

CALCASIEU PARISH SCHOOLS  
**ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURES**  
MIDDLE SCHOOL

FILE NUMBER: \_\_\_\_\_ DATED ISSUED: \_\_\_\_\_

SUBJECT: SPIRIT TEAMS (CHEERLEADERS, PEP SQUAD, DANCE TEAMS, POM POM SQUADS)

**Purpose:**

This document will offer guidelines and suggestions to both sponsors and principals in the areas of safety, tryout procedures, fund raising, constitutions, travel, public relations, practices, and responsibility. It also assists in the following:

- 1) Providing direction for principals and sponsors in the middle school setting for implementing their individual Spirit Teams
- 2) Limiting liability potential due to the physical demands of these activities

**Philosophy:**

The middle school students who are involved with "Spirit Teams" at their schools participate to promote a cooperative spirit among the student body, faculty, and administration. Through the establishment of spirit teams, middle school students will exemplify the type of sportsmanship that will assist in developing the basic attitudes of good citizenship.

The objectives of such positive middle school spirit leaders are as follows:

- 1) TO CREATE an opportunity to learn, achieve, and succeed;
- 2) TO DEVELOP wholesome school spirit;
- 3) TO DEMONSTRATE loyalty to their school and team regardless of the outcome of the competition; and
- 4) TO PROMOTE life-long learning;

## Regulations:

- 1) Middle School spirit teams/cheerleaders are prohibited from all squad competitions with the exception of summer camp.
- 2) Middle school spirit team leaders/cheerleaders are prohibited from traveling outside the state of Louisiana as cheerleader representatives of their school.
- 3) Middle school spirit team leaders/cheerleaders and those students who try out for the team must maintain a 1.5 grade point average.

## Guidelines/Suggested Procedures for Middle School Spirit Teams

### I. Safety and Liability

#### A. Safety Guidelines

1. All pyramids and partner stunts are limited to two persons high. *Two high* is defined as the base (supported person) having at least one foot on the ground. All bases must have direct weight-bearing contact with the ground.
2. All extended stunts higher than a shoulder stand must have a continuous spotter for that stunt. No extended stunt may brace other extended stunts.
3. Basket tosses or any type of airborne toss must be performed from ground level and must be dismounted to a cradle position by the original two bases plus an additional spotter. Airborne tosses may not land in a stomach catch except in the case of a log roll.
4. All gymnastics stunts must originate from ground level and may progress to a cradle. Only normal spotting into the cradle is allowed. The spotter may not increase the height of the tumbling skill by tossing the tumbler.
5. No partner stunts or pyramids may move through or under a basket toss, and basket tosses are not allowed to be thrown over the stunts. This rule applies to all airborne toss stunts.
6. All roll-ups originating from the ground level into partner stunts

are permitted. Swinging into the same stunt, which involves a hip –over-the-head rotation, is not permitted.

7. The following are prohibited:
    - a. Mini-tramps, springboards, or any height increasing apparatus
    - b. Toe pitches and leg/toe pitch flips, spotted or unspotted
    - c. Free-falling flips from any type of stunt or pyramid
    - d. Knee drops, jazz-sits, and body drops (airborne drops in which the feet do not hit the ground first)
    - e. Front and back tension drops
    - f. Back suspended rolls, including shoulder sit roll-offs
    - g. Single-based spit catches
    - h. Vaults and suspended flips
    - i. Helicopter stunts
    - j. A person in a cradle position cannot be tossed over to a straddle sit position.
  8. Proper cheerleading/dance shoes must be worn to prevent slipping.
  9. All cheerleader activities are limited to their team's half courts during basketball games; cheerleaders may not perform *any* stunt crossing the half court line.
- B. Liability Concerns for Coacher/Sponsors and Administrators of Spirit Teams
1. Spirit teams should be placed under the direction of a knowledgeable advisor or coach.
  2. The Coach/Director/Sponsor should be in attendance at all practices and functions.

3. All spirit team members should receive proper training before attempting any form of gymnastics (tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps).
4. All practice sessions should be held in a school location suitable for the activities of the squads, away from excessive noise and distractions and using tumbling mats if necessary.
5. Training in proper spotting techniques should be mandatory for all squads attempting gymnastics.
6. Jewelry, accessories, and apparel should be conducive to safe performances.
7. Warm-up and stretching should precede all practice sessions, pep rallies, games, competitions, and other physical activities
8. All squads should develop a conditioning and strength-building program.
9. The performance surface, location, and weather conditions should be taken into consideration before engaging in physical activity.
10. Advisors/coaches must recognize the entire squad's particular ability level and limit the squad's activities accordingly.

## **II. Tryouts/Selection**

- A. There are four possible selection procedures. Each school should choose a procedure consistent with its philosophy concerning its spirit team program.
  1. All students who want to be on the squad and meet the criteria set forth by the advisor and the administration will be accepted.
  2. A panel of judges may be used to select squads. Advisors may choose judges from the following sources:
    - a. Local advisors/sponsors
    - b. McNeese State University Cheerleaders/Cowgirl Kickers

- c. National Cheerleader Association or other professional cheerleading/danceline organizations
  3. The student body may elect the squads.
  4. A school may choose to use a combination of the above methods.
  5. Sponsor may select the team but only with the approval of the Administrative Director of Middle Schools.
- B. Before tryouts the advisor should ensure completion of each of the following:
1. Advertise criteria for spirit teams at beginning of school year.
  2. Advertise at feeder schools and home school approximately three weeks prior to tryouts.
  3. Arrange for judges/assemblies with student body.
  4. Run-off score sheets, ballots, and tally sheets.
  5. Arrange for eighth graders or choreographer to prepare tryout material.
- C. Schedule a tryout clinic for participants if applicable.
- D. During the tryout clinic, the advisor should ensure the following:
1. The material should be taught to all candidates.
  2. Both participants and parents should receive permission slips, constitutions, and information on financial responsibilities of the parents.
  3. All participants must meet the constitutional guidelines prior to tryouts.
- E. The following are recommendations concerning general information about tryouts:

1. Advisors should require the students and their parents to attend a meeting before tryouts to inform them of constitutions, costs, time requirements, etc.
2. A group cheer isn't necessary for tryouts, since the judges don't really gain any pertinent information about candidates from these cheers.
3. The committee recommends that an administrator be present at tryouts and during the tallying.
4. Tryouts are a very emotional time for the candidates, a fact which should be considered when deciding how and when results are announced.
5. Cheerleader squads should reflect the diversity of the school population when possible.

### **III. Fund Raising**

- A. All fund raisers must be approved by an administrator before any arrangements are made.
- B. High percentage profits should be an essential element in money-making projects. Advisors should carefully scrutinize the value of different kinds of projects prior to pinpointing which ones are most compatible with the group and community.
- C. The following are guidelines from the committee concerning fund raising:
  1. Be wary of requiring students to sell a quota.
  2. Fund raising agents should be pre-approved by the proper school board official (Associate Superintendent's Office).
  3. Accurate records are mandatory.
- D. The following are examples of fund raisers that have been used successfully:
  1. Spirit tags, ribbons, etc.

2. Candy
3. Clinics
4. Bake sales
5. Garage sales
6. Barbecue, gumbos, spaghetti dinners, etc.
7. Dances
8. Professional fund raising companies
9. Holiday candy grams
10. Video coupon booklets
11. Mother's Day Out

#### **IV. Constitutions**

- A. Constitutions should be approved by an administrator each year *before* they are issued.
- B. Constitutions should cover such items as grades, grade-point averages, rules for conduct both in and out of uniform, reasons for dismissal, time requirements, and selection procedures for the squad and for officers.
- C. Constitutions should be signed by both parents and students and kept on file.
- D. Constitutional revisions, especially those relating to grades/GPA, should be in place not later than the beginning of the school year. Ideally, such revisions should be announced at the beginning of the year and go into effect at tryouts.

#### **V. Travel**

- A. Bus requisitions must be completed 10 days in advance.

- B. Parents may drive students to functions; however, parents must sign a release form to be kept on file. One form is sufficient for the year.
- C. Students should ride to and from events with a responsible adult.
- D. Sponsors should either attend all required events or have a designated faculty member approved by the administration as a replacement.
- E. The sponsor should carefully consider which functions/games the group should attend. Considering the number of different sporting events in our schools today, it is unrealistic to expect the squad members to attend every athletic event. The coach should work with the principal to organize a reasonable plan for participation.

## **VII. Responsibilities**

- A. Coach/Sponsor
  - 1. Spring
    - a. Organize tryouts
    - b. Order uniforms- this is the coach's responsibility and should not be delegated to the officers or the parents.
    - c. Order camp clothes/practice clothes.
    - d. Schedule practices for conditioning and camp material.
    - e. Make arrangements to attend camp.
  - 2. Summer
    - a. Organize and attend practices to prepare for camp.
    - b. Attend camp with your squad for the following reasons:
      - (1) To receive a coaching instruction.
      - (2) To acquire methods to establish both rapport and discipline tactics.

- c. Organize and attend practice.
  - (1) Paint spirit signs.
  - (2) Plan spirit projects.
  - (3) Learn material for upcoming performances.
  - (4) Continue conditioning.

3. Fall

- a. Arrange transportation for away games.
- b. Organize and attend all practices.
- c. Organize and make all arrangements for pep rallies.
- d. Attend all required games and special events.
  - (1) For basketball, splitting the group into mini squads and divide game and tournament responsibilities is permissible.
  - (2) Special events include banquets, Christmas parties, etc.

B. Head Spirit Team Leaders

- 1. Make sure all squad members are aware of schedules events, etc.
- 2. Be responsible for calling squad members when needed.
- 3. Decide which uniform and accessories will be worn
- 4. Act as a liaison between the sponsor and the squad as well as between the administration and the squad.
- 5. Be a team leader.
- 6. Carry out the practice schedule made in conjunction with the sponsor.

7. Make sponsor aware of any problems that arise on the squad.

C. Parents

1. Accept financial responsibility for uniforms, camp fees, supplies, and transportation costs.
2. Provide transportation to events when necessary.
3. Help with fund raisers.

D. Administration

1. Make sure the spirit teams have a safe place to practice.
2. Make sure the sponsor is adequately trained in case of an emergency
3. Make sure the sponsor is familiar with the responsibilities of the job.

## **IX. Suggestion for Practices**

A. Practice is limited to regular school days. Practice is not allowed on week-ends, holidays, or during the summer (except for the week preceding camp), since insurance will not cover the participants on these prohibited days.

B. Limit practice to a maximum of two hours.

1. Allow 15-20 minutes for stretching, warming up, conditioning.
2. Practice jumps, gymnastics, kicks, neck stretches.
3. Prepare material for pep rally and/or games.
4. Ensure that students receive all schedules.

C. Practice is limited to school facilities.

D. Inspect practice area for possible hazards such as pot-holes, concrete deformations, overhead obstacles (i.e. basketball goals).

E. Require all squad members to be at every practice to avoid injury.

- F. Do not let squad members practice in the sponsor's absence.
- G. The sponsor must understand that being a spirit team member is only one part of the student's life and should schedule accordingly.

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