

Soquel High School Cheerleading

The cheerleading program at Soquel High School has redefined a tradition of excellence, and through that is expected to be well-respected and looked up to statewide. You as a cheerleader must be prepared to hold yourself to this level of excellence, and by being chosen as a member of the cheer team, it is assumed that you will fulfill this responsibility.

This cheerleading manual is designed to inform cheerleaders, parents, and school officials about the policies and procedures governing the cheerleading program at Soquel High School.

A cheerleader's role is to promote sportsmanship, boost team spirit, direct the student body in its support of the teams, and help the school achieve the objectives of the interscholastic sports programs. This role makes the cheerleader a strong influence in guiding student conduct at games, and you should maintain the proper dignity in this leadership.

The overall objectives of this cheerleading program are:

1. To promote the type of sportsmanship that will help students acquire the basic attribute of good citizenship.
2. To develop wholesome school spirit.
3. To develop loyalty to your school and team regardless of the outcome of the game.
4. To promote cooperative spirit among the student body, faculty, staff, and administration of SHS.
5. To help SHS achieve the most worthwhile objectives of its athletic activities.
6. To promote the development of lifelong values and skills.
7. To develop athletic and leadership skills.

General Cheerleading Principles

Your responsibility begins before the game. Look sharp, be sharp! You should arrive at least one hour before the game, and have all stretching, warming up, etc. done before the beginning of the warm up clock. You should always be on your best behavior. Other people will judge your school by your conduct. At home games, make the opposing cheerleaders feel welcome, and make a point to answer any questions they may have. It is a good idea to discuss any cheering rotations you will use during the game. At way games,

you will act as ambassadors of Soquel High School with behavior above reproach.

During the games, you will put your full attention on cheering. You will execute sharp crisp motions, use loud crisp dictation for cheers, and execute "spirit" and jumps after each sideline cheer. Be proactive. Be ready for the next time-out before it happens. Know what cheers or stunts/pyramids you will be doing next. When you are on the court, be conscious of what else is going on- for example, during pre-game warm ups, don't stunt if the player warm ups interfere with the safety of the stunt.

Know when to cheer- as your team comes on the floor/field; honoring fine play of your team; offense versus defense; 1st downs; kicks; kneeling when an opposing player is hurt and clapping to honor them as they leave the floor/field; any positive action during the game. On the other hand, know when not to cheer- don't be negative. You are to "lead" your crowd in positive cheers. There may be times when the crowd will start their own negative cheers- even though you may not be able to stop them, you must make an attempt. You may not be successful all the time, but it will reflect on you positively if you have at least tried.

Cooperation. Being part of a cheerleading squad means a team effort, and trying to promote good relationships among each other, your cheer coach, sports coaches, the student body, and faculty.

Teamwork. Being a cheerleader means working together as a member of a team. No one will dominate, but cooperation will prevail and disagreements will be worked out in a friendly manner. If this becomes a problem, the cheer coach will sit down with all members of a squad, and the problems will be discussed.

Captain. The cheer coach may decide to appoint a captain of a squad. This person will be in charge of making sure the squad knows all they need to know and may be assigned certain organizational duties by the cheer coach.

Remember: You are representing Soquel High School, and everyone associated with this school. Don't take this lightly!!

Specific Cheer Rules and Regulations

1. The first required responsibility for cheerleaders after being selected are squad fundraisers. Each cheerleader is expected to participate in fundraisers. If he/she does not participate,

he/she will be expected to do additional duties to make up for the non-fulfillment. It is not fair to the rest of the squad members if each member does not do his/her part.

2. Each squad member is strongly encouraged to attend summer cheer camp. Part of SHS's success will be based on participation in things such as camp. The coach or squad will select the camp they wish to attend.
3. Posters for all games and to boost team spirit will be made by all squad members. We may pick a particular day to make all run throughs and school signs or we may do it on a weekly basis.
4. Cheerleaders are committed to their position and that is why they are not able to participate in other sports during their cheer season. There are rare exceptions to this, which must be cleared with the cheer coach in advance; however, cheerleading still must be the first priority.
5. Cheerleaders are required to attend all scheduled practices, meetings and contests. If a cheerleader is ill, or some other unforeseen event occurs, the cheerleader must contact the coach **in advance** of the event they are to attend. Work will **not** be excused. It is the cheerleader's responsibility to know her schedule. If an unscheduled contest comes up, the coach and the squad will discuss the availability of cheering or working for that event.
6. Cheerleaders, as with any other athlete in any other sport, must attend the **full school day**. This is a school rule, and the attendance office is very firm regarding this issue. You will not be able to cheer for a game if you miss even one class period on the day of a game without a doctor's note.
7. There will be **mandatory** practices during the summer and the school year as scheduled by the coach. There will be **no excuse** to miss these practices. If a cheerleader is in school that day, he/she is expected to be at practice. If the cheerleader missed school because of illness or other excused reasons, it is encouraged to come and sit at practice if you can. This will help you keep up with what the squad is learning or changing. During the summer, missed practices will be dealt with on an individual basis. During the school

season, the following will occur: If a cheerleader misses 2 practices in a week, he/she will be benched from the ballgame and must sit, in uniform, with the coach. If missing 1 or 2 practices a week becomes a habit, you may be moved down or removed from the squad. If a cheerleader misses the day before a game, he/she will be benched for the game. If necessary, we will use a demerit system during the year.

8. You are student-athletes...School work must come first! The coach will be checking grades periodically, and if a cheerleader is having problems with class work, the coach will discuss with the cheerleader the best plan of action for that situation. If a cheerleader knows they will miss a class for a cheering reason, they are expected to make up that work in advance. It will only give the teacher a better impression of that student-athlete. It is at the coach's discretion to request grades on a weekly basis to ensure the student is reaching their maximum potential in classes. We will have a mandatory study hall once a week.
9. Missing a game without prior notice to the coach will be **unexcused**. If a second game is missed, the cheerleader will be dismissed from the squad.
10. Cheerleaders, as well as all other athletes at SHS, are required to have a sports physical **before** the first practice or event. They must complete a Santa Cruz City Schools Athletic Packet, Concussion Information Sheet, and turn them into the cheer coach. Do not wait until the first day of practice to do this!! There are no exceptions to this rule.
11. **NO EXCESSIVE PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION!** We understand that you may have a boyfriend or girlfriend during your participation on the cheer squad. But as a part of the squad there are limits to what are acceptable displays of affection. There will only be one warning for this type of behavior. The next notice will be an automatic suspension from participation on the cheer squad
12. **Talking back to the cheer coach is unacceptable.** You can be released from the squad if you choose to disrespect the coach.

13. Do not talk down to or scold your fellow teammates. It is the job of the coach to properly deal with any problems that may arise. **You are not the coach!**
14. Soquel High Cheerleaders will follow ALL AACCA and National Federation rules regarding cheerleading. Failure to do this will result in suspension from a game, and after 2 suspensions the cheerleader will be dropped from the squad. Some of these things include fingernail length, jewelry, ALL piercings, hair pulled back, proper stunting guidelines, etc. The cheer coach will be making "spot checks", and cheerleaders are expected to be in compliance at all times.
15. **Stunting practice can only take place when the certified cheer coach, or designated representative is present! No exceptions to this rule!!**
16. Cheerleaders are strongly encouraged to attend other athletic events for which their fellow cheerleaders are cheering. When at these events, they are expected to set a good example for the other students to follow. This includes standing, clapping and singing the school song, following cheers, and acting respectfully.
17. Involve the parents and adult crowds as much as possible- but your main responsibility is the student crowd. Cheer to them and lead them in your cheers.
18. Cheerleaders are subject to the Santa Cruz City School District rules regarding eligibility of a student to represent a school at any contest. This includes drug, alcohol, and tobacco use and possession. I also have a "guilt by association" rule that applies to all cheerleading athletes. The suspension for this is automatic and cannot be appealed. Please refer to the Co-Curricular Activities Substance Abuse Policy for specific details.
19. Varsity cheerleaders are eligible for a sports letter. Lack of responsibility toward practices, poster work, fund raisers, and meetings, in addition to actual cheering may cost a cheerleader her letter. Missing games because of family vacations, elective surgeries, and other non-essential events can cost a cheerleader her letter. The cheerleader should

consult with the cheer coach **before** the event to determine if it is excused or non-excused.

20. The cheer coach adheres to the "perfection before progression" stunt theory. We will not attempt a stunting skill in a game that has not been perfected several times in a practice. If the cheerleaders attempt to do this on their own, this is considered an **unexcused** event and will be dealt with accordingly.
21. **Physical Fitness** - It is in your best interest to be as physically fit as possible. The more fit you are, the easier it is to participate and the fewer injuries you will incur. Injuries are a definite part of being an elite cheer squad member. All injuries (minor or serious) must be reported to the coach. This is to ensure your safety and the safety of others. It will be expected of you to do some type of physical exercise on non-practice or non-game days. You must have a physical form on file each year.
22. If a cheerleader decides to quit the squad, he/she must immediately inform the coach. They will not be allowed to be reinstated to the squad for that cheer season, nor will they be allowed to tryout for the following year's cheer season. Anything that has not been paid for must be returned to the coach immediately.

Expenses

While it is desired that cheerleading shouldn't be a financial burden, it is definitely a large financial commitment. The following are considered cheerleading expenses:

1. Any high school mandated activity fee. Must be paid prior to the first cheering season. Cheerleaders pay only 1 sports activity fee through a minimum \$150 donation.
2. Sports physical. This must be completed before the first practice.
3. Personal cheering supplies- shoes, uniforms, bows, briefs, socks, bodysuits, poms, warm-ups, bags and practice wear.
4. Camp - Residential summer cheer camp is \$415.

Tryouts

Tryouts are held in the spring, usually in April. Three or four practice sessions (clinics) are set up prior to tryouts. At these sessions, the prospective cheerleaders are taught cheers, dance, proper jump and motion technique, and possibly some basic stunts. This is when they will be given specific tryout guidelines. These practice sessions are mandatory since they are working help sessions. Supplemental tryouts for basketball season will be usually held in November.

Each person must do the following at tryouts:

1. One cheer that is learned by everyone. They will perform this cheer in a group of 4 or 5.
2. 3 or 4 sideline cheers performed in a group of 4 or 5.
3. Required jumps- toe touch, front hurdler, jump of your choice.
4. Optional jumps- may include double nine, pike, side or alternate front hurdler, etc.
5. Dance- this is also performed in a group of 4 or 5.
6. Tumbling will add additional points.

The candidates are judged on an overall score of 1-5. Items incorporated into this score are precision and tightness of motions, jumping skill, correct rhythm, and performance of cheers and dance, correct voice usage, overall presence, and cheer ability and potential. Tryouts also include 2 teacher recommendations, school grades, and attitude.

Students are then ranked in point order from highest to lowest until all the cheer spots are filled.

The number of cheer spots will be determined by the cheer coach. This will be basically the same, but may change from year to year depending on the number trying out, and the ability of those trying out.

Judging is done by the cheer coach and outside experienced judges. The cheer coach has a built in system to prevent "favoritism or un-favoritism" in judging. Usual number of judges is 3-5.

Season Length

The cheering season begins with the first meeting in the spring after tryouts, and ends with the End of the Year Cheer Banquet, usually in March.

Transportation

All parents must sign the Non-District Transportation Notice. It is the responsibility of the parent to provide transportation to school sponsored activities. Students are not allowed to ride with any other student. They must ride with their parent, another parent or adult 21 yrs or older, or the coach. Any parent who is driving another cheerleader must also sign the Field Trip by Private Vehicle Declaration of Employee/Parent/Volunteer Driver of any SCCS High School Student Form.

Cheer Squads

Fall- Varsity Football and JV/Freshman Football

Winter- Varsity Boys/Girls Basketball and JV Boys/Girls Basketball

I HAVE READ THE SHS CHEERLEADER MANUAL AND PERSONALLY COMMIT MYSELF TO FOLLOWING ALL THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OUTLINED IN THIS MANUAL. I PLEDGE MY ADHERANCE TO THE RULES OF CONDUCT AND BEHAVIOR AS WELL AS PLEDGING MY FULL COOPERATION TO THE OTHER CHEERLEADERS AND TO THE CHEER COACH. IF AT ANY TIME I FEEL I CANNOT UPHOLD THESE RULES AND GUIDELINES, I WILL RESIGN FROM THE POSITION OF CHEERLEADER AND NOTIFY THE CHEER COACH OF THIS DECISION IMMEDIATELY.

MY PARENTS AND I HAVE DISCUSSED THIS MANUAL, AND UNDERSTAND ALL THE INFORMATION GIVEN IN THIS MANUAL, AND WE ACCEPT THE RULES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THIS POSITION.

CHEERLEADER SIGNATURE _____

PARENT SIGNATURE _____