



Vista Murrieta High School



CHEERLEADING Handbook

2016/2017



Philosophy

The Vista Murrieta Cheer Squad will serve as a support group for the various athletics teams and activities that comprise VMHS. The purpose of the squad is to boost school spirit, promote good sportsmanship, encourage and sustain crowd involvement, help student participants and spectators enjoy the spirit of the event, and above all exemplify **Character, Leadership, Attitude, Scholarship, and Service (C.L.A.S.S.).**

The VMHS cheerleaders are highly visible on the school campus and in the community; therefore, high standards and appropriate conduct are essential at all times. In order to earn the respect of the student body, the squad must demonstrate positive personal behavior and cohesiveness, and provide a standard in which others should emulate.

Part A ~ PROGRAM OVERVIEW

PURPOSE

Cheerleaders are student leaders who exemplify and promote school spirit, pride, and sportsmanship. Cheerleaders enhance a positive school climate by exhibiting leadership skills such as respect for individual differences, academic excellence, and modeling appropriate behaviors, in and away from school, at all times.

Cheerleaders are expected to be athletically skilled in the field of cheerleading and both mentally and physically fit. As a representative of VMHS, members of the cheerleading squad will be expected to maintain a higher standard of behavior than that of their peers, both on and off campus. In or out of uniform, cheerleaders have a large responsibility to meet these expectations at all times.

Composition ~ The cheerleading program will consist of three separate cheer squads: freshmen (9th grade only), junior varsity (10th/11th grade), and varsity (11th/12th grade). The VMHS Cheer program is a **yearlong commitment**.

*Manager/Alternate Position- **JV/ Varsity levels ONLY**. 1-2 participants will be chosen based on the coach's discretion. Managers have the same requirements to maintain and uphold. Roles of a manager include the following:

- Being an alternate when member of the squad is unable to cheer (ie- GPA, injury)
- Assisting the coach during practices and games

Academic and Citizenship Requirements ~ A minimum GPA of 2.5 is required for all members of the cheer team, at all times, including tryouts. If a student falls below a 2.5 on the progress report following tryouts, student will be dismissed from the squad. Grades will be checked at each progress report period (ie – 6 times per year).

If a student falls below the minimum at the end of each grading period, the student is considered ineligible. During this period the cheerleader is still required to attend all practices and activities, but is benched for all games, performances and any extracurricular activities until the next grading period. Upon a second drop below a 2.5 (during any part of the season), student will be dismissed from the squad.

Health and Fitness ~ Cheerleading is a rigorous activity and all members are required to be in top physical condition.

Students with serious health problems that are aggravated by exercise and/or which limit full participation for a substantial amount of time should not try out for the squad. Cheerleaders will be required to fill out forms located within the athletic packet, which ensures clearance through a physical evaluation by a physician. Although cheerleading is not sanctioned by CIF, we want to ensure the safety of all students who participate in physical activity.

All cheer squad members will be considered athletes, and are expected to condition and train in such a way as to benefit not only themselves, but the squad as a whole. We are a team, and will function as a whole, and not as individual parts! We will conduct ourselves in such a way as to model a strong, cohesive, and motivated athletic team.

Fundraising: This is a necessary component of every team or group! Money earned is used to further benefit the cheer program as a whole. It is essential that every member do his or her part. Individuals who do not participate in Fundraising will not earn the right to a Varsity Letter or participate in extracurricular activities. There will be several fundraising opportunities throughout the year, and each member of the squad is expected to participate.

Part B ~ Guidelines and Expectations

Uniform and Dress Code: *Failure to wear any part of the uniform or practice gear, as well as not having cheer boxes, will result in the*

documentation of points and the cheerleader will not be able to perform/participate.

* The cheerleader is required to be in uniform (skirt, shell, briefs, approved shoes/white “no show” socks, & bow) prior to arriving at the game or event. **There will be no putting on make-up, doing hair or changing on the field, court, or bleachers.** (The coach or captain will determine whether the liner and/or warm-ups will be worn.)

*** Before any alterations to the uniform it MUST be cleared by your Coach.**

* As long as you are in full uniform, no other pieces of clothing may be worn (Uggs, flip-flops, jackets, etc...). After games/activities DO NOT wear partial uniform. S

* **No jewelry** may be worn during practice, game or performance (belly rings, nose rings, and body piercings)

* Nails must be kept at sport length.

* No visible Tattoos (must be covered)

* No gum chewing or candy during practice or games

* Hair must be pulled back and off of the face. Bright hair colors (red, orange, blue, yellow, purple etc.) are not acceptable. We are a team and need to look like a team.

* All pieces of gear (to include uniforms, bows, poms, boxes, warm-ups, etc.) will be brought by the cheerleader to each event, game, and practice.

* For Practice Days ~ Required attire for practices are shorts, t-shirts, sweats, leggings, athletic shoes, socks. Girls must wear spankies and sports bras under practice clothes. It is unacceptable to wear a sports bra by itself. No loose clothing that hangs off shoulders.

- * Game Days at School ~ The coach and/or captain will determine what is worn on these days. If you show up and you're missing any part of your attire (including boxes) then you will be docked points and sit out 1 qtr of game. If your missing uniform or box arrives in the middle of qtr, you will sit out until the next qtr starts and points will be documented.

Cheer Behaviors and Expectations

- * Above all, cheerleaders will abide by all school rules, and always model C.L.A.S.S.
- * Cheerleaders will be dressed out and ready to practice by specified practice time.
- * Cheerleaders will know all chants, cheers, and routines
- * Cheerleaders will not use cell phones, I-pods, or other devices during practices, games, or other cheer events.

Cheer Behaviors and Expectations – Continued

- * Cheerleaders will not eat during practices, games, or events unless given permission by the coach (this includes gum).
- * Cheerleaders will be focused and on task at all times.
- * Cheerleaders will be respectful of themselves and others.
- * Cheerleaders will be responsible for their actions, attitudes, and performances. Coaches have the right to pull cheerleaders from games/events if they feel cheerleader is not performing up to their expectation or he/she is not reflecting the appropriate attitude.
- * Cheerleaders will maintain a positive and outgoing attitude when cheering.
- * Cheerleaders will use appropriate language at all times.
- * Cheerleader's will use appropriate displays of affection, especially in uniform or spirit wear at games and at school.

- * Cheerleaders will represent the school in a positive manner on and off campus.
- * Cheerleaders will always give the task at hand 100%, and without complaint.
- * Cheerleader will ALWAYS represent themselves with class on ALL SOCIAL MEDIA including text messages. Foul language, inappropriate pictures/videos, hazing or harassing on any social media will not be tolerated. The coach reserves the right to determine the appropriate action that could include dismissal from the squad.

Time Commitment ~ Being a member of the Vista Murrieta Cheerleading team requires a major commitment from athletes and their families. Successful cheerleading teams require many hours of work from each athlete. Our goals include developing as an individual and as a team. These goals take no less than 100% effort from each individual. Therefore, it is important for athletes to understand the necessity of time management. Calendars are essential! Each cheerleader will be given a link to our team website which includes a team calendar (updated a month ahead of time). It is the cheerleader's responsibility to be aware of upcoming events and to plan accordingly.

Though it is admirable for athletes to become involved and well rounded, athletes should take caution when becoming involved in multiple organizations and activities. Outside commitments should not conflict with any student's cheerleading duties. Please consult the practice and cheer calendar before making personal appointments. By committing to the program, the athlete is making cheer their primary responsibility. Other outside commitments must not interfere with participation in an event, game, and/or practice. Although we do promote multiple sports and activities at Vista Murrieta, we encourage members of the cheer team to not overbook themselves.

It is wrong to expect any program to lower its standards because a member of the team has overcommitted themselves. Making wise choices based on your time, talents and interests is a vital part of becoming an adult. Budget your time wisely!

If you are participating in a spring sport, you will be exempt from all cheer duties during that season.

A preliminary calendar will be available online to help families in planning and assessing the commitment required. The calendar could adjust during the course of the year and will include: All summer practices are mandatory. If more than 2 practices missed, the cheerleader will not perform at camp.

* May 5th – Uniform Fittings 2:30pm – 5:30pm Pechanga Room (P118)

Uniform deposit

* June 3rd – Final payments due

* June 27th- June 29th July 11th – July 26st – summer practices Mon –Thur.
8am to 11am

* July 13th - Stunt clinic from 8am to 12pm (MPR)

* July 27th – July 30th – Cheer Camp

Riverside Convention Center – Hyatt & Marriott Hotels

* Daily afterschool practices and sporting events during the school year include: Football, boys/girls Volleyball, boys/girls Water Polo, Wrestling, boys/girls Basketball and other sports determined by the advisor.

* Team Fundraising events, community service events, rallies, and showcases

THE IMPORTANCE OF PROCEDURE: Policies and procedures are put forth in this handbook to ensure that all aspects of the cheer program run smoothly, and that each member has a fair, safe, positive, and successful experience. It would be appreciated if exceptions to the rule were not requested.

At times, unforeseen circumstances may dictate modification of a policy. In this case, modifications will be made on a case-by-case basis at the discretion and judgment of the coach!

* Any cheerleader who is ineligible for any reason is expected to attend all practices and games in full uniform/practice gear and sit where designated by the coach; this includes injured members.

* The entire squad is expected to be at games, rallies, practices, and events on time.

- * Transportation, when not provided by the school, will fall upon the cheerleader.
- * If a cheerleader is absent for any reason for any event he/she must contact the coach prior to the absence. Do not send word with another team member, we will not accept messages from anyone but the parent or cheerleader that is absent. By calling the school to clear attendance will not clear cheerleader from cheer. If we do not hear from the cheerleader or parent prior to practice, game or event, the cheerleader will be docked as an unexcused absence. It is not the coach's responsibility to figure out where you are.

Attendance/Discipline ~ *The school policies for attendance and discipline, as stated in the school handbook, will be enforced. If at any time a cheerleader acts or speaks inappropriately, causes harm to another student, or simply acts with conduct detrimental to the organization, the coach reserves the right to choose the appropriate consequence. Any member who quits (for any reason) will be disqualified from trying out the following year. Any member who quits or does not complete a full season (July – April) forfeits their right to earn a varsity letter or certificate of completion.*

Absence: All cheerleaders will be allowed a total of 3 “Sick Days” per semester. A “Sick Day” will be classified as a day in which the cheerleader is absent from school due to illness and is not seen by a doctor. If a cheerleader is sick before/during/after school, he/she must still check in/contact their coach and it will be up to the coaches' discretion. If cheerleader has limitation due to injury, they will sit out until cleared by a Doctor.

Cheerleaders must inform coaches of all school activities in order to be cleared from an absence/tardy and all vacations must be given in a 1-month advance notice.

➤ **EXCUSED ABSENCES**

- Illness (more than 3 days provide Dr. note)
- Injury with Dr. Note that prevents attendance
- Doctor/dentist appointment (with note provided- 3days to clear)
- Funeral
- Religious holiday & Vacations with 1 month given notice

- Unexpected emergency (contact coach); absence pre-arranged and approved by the coach.

➤ **UNEXCUSED ABSENCES**

- Doctor/dentist appt. without a note;
- Work/job; uniform/dress code violation;
- Tardiness
- Vacation (not cleared 1 month in advance)
- Extra-curricular outside of school.

Vista Murrieta's 2016/2017 Cheer program will document discipline and behavior on a point system. Each cheerleader will have a **30-point** allowance for the entire season. If a cheerleader reaches the 30-point allowance at anytime during the season, he/she will be dismissed from the squad. Points will be accumulated as outlined below:

POINT SYSTEM

- 1 point:** -Tardy to practices (less than 30 min), Jewelry, gum
- 2 points:** -Tardy to practices (more than 30 min),
-Warning for missing uniform piece (assuming cheerleader is able to retrieve missing piece prior to start of game)
- 3 points:** -Tardy to game (less than 15 min)
- 5 points:** -Tardy to game (more than 15 min) plus 1 qtr sit out (discretion of the coach)
-Absent to practice (unexcused)
- 8 points:** -Absent to game (unexcused) this includes not having the proper uniform.
-NO CALL NO SHOW (Absent from practice without notification)
- 10 Points:** -NO CALL NO SHOW (Absent from game without notification)

10 – 15 points:

-Inappropriate social media, bullying, harassing, text messages (All social media)

5 – 15 points:

-Behavior, Attitude, dishonesty

20 points: -Suspension from school plus 1 week suspension from the squad after returning from school suspension.

Uniform: As outlined in the uniform and dress code section of the handbook, all cheerleaders are expected to follow these expectations at all times. If a cheerleader is missing a part of the uniform (this includes appropriate socks, bows, shoes, poms, etc.) he/she will be sent home to change and points will be documented. If he/she is able to return to school before the scheduled meeting time with the appropriate uniform cheerleader will only be documented 2 points for the ‘warning’. Cheerleaders must be “Ready to Go” at the scheduled meeting time.

-Social Media/Bullying: As this issue is taken extremely serious on our campus, any bullying/cyber bullying issues or social media conflicts will result in an automatic 15-point documentation. The cheerleader will be written up and notified of their current point total. Depending on the severity of the issue, dismissal from the squad is left up to the discretion of the program advisor.

-Behavior/Attitude/dishonesty: This documentation is dependent upon the action of the cheerleader and will be left up to the discretion of the coach. It may results in 5-15 point documentation.

Complaint/Concern Procedures ~ *Please follow this hierarchy:*

- 1). Bring your concern/complaint to the coach’s attention first. Most issues can be resolved at this time.

- 2). If then you are still not satisfied, contact the Cheer Advisor in charge of overseeing the cheer program.
- 3). If the above steps have been done and you are still not satisfied then we will make an appointment with the Athletic Director. The Athletic Director and or Principal will not meet with parents unless the above steps have been taken.

Communication – *There are several ways to this to occur. Information may be put on the team's website, e-mails, sent home via a flyer or handout, or communicated by phone/text message. You may contact the coach through several methods as well:*

Courtney Hansen – Cheer Advisor/Varsity Coach

Email – ccarmichael@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Cell phone – (951) 837-1839 – Work (951) 894-5750 x 6797

Claire Esteves – JV Coach

Email – cesteves@murrieta.k12.ca.us

Cell phone – (951) 837-3989

Freshman Coach (TBA)

Cheerleading Handbook Acknowledgement

Signing *The Cheerleading Handbook Parent/Student Acknowledgement* form confirms agreement to the expectations outlined on the previous pages. The cheerleader must follow the rules and expectations throughout the entire season. Failure to follow this contract may result in dismissal from the squad.

Student Signature X_____

Student Name (print) X_____

Parent Signature X_____

Parent Name (print) X_____

Coach's Signature X_____

Date ~ _____