/ spirit notebook, a 3.0 GPA, and teacher evaluations.

In the event that no one is interested in applying or is not qualified for the captain, the coach reserves the right to appoint a captain, co-captains, and/or spirit leaders at their discretion.

All leadership positions are subject to the coach's discretion at any time during the year. The coach may remove or add any qualifying cheerleader in the absence or removal of the leader for any reason as the coach sees necessary.

Captain expectations and responsibilities will include but are not limited to:

- Captains should be the first to arrive and the last to leave
- Responsible for beginning conditioning at practices
- Meet with the coach once a week to plan pep rallies, etc.
- Selecting cheers and chants for game day
- Organizing and choreographing pep rallies with coach
- Showing no partiality within the squad

Captains/Co-Captains may also be asked to be the cheer coach's student aide in order to provide them with an opportunity to work together without a disruption to the student's class schedule.

ARTICLE VII. UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT

Any uniform bought by the school belongs to and will be kept by the school. Uniforms bought by cheerleaders belong to and will be kept by cheerleaders.

***While in uniform, natural hair, makeup and nail polish must be worn. The coach reserves the right to determine which shades are appropriate. Any refusal to change the color in question will result in demerits and/or probation.

***While in uniform, a sports bra must be worn at all times and must be concealed by the uniform. Only sports bras of white, royal or black will be allowed, depending upon the color of the shell chosen. No off color sports bras or any sports bras that may be seen through the shell, including straps that are visible outside the shell will be allowed. A cheerleader will receive demerits if they do not comply and may also be benched for the entire game. Care of uniforms is to be excellent at all times. A uniform care sheet will be provided to each cheerleader/mascot. All alterations to the uniform must be pre-approved by the cheer coach, and will be the financial responsibility of the cheerleader.

Length of skirts will be approved by the cheerleading coach and/or administration, and will reflect the policies of the district.

Uniforms and camp clothes will be selected at the discretion of the cheerleading coach and/or administration. Each girl will be financially responsible for all clothing items and uniforms, as well as any maintenance for each item.

The cheerleader and parent(s) take complete financial responsibility for any articles that are damaged, lost or stolen.

Uniforms, or any article of clothing related to cheer, shall only be worn by the cheerleader.

Uniforms must be worn, zipped, and unrolled. Uniforms must be worn the way they are made to be worn.

Uniforms or any part of a uniform are only to be worn during games unless permission is granted by the cheer coach.

Cheerleaders are required to wear lipstick during all performances unless otherwise stated by the coach. The color will be decided by the coach per performance. Lipstick is a part of the uniform requirements.

***While in uniform, no jewelry is allowed (except team picture day). This includes belly button rings, tongue piercings and any other type of jewelry. Bandage coverings or any other objects (spacer/retainer) inserted in the pierced area will not be permitted. Any violations of this policy will result in demerits at the coach's discretion.

***All cheerleaders will be responsible for their own poms, any article of clothing/accessory related to cheer, and their cheer bags. It is their duty to keep up with it and to have items in their cheer bag at all times. If a cheerleader does not have the required item, this may result in demerits at the coach's discretion.

ARTICLE VIII. PRACTICES

***Squad members are expected to be punctual and attend all scheduled practices.

***Practices are closed to all parents/guardians and/or siblings. NO EXCEPTIONS.

***All practices are mandatory. Failure to attend may result in demerits and/or dismissal from the squad.

The amount of practice time will be determined by the coach and will follow University Interscholastic League guidelines.

***Any cheerleader missing the day of practice and/or a performance will adhere to the University Interscholastic League rules, which may prevent them from being active participants. In the case the cheerleader is not allowed to perform, they are required to follow the procedures outlined by the guidelines of University Interscholastic League.

***Absolutely no stunting is permitted at practice without the coach present. Squad members are not allowed to stunt at private residences and/or parties etc. The coach and Rice ISD are not liable for any accidents which may occur.

***Attendance is mandatory for scheduled practices and any last minute practices deemed necessary by the coach for:

- Football games
- Pep Rallies
- Any events deemed necessary by the coach regarding any sport at the high school level
- Playoff games and/or Pep Rallies
- Outside rehearsals for cheer or choreography
- Cheer class

- Any other event deemed necessary by the coach and/or administration

***Practice attire must consist of athletic shorts, sports bra, shirt and cheer shoes. Hair must be worn up and out of the cheerleader's face.

***No jewelry may be worn at practice.

No gum, candy, soda or food will be allowed during practices. Failure to comply to this rule may result in demerits.

ARTICLE IX. ATTENDANCE

The status of an absence or tardy will be determined by the coach as defined by the Texas state law. Cheerleaders must limit their number of absences, or performance privileges may be revoked. Absences or tardies from any cheerleading activity or event will only be excused for the following reasons:

- Personal illness or accident (this does not include family members)
- Death in the family
- School sponsored extracurricular activities with advanced approval of the cheer coach

Any reason other than those listed above will be considered an unexcused absence. Work, doctor/dental appointments, hair appointments, and non-sponsored school activities do not qualify as an excused absence. Any unexcused absence may result in performance ineligibility.

Unexpected Absence Procedures: In the unexpected event of an illness, accident, or death in the family, **a parent must contact the coach prior to class or practice.** A parent note and or doctor's note must be submitted to the coach upon the cheerleader's return to school or practice. Two consecutive absences will require a doctor's note.

Expected Absence Procedures: At least two weeks prior to the event and/or practice, squad members must submit a written request for an expected absence. The coach reserves the right to deny or accept the absence as excused or unexcused at their discretion.

Cheerleaders are expected to attend school on a daily basis, the majority of the day, to maintain eligibility for participation in activities.

Injured cheerleaders are expected to consult a doctor and/or athletic trainer as soon as possible. Any injured cheerleader sidelined due to injury will be expected to attend all functions and/or events, dressed out, and remain with the team until the function and/or event is over.

Cheerleaders must arrive on time and stay until dismissed by the cheer coach.

Any member absent to after game meetings will receive demerits.

ARTICLE X: GAME DAY RULES & EXPECTATIONS

***Cheerleaders will arrive at the time designated by the coach. Any cheerleader who is late will receive demerits. If the squad has to wait ten minutes or more for a cheerleader, the bus may leave. If this is the case, the cheerleader will receive demerits and will be benched for the next full game. No Exceptions.

***Cheerleaders will perform at every football game and any playoff games scheduled. In the event that volleyball games are scheduled at home before a football game, those not playing will be expected to dress out and sit in the stands, as a group, and cheer.

Cheerleaders will perform at every home district basketball game and any playoff games scheduled.

All cheerleaders will ride the bus to and from out of town games unless previously determined by the coach.

***Cheerleaders and/ or mascots will be given time during halftime to get something to drink and/or eat. It must be finished and squad members back in line positions at the time designated by the coach or the cheerleader and/or mascot will receive demerits.

Every varsity cheerleader and mascot must line up at the tunnel prior to the start of the game and the second half. Any cheerleader not present will receive demerits.

All cheerleaders will be dressed in matching uniforms and accessories. In the event that a cheerleader does not have the required uniform and/or accessory, they will receive demerits and will be required to sit out the entirety of the game. They will not be allowed to leave prior to the end of the game.

***No cheerleader may approach the fence to talk to any family, friends, and/or other member of the stands. This also includes members of the band. Any cheerleader doing so without direct consent of the cheer coach will result in demerits.

PEP RALLIES: Each cheerleader will be expected to participate in planning and preparing for pep rallies. This includes but is not limited to:

- Painting signs
- Choreography and practices of dances and/or skits

- Securing props and items needed for games
- Cleaning the gym afterwards and replacing items

ARTICLE XI: BENCHING, PROBATION, SUSPENSION, DISMISSAL & RESIGNATION

Benching is the temporary removal from performing or participating at a game or performance, at the coach's discretion.

Probation is a designated time period on which the athlete may participate in limited organized activities as determined by the cheer coach. A probation contract may be written for the cheerleader, and require a signature from the parent/guardian.

Suspension eliminates the cheerleader from participating at cheerleading functions and excludes participation in performances and special events. However, the cheerleader will still be required to participate in practice sessions during school hours only. If a cheerleader is placed on suspension, a mandatory meeting will take place with the cheer coach and principals.

Dismissal involves the loss of membership from the cheer squad. All school issued equipment and uniforms paid for by the school must be returned, and all financial obligations must be cleared within one week of dismissal. Once a cheerleader has been dismissed, they are no longer allowed to wear any part of the Rice High School cheerleader uniform. In the event that RISD pays for any part of the cheer uniform and/or supplies, the dismissed cheerleader must turn in all items to the cheer coach. In the event that there is a cheer class, the dismissed cheerleader must remain in the class and participate in class activities until the end of the current semester.

Resignation shall be defined as a choice made by the individual cheerleader that they no longer wish to participate in the cheer program. Resignation procedures will include a letter of resignation from the cheerleader, signed and dated by the cheerleader, the cheerleader's parent/guardian and the cheer coach. All uniforms and accessories owned by the school must be returned at the time of resignation, and all financial obligations must be cleared. In the event that there is a cheer class, the resignee must remain in the class and participate in class activities until the end of the current semester.

ARTICLE XII: DEMERIT SYSTEM

The cheer coach will have the authority to give demerits to any squad member for not upholding the Cheer Constitution, school policy, and/or instructions set forth by the cheer coach and/or administration.

Demerits will affect the active status for a member and are in effect from the time of selection.

Cheerleaders will be notified when they receive a demerit. It is the cheerleader's responsibility to keep up with how many demerits they have.

The coach reserves the right to distribute punishment as necessary for demerits or any other disciplinary action as the coach sees fit.

A cheerleader may expunge the demerits by running one mile per each demerit at the coach's discretion. The cheerleader must set up a time with the coach to run off demerits within three days of the infraction, or the option to run them off will no longer exist.

Once a cheerleader has accumulated 5 demerits, they will be placed on probation, for a time determined by the coach. The member will still be required to attend all practices and performances during that time and sit with the coach. (see Article XI).

***A cheerleader who accumulates 10 demerits will be dismissed from the squad. (see Article XI).

DEMERITS: (number may increase for repeated offences)

******Any misuse or undesirable conduct related to any social media or inappropriate use of any technological device, whether school or personal, and including but not limited to text messages, postings, status updates, pictures, etc. may result in automatic dismissal or a number of demerits based on severity, at the discretion of the coach.**

All policies of Rice ISD must be upheld by every cheerleader, manager and coach at all times.

TWO

- Not wearing appropriate attire to practices
- Excessive talking during practice or while on sidelines
- Excessive talking or apathy during cheer class
- Inappropriate or poor conduct on the bus and/or restaurants while traveling to and from out of town performances and/or events
- Gum, candy, soda or food at practices
- Tardy for runthrough or line positions before the game and second half
- Skipping or excessively late to practices.
- Lunch detention for any reason

THREE

- Talking to people in the crowd while in sideline formation
- Eating/drinking without permission at a cheer function
- Not bringing required supplies (ex. poms, megaphones)
- Failure to have proper attire and/or accessories
- Not participating in spirit week or dress up days
- Office referral for dress code violations, at the discretion of the coach

FOUR

- Leaving squad during practice/game/event without direct permission from coach
- Late to practice or performance
- Public display of affection while in uniform
- Insufficient knowledge of cheers/chants/dances, at the discretion of the coach
- Unauthorized use of phone during practices and/or performances (including summer practices, camps and/or other cheer related events)
- Not participating in assigned cheer events/fundraisers, including but not limited to leaving early and showing up late, unauthorized use of phone or being apathetic in attitude/behavior

FIVE

- Inappropriate behavior while representing RISD, including but not limited to profanity or obscene gestures
- Taunting or disrespecting other team and/or squad, coaches and/or officials
- Showing disrespect to coach, captain and/or other squad members
- Showing disrespect to any faculty, school personnel or school property within RISD and/or any other opposing district
- Office referral for disciplinary reasons, at the discretion of the coach
- Missing a game or performance without prior permission from coach

AUTOMATIC DISMISSAL

- Continual /severe inappropriate conduct -- Coach's discretion with administrator approval
- Any member proven guilty of smoking any inhalant including E-Cigs; involvement with drugs in any capacity including but not limited to using, taking, selling, endorsing, holding, or taking pictures with alcohol or any other illegal drugs as defined by the Rice ISD Student Code of Conduct, Student Handbook, local law enforcement, or as defined by coaches and administration
- Refusal to participate in any cheerleading activities
- Non-payment

- Fighting or being involved in fighting for any reason
- A grade of 69 or below in any class for two grading periods (does not need to be consecutive)

ARTICLE XIII: CONSTITUTIONAL CHANGES

The interpretation of this constitution is the sole right of the coach and administrators. This constitution is meant to be a guideline and cannot possibly cover every situation. Therefore, it is left to the discretion of the coach and administrators to interpret this document and make decisions based on what they deem appropriate and necessary for the benefit of all squad members.

Any changes or amendments will be done so on the basis of what is deemed necessary and appropriate in consideration of any circumstance or situation that may arise within the year, and will be subjected to approval by the coach, building principals, or the superintendent.

This constitution has been submitted for approval to the Rice ISD School Board.