

NORTH EAST INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

High School Spirit Groups Constitution

2019 - 2020 SCHOOL YEAR

Fine Arts students in North East School District will be afforded the opportunity to explore, display, test, evaluate, and refine their talents, based upon their individual development, the Fine Arts Department will provide opportunities for successful student self-expression and personal growth as artists, citizens and life-long learners, fostering community/parental support through school, district-wide and state and/or national levels of performance.

ARTICLE I. GOAL

The goal of this document is to develop a set of uniform guidelines for each spirit organization in N.E.I.S.D. These guidelines will focus on the proper implementation of tryouts, membership requirements, and performance expectations of the various organizations.

ARTICLE II. MEMBERSHIP

Section I. Each member will give of his/her time to participate in required activities throughout the year. The individual should not hold a job or participate in an outside activity that will interfere with spirit group activities. If an outside activity interferes with the student's involvement in a spirit group, the student may be removed from membership in the organization.

Section II. Each member will participate in all assigned fundraising activities to meet his/her financial obligation. Failure to meet the expectation may result in performance penalties and/or demerits.

Section III. The members and their parents shall be aware of the responsibilities and expenses of the individual groups stated in the tryout packet distributed to all perspective members. The mandatory expenses must be paid in full by their respected due dates. Failure to meet the expectation will result in performance penalties and/or removal. **Members and their parents shall also be aware that all expenses must still be paid even if a student quits or is removed from the team.** SPECIAL NOTE: Fundraising money is property of the school district and cannot be refunded.

Section IV. The parents must be willing to support the member in complying with all rules and regulations of the school and the organization.

Section V. In order for a student to be eligible to try out for Dance/Drill team or Cheerleader, the student and/or parent must attend a scheduled orientation meeting. In extenuating circumstances, an individual conference may be scheduled with director/coach before the tryout workshop begins.

Section VI. Students who for whatever reason have been dismissed from a spirit organization on two (2) separate occasions are ineligible for membership.

Section VII. Students who quit dance, drill and/or cheer will be ineligible to tryout the following year. An appeal, in extenuating circumstances, may be made to the director/coach.

Section I. Pep Squad

Pep Squad membership is open to an unspecified number of ninth to twelfth grade students who will specialize in beginning dance technique. No pre-requisites are required but members must be in attendance at summer camps and/or clinics as designated by the director.

Section II. Drill Team/JV Dance

Drill Team membership is open to tenth-twelfth grade students (ninth grade optional to be determined by school). Drill Team will specialize in intermediate dance styles and technique. To become a member, the student must participate in a tryout process and follow rules/regulations set forth by the school. Requirements for competition team selection will be specified in each campus handbook. The director will have final determination in the selection of competition teams.

Section III. Dance Team

Dance Team membership is open to eleven and twelfth grade students (tenth grade optional to be determined by school). Students will specialize in advanced dance styles and technique. To become a member, the student must participate in a tryout process and follow rules/regulations set forth by the school. Requirements for competition team selection will be specified in each campus handbook. The director will have final determination in the selection of competition teams.

Section IV. Cheerleaders

- A. Freshman squad membership is open to ninth grade students only. To become a freshman cheerleader, the student must participate in a tryout process and follow rules/regulations set forth by the school.
- B. Junior Varsity membership is open to 10th, 11th and 12th grade students (ninth grade optional to be determined by school). To become a Junior Varsity cheerleader, the student must participate in a tryout process and follow the rules/regulations set forth by the school.
- C. Varsity cheerleaders will consist of junior and senior students (tenth grade optional to be determined by school) who must participate in a tryout procedure and follow rules/regulations set forth by the school.
- D. Yell leaders (optional to be determined by school) will consist of males who must participate in a tryout procedure and follow rules and regulations set forth by the school.
- E. Competition team selection may be held separately from squad tryouts. Requirements for competition squads will be specified in each campus handbook. The cheer coach will have final determination in the selection of competition teams.

ARTICLE IV. RESPONSIBILITIES

Section I. All members will attend athletic events, practices, activities, and competitions designated by the director. Members must participate in projects to promote school spirit and assigned fund-raising activities.

Section II. Any member who does not meet performance expectations during practice in-class, before/after school practice, or who has one or more absences from practice, may be excluded from participation in that week's performance and/or future performances.

Section III. All members are expected to maintain eligibility. Grades will be reviewed each nine weeks. Receiving one or more "F's" in a nine-week period will result in scholastic probation for three weeks. Receiving an "F" in any two nine-week grading period may result in dismissal from the spirit group.

ARTICLE V. ATTENDANCE

Section I.

- A. Attendance at all Spirit Group activities is required, unless stated optional by the director/coach.
- B. A member may have no more than three (3) **unexcused absences** from activities, meetings and practices. Absences in excess of three (3) unexcused absences will be grounds for dismissal from the organization. Meaning students will be removed from the organization on their fourth (4th) unexcused absence. Students will receive demerits for any unexcused absence and these demerits may not be erased with merits. Cases of prolonged absence may receive special consideration when presented to the director/coach in writing. Director/coach's decision is final.
- C. Excused absences include:
 - 1. Personal illness or accident
 - 2. Funeral or death of a family member
 - 3. Special school activities which are approved in advance by the director/coach
 - 4. Religious holiday
 - 5. Weddings of a family member
 - 6. Graduation of an immediate family member

Note: Out of town trips, vacations, and work are not excuses for missing required spirit group activities. (Unscheduled playoff games included)

- D. In order to receive an excused absence from practice, a member must present a written note (from the parent/guardian) to the director/coach. The note must include the member's name, date, reason for absence, and parent and/or guardian signature and phone number.
 - 1. In case of illness, a parent/guardian must notify the director by email/telephone prior to the practice or performance, and the member, upon returning, must present a written note with the information stated above. (Section D)

2. An unexcused absence is automatically given if a note is not presented to the director/coach. This may affect the student's performance standing or membership in the organization.
- E. When a member is absent, it is his/her responsibility to call a fellow member to find out what was missed and what is required upon his/her return (proper uniforms, meeting deadlines, etc.)
- F. Any member who misses one practice may forfeit performing in the upcoming scheduled performance(s) and/or future scheduled performances.
- G. Any member who misses assigned games may be subject to performance penalties and/or demerits.

Section II. Performances/Games

- A. All members shall attend all varsity football, assigned basketball, soccer, volleyball, and all other designated events. Competition beyond the district level will necessitate further participation (playoffs).
- B. An unexcused absence from a performance/game will result in performance penalties, demerits and/or probation.
- C. To excuse an absence from a game, *see Article VI, Section I, D*. The member will be required make up the assigned game by attending the next scheduled game or a game that is assigned by the director/coach.
- D. Only in cases of extenuating circumstances will a student be allowed to leave a game or function with his/her parents/guardians. The following procedure must be followed:
 1. A note must be presented to the director. It must state the member's name, date of the game, name and signature of the parent/guardian, and phone number. The reason for the request must be outlined in the written statement.
 2. Parents must personally take responsibility for the member by meeting the director in the stands at the end of the game. If the adult who is to take the member does not follow this procedure, the member must return on the bus with the group.
 3. Any exceptions to this procedure must be approved by the director and an administrator.

Section III. Class Attendance

- A. A student must present an admittance slip from the attendance office to the director following a school absence.
- B. When a member is absent, it is his/her responsibility to call another member to find out what he/she is required to do the day he/she returns. (*See Article VI, Section E*)

Section IV. Tardies

- A. Members must be in class, practice and designated functions at specified times. Tardies will result in additional exercises, demerits and/or performance penalties.

ARTICLE VI. MERITS/DEMERITS

Section I. All merits and demerits received by the student will be approved by the director/coach and will be in effect for one semester. A student may cancel demerits by acquiring merits during any semester. The ratio is three merits for each one demerit. Directors/Coaches have the discretion to remove a student from the program after consulting with campus administration any time they feel the student's conduct/behavior/actions do not meet the standards and/or expectations of the program.

Section II. District Approved Merits
The following are examples of merits, but not limited to:

- 9 Straight "A" report card
- 6 All A's and B's report card
- 3 Perfect school attendance record for nine weeks
- 1 Super spirit and yelling at an event
- 1-10 Special assignments by the director

SEE SCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR MORE MERIT OPPORTUNITIES

Section III. District Approved Demerits
The following are examples of infractions, but not limited to:
Students may accumulate demerits at any time following membership selection. Demerits are issued for improper conduct. Demerits will not affect the grade but will affect active status in the organization. All demerits issued must have director approval, and will be in effect for one semester. One demerit can be cancelled by earning three merits during a semester.

- A. Attendance and Tardies
 - 3 Unexcused absences from game or activity
 - 3 Unexcused absences from practice or meeting
 - 1 Tardy to practice, games, roll call, trips, etc.
- B. Uniform
 - 2 Failure to wear proper uniform when required
 - 4 Failure to remain in uniform
 - 3 Wearing uniform outside of assigned times
- C. Behavior
 - 1-5 Not following directions of director/coach
 - 2 Lunch Detention, Before/After School Detention
 - 3 Saturday Detention
 - 3 Insubordination towards an officer
 - 5-10 Insubordination towards director/coach/teacher
 - 5-10 ISS Level One Assignment
 - 5-10 ISS Level Two Assignment
 - 5-10 Alternative School Placement

- D. General
1-10 Director/Coach Discretion

SEE SCHOOL HANDBOOK FOR ADDITIONAL SCHOOL SPECIFIC DEMERITS

Section IV. Consequences and Awards

- A. A member accumulating 5 or more demerits in a semester will be placed on spirit group probation or 15 school days unless merits have been accumulated to offset demerits.
- B. A member accumulating 10 or more demerits in a semester will be dismissed from the organization and may be denied future participation.
- C. In order to be eligible for district-end-of-the-year awards, attendance must be in accordance with the Constitution and the member must be in good standing.

ARTICLE VII. PROBATION

Section I. Scholastic Probation

Receiving one or more “F’s” in any nine-week grading period will constitute scholastic probation. This probationary period will coincide with state UIL guidelines of “No pass, no play”. The student must be passing all classes as indicated on the progress report. The member will participate in practices but will not be allowed to perform, will not wear the uniform and will not travel with the team. This type of probation will affect the student’s membership in a spirit group. Receiving an “F” in any two nine-week grading periods may result in dismissal from the spirit group.

Section II. Spirit Group Probation.

When a member is placed on spirit group probation, the member and his/her parents will be notified to attend a meeting with the director and/or administrator to discuss the consequences for violation of the standards of conduct set out in the Spirit Group Constitution and/or Fine Arts Code of Conduct.

- A. The length of spirit group probation is 15 consecutive school days. Weekends are included in the probationary period but are not part of the 15 day probation.
- B. A student must complete an assignment as specified by the director/coach to remove five demerits within the fifteen-day probation period.
- C. A member violating this probationary status will be dismissed from the organization.
- D. When on spirit group probation, the member will not be able to participate actively in the group (perform or serve as an officer) but must attend all practices, group functions and be in uniform. In the event of probation a member may be removed from an officer position.
- E. **Violation of the NEISD Fine Arts Code of Conduct may result in additional consequences. See NEISD Fine Arts Code of Conduct and Student-Parent Acknowledgement Form.**

Section III. Reasons for Dismissal:

- A. **Violations as outlined in the Fine Arts Code of Conduct and the North East Student Code of Conduct**
- B. A member being placed on Spirit Group Probation twice in one school year will be dismissed from the spirit group immediately.
- C. A member accumulating 10 demerits in a semester will be dismissed from the spirit group, regardless of merits accumulated.

ARTICLE VIII. TRYOUTS

Section I. Procedures

- A. Each candidate trying out for a position on Drill Team, Dance Team and Cheerleader/Yell Leader will tryout in front of a panel of two impartial judges and the director/coach.
- B. All candidates will be required to attend a mandatory tryout meeting scheduled by the director/coach. At that time the candidate will receive a “tryout packet” outlining projected costs, tentative schedules, and a copy of the Fine Arts Code of Conduct, Spirit Constitution and Campus Spirit Handbook.
- C. To establish eligibility for tryouts, a candidate must:
 - 1. Submit a tryout application
 - 2. Take a test covering the material distributed at the first meeting regarding the Constitution/Handbook. Candidates must earn an 80 on this test before being allowed to tryout for Drill/Dance/Cheer/Yell Leader.
 - 3. Be a member in good financial standing with the district, campus, and required outside instruction (example: gymnastics, textbooks, etc.).
- D. A candidate is expected to attend the entire tryout sessions/workshops and tryout. If a candidate misses any portion of the tryout, he/she is automatically withdrawn from tryouts, unless candidate has prior approval for absence from the director/coach. All tryout activities are closed to spectators.
- E. Privately paid instruction for candidates, by current members, is prohibited during the workshop period.
- F. Membership is for the current year only. All members of an organization must re-establish their membership through audition.
- G. Candidates must clear all financial obligations to the school and/or District prior to tryouts.

- H. Candidates for an organization may submit to the organization's director/coach a letter from a physician licensed to practice medicine in the United States, describing any serious physical injury that may have an impact on the student's ability to actively participate in the tryouts. The physician's letter must state; injury, limitations, and date for clearance to return to the activity. The director will provide copies of the physician's letter to the tryout judges, on which the student's name will be redacted and replaced by the student's tryout number. The judges may use their professional discretion in scoring the candidate.
- I. Candidates who suffer a serious injury that may impact their ability to actively participate in the tryouts, may submit a video that contains a demonstration of the student's current skills in high impact activities (e.g., jumping, tumbling, kicking, etc.), if such activities are affected by the student's injury. The video may not exceed 60 seconds in length and must be submitted on the day of tryouts. The use of video at tryouts rests in the sole discretion of the organization director, whose decision is final.

Section II. Scoring Procedures

The following point system will be utilized in all tryouts.

Point System:

3 Judges= 900 (300 points each) and/or utilizing a YES or NO rubric (To be determined by school)

Judges' scores: There will be three judges. The director/coach will serve as one of the three judges. Points will be awarded according to the tryout score sheet. Campus staff will tabulate judges' scores and/or evaluate the results. The administrator and director will determine the membership of the team based on a large break in the scoring array and/or utilizing a YES or NO rubric (to be determined by school). Determination will be made based on tryout numbers, rather than candidate names.

Section III. Alternate Tryouts

- A. Students moving into the attendance area from out of state after the scheduled tryout date may tryout at their assigned home campus for the director/coach if they can provide appropriate documentation that they were a current member of a Drill/Dance/Cheerleading program before moving. The director/coach will communicate the tryout expectations to the candidate and offer placement on the team they feel is best suited for the candidate. This could be Drill, Dance, Cheer or Pep Squad. The director/coach's decision is final and will not be overturned.

Section IV. Performance Auditions

- A. Auditions may be held for performance routines. All candidates are required to audition; unless an exception for medical reasons (as discussed below) has been granted previously by the organization director/coach. If auditions are required all candidates must participate.

- B. Those members who fail to attain a performance expectation (to be determined by the individual director/coach) will be pulled from that particular performance.
- C. While student officers may be used to assist the director with auditions, under no circumstance will they have the responsibility of determining who will or will not perform.
- D. All members (performers and alternates) will continue to rehearse each routine daily. No one will be allowed to sit out of practice except for medical reasons.

ARTICLE IX. HANDBOOK

Each high school campus will develop a handbook whose guidelines may address some of the articles in this Constitution in a more specific way that fits their specific team needs. This handbook should be an extension of this document and shall not contain information that is contradictory to the information contained in the document.