



## **Cheer Sponsor**

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### **Mission and Purpose**

The mission of the Illini West cheerleaders is to build school spirit and promote the formation of community throughout IWHS. Through the accomplishment of this mission, our cheerleaders will become strong athletes, bold leaders, and positive contributors to our community.

### **Eligibility Requirements**

In order to be a member of the Illini West Cheer Team, a candidate must meet all of the following eligibility requirements:

1. Enrolled at Illini West for the 2018-2019 school year
2. Maintain passing grades set forth in the IWHS Handbook
3. Have a current physical on file

## **Practices and Responsibilities**

### ***Practices***

In the summer, practices will start at the beginning of August, as the first football game is usually the first Friday of school. It is the girl's responsibility to utilize the Facebook page to become familiar with sideline cheers. If you do not have Facebook the cheers can either be emailed or put onto a flash drive for you.

In the fall & winter, cheerleaders will have two practices per week.

- Monday, 3:30-5:30
- Wednesday, 3:30-5:30

An afternoon shuttle will be provided roughly 15 minutes after practice is over to return cheerleaders to Dallas City and/or LaHarpe.

All cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices unless excused in accordance with the demerit guidelines. If you will be absent or late to practice it is your responsibility to notify the sponsor AND captains prior to practice beginning. Those who fail to do so may have consequences also in accordance with the demerit guidelines.

A cheerleader must be at the practice before a game in order to cheer in the next game. It is the coach's decision to determine if a cheerleader is prepared for a game. If a cheerleader has missed a practice in which cheers, chants, formations, and/or dances have been learned, it is up to the coach to decide if that cheerleader will cheer in that week's game(s).

School cheerleading should be a priority. If there is a conflict with a practice you must discuss the conflict with the coach. It will be up to the coach to determine absences as excused or unexcused.

Weight Training class is highly recommended for those participating on the IWHS cheer team. Those who choose not to participate may not be given the same opportunities as those who do take part when it comes to stunting.

### ***Games***

In the fall, football games typically occur on Friday evenings {Aug-Oct}. Expect to cheer at 8-10 of these throughout the season, half of which will likely be away games. In the spring, basketball games will be played on various evenings for several weeks {Dec-Feb}. Expect to cheer at 12-16 games, half of which will likely be away.

The plan for all away games is for the cheerleaders to take their own individual activity bus driven by the cheer sponsor. No one except cheerleaders are allowed to ride the bus unless approved through the athletic director.

Cheerleaders will have their own form of transportation to and from all home games. Transportation back to Illini West School will be provided for away games. (If going through La Harpe they will make a pick up/drop off) All cheerleaders must ride the bus to away games. If a cheerleader wants to ride home with a parent they must be signed out prior to the end of the game. No cheerleader is permitted to ride home from a game with friends unless proper notification to the sponsor has been made prior.

Upon arrival, they should be ready to begin warm ups and stretching with the captains. Cheerleaders should always arrive at games in proper uniform, including turtleneck, hair bow and cheer shoes, with their warm up. If a cheerleader is not in an appropriate uniform, she will not be allowed to participate.

During football season it is the cheerleader's responsibility to eat prior to game, have their drink for game, and have used the bathroom facilities. During basketball season we will meet in the Home Ec room and have dinner together. We ask that parents sign up to provide one meal per basketball season. Sign up will become available once schedule gets released.

A cheerleader must be present at school THE DAY OF THE GAME. If he/she does not attend school the day of a game for more than half the day, he/she will NOT cheer in that game.

There is NO guarantee that every girl will cheer in every game. Each cheerleader must EARN the privilege to cheer through attendance, attitude, practice, and responsibility of perfecting chants, cheers, and dances to be performed during games.

During games, cheerleaders are to stay in formation and in the ready position at all times. Games are not a time to socialize with team mates. Cheerleaders must always be focused on the game and the sponsor in order to be prepared to lead the fans to cheer for the players.

This is NOT an individual sport, it's a team sport. You need to be ready and open to be in any position that you're put in. Whether it's stunting or formations. I want versatility!!

### ***Pep rallies and other activities***

Additionally, there may be pep rallies in which the cheerleaders will perform. For these pep rallies, additional practices may be called.

It is the cheerleader's responsibility to decorate the halls and field for Homecoming week. This is typically done the weekend before. You will be updated as time approaches.

There will also be opportunities for service projects and social activities that will require participation, but you will be notified of these events well in advance in order to make proper arrangements. Beyond the cheerleading skills, you need to work on being a leader on your team, in your community, and to other people at your school. Set an example!

Around February you will attend a field trip and "showcase" to the junior highs current 8<sup>th</sup> graders in Carthage, La Harpe, and Dallas City to recruit new members for the following year.

## ***Fundraisers***

In order to offset some costs for the program or to purchase new items for safety or spirit, we will be holding fundraisers throughout the year.

1. Face painting
2. Cheer Clinics {football & basketball seasons}

## ***Uniform/Accessories***

Uniforms WILL be worn on game days to school, weather permitting, unless coaches states otherwise.

The uniforms that are loaned to all cheerleaders include a skirt and top. The cheerleader is responsible for purchasing hair bow, bloomers, socks and shoes.

Cheerleaders must act appropriate while wearing the uniform. Cheerleaders must remember that they represent the organization and their community. The uniform and accessories that are chosen by the cheerleading coaching staff are mandatory.

Cheerleaders will not make any alterations to their game uniform unless approved by the Coaches. Uniforms must be returned at the end of the season. If any alterations are made or equipment is not returned, Cheerleader/Parents will be held financially responsible.

See Anticipated Expenses

## ***Safety Information***

Safety is of utmost importance when performing cheerleading skills, and in practices, pep rallies, and at games, it will be treated as such. Therefore, all skills included in these activities will be in accordance with NFHS and IHSA safety guidelines. Additionally, all coaches are First Aid & CPR certified and are familiar with the emergency action plan in order to respond quickly and appropriately in case of injury.

## ***Specific Guidelines***

1. No tumbling or stunting skills are to be done until the sponsor arrives.
2. Sponsors and teammates will spot all new stunts.
3. Sponsors reserve the right at any time to change out flyers or bases.
4. All bases are to make their flyer's safety their priority, especially when she is in a downward motion.

5. Every cheerleader is expected to give 100% to a stunt regardless of their position.
6. Spotting requires hands in the air at all times fully prepared to catch while facing the flyer.
7. Stunt groups are created at the discretion of the sponsor but will be formed by taking into account size, height, and skill of all cheerleaders.
8. Sponsors may hold a group accountable for dropping a stunt or performing a stunt unsafely, including extra conditioning or “grounding” a group for a time.

## **Discipline and Expectations**

Illini West cheerleaders are expected to be examples in conduct, athleticism, and leadership. Additionally, they are expected to be faithful in attendance and participation to their required activities and maintain the skills performed at tryouts throughout the year.

Failure to uphold these expectations will result in demerits for which there will be consequences.

*See attached Demerit System.*

Cheerleaders will have a good attitude throughout the season and will work as a team cooperatively. We succeed as a team and meet challenges together as a team.

Cheerleaders represent his/her team as well as his/her school, therefore appropriate behavior is expected not only when a cheerleader is wearing his/her uniform, but also at all times throughout the season.

Cheerleaders will treat team members, other cheerleaders, football players, coaches, officials, and fans with kindness and respect, regardless of race, gender, creed, or ability by refraining from rude or abusive language, actions or gestures. Parents should help encourage this behavior throughout participation in the program.

Cheerleaders will abide by the “Zero Tolerance” policy. You WILL be GUILTY by ASSOCIATION even if you are not partaking in the “activity.” Represent your team well and DO NOT put yourself in a compromising position! This includes but not limited to meanness, negativity, and/or drama! Engaging in such activities will be immediate dismissal from the team.

A cheerleader must NEVER be seen smoking, drinking alcohol, or using any other kind of illegal drugs or making obscene gestures IN OR OUT OF UNIFORM, PERIOD. This also includes posting videos, pictures, or status updates of yourself OR others doing any of the previously mentioned violations on Facebook, Instagram or any other social networking site. This also includes any other pictures or videos of questionable behavior. If it is questionable, DON'T POST IT! If, for any reason, these rules are violated and it is reported to the sponsors, the

sponsors have the authority to immediately dismiss the member from the squad. You are an IWHS cheerleader AT ALL TIMES and are responsible for acting on behalf of the school.

Cheerleaders will observe good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support of team mates, sponsors, coaches and parents at every game, practice, or other events.

Cheerleaders should practice healthy eating habits and avoid sugary snacks, drinks and sodas while at practice or games. These types of foods are known to be dehydrating to the body. Cheerleaders should always bring a water bottle to practice and games.

Cheerleaders will pay attention to sponsors and follow their directions, respecting that sponsors are dedicating their personal time to coach and instruct.

Cheerleaders will carefully review the rules and regulations with their parent and adhere to the rules.

Cheerleaders understand that a violation of these rules will result in the suspension or termination of their participation with IW cheer.

A cheerleader will be prepared for all practices, games, pep rallies, and competitions. This includes having her uniform, shoes, hair bow, poms, etc. Proper practice attire consists of cheer shoes, athletic shorts, and a shirt.

A cheerleader is RESPONSIBLE! This includes being aware of practice and game dates and times, knowledge of material, care of uniform and warm-up, care of facilities, pick up trash, etc.

No gum! Hair should be done to where it does not involve conflict with cheering or routines. If you stunt, hair is to be pulled back and no earrings. Nail polish is acceptable as long as it's in good appearance. We like all the girls to look uniform therefore hair will be discussed prior to games. {ex: low pony/high pony}

Uniformity is very important in order to maintain an organized and elite status while performing. This includes games as well as pep rallies or any other events that may arise throughout the year. While performing all members must adhere to the guidance from the team captain. This can be something as minor as wearing or not wearing a jacket, the cheerleader will be asked to sit out until he or she complies.

The sponsor/Captain{s} will work with the squad in the best interest of the team. They make all final decisions together. Discipline, as well as demerits, is the responsibility of the sponsor.

Members should treat the sponsors/captains with respect. The sponsors are giving up valuable personal and professional time for the squad. Serious disrespect is cause for dismissal from the squad immediately.

Any questions or problems concerning the squad should be directed to the sponsors/coaches during school hours. The sponsors/coaches will return phone calls and/or emails at their earliest convenience. Issues should not be addressed during practices, games, or other school events. The sponsors/coaches need to fully supervise while at these events.

## **Grades**

Eligibility comes out Thursday mornings for the following week. Students have until mid-Friday to be removed from the list via teachers email to Athletic Director. If they are not removed they are ineligible for the following week sports. {Monday-Sunday} They are still required to participate in practices and must attend all games. They are required to wear Charger attire, sit with the sponsor, cheering on their team, and be without their cell phone. \*Once the list is final it does not matter if you raise your grade, you are still ineligible the whole week.

*See attached Demerit System.*

## **Parent/Guardian Commitments**

All parents/guardians are expected to give support, encouragement and accountability to your cheerleader as they walk out their commitment to our team and the standards expressed in this handbook. Be supportive and constructive toward the school, the cheerleading squad, and its leaders by practicing life-promoting attitudes and action, and by avoiding criticism and complaining.

Parents/guardians are also expected to be open in communication with the Cheer Sponsors, bringing concerns to them first. If necessary, further concern can then be addressed with the Athletic Director, then the administration if necessary.

Additionally, they should be committed to follow through with the appropriate steps of registration, uniforms, camps and competitions, as well as parent involvement and volunteering for fundraisers, social activities, or school events. They must also be willing to provide transportation to and from home and away games (as carpools) and practices.

Lastly, parents/guardians should strive to be an example in sportsmanship and support within the school community—uplifting athletes on all sides and holding themselves and their own athletes to the highest standards.

## **Anticipated Expenses for 2018-2019 {estimated}**

Camp \$50

Clear Strap Activity Bra: \$15

Basketball Shoes: \$40 {only new members}

Cheer Bag: \$30 {optional}

Any physical items purchased will be property of the cheerleader.

\*Keep in mind that most of these things can be used all 4 years, as long as products are still available.

## **Illini West High School Sideline Cheerleading Demerit System (2018-2019)**

1. Lacking knowledge of cheers/chants/dances during games

2

2. Having anything less than a positive attitude	2
3. Late to a home game or bus departure	2
4. Late to practice	2
5. Leaving early from a game without permission or not staying to clean up	2
6. Using cell phone at games or practice	2
7. Lacking spirit or enthusiasm at games	2
8. Using inappropriate language during games or practice (includes taunting and name calling)	5
9. Showing disrespect to a sponsor or squad member	5
10. Showing disrespect to a teacher or other staff member	5
11. Inappropriate posts on ANY form of social media	5
12. Ineligible due to grades	5
13. Unexcused absence from practice or a game	5
14. Blatant insubordination to sponsor (attitude, refusal to be a team-player, etc)	10
15. Violation of the School Code of Conduct resulting in ISS/OSS	15
16. Illegal substance abuse	15
17. Another contract infraction not listed on this form	?

**Consequences**

- For EVERY 5 demerits it results in the cheerleader being benched for ONE week and additional conditioning. The cheerleader will attend the game in school colors, sit with the sponsor for the duration of the game, while not using her cell phone. The cheerleader is NOT allowed to wear the uniform to the game, however school is okay.
- A total accumulation of 15 demerits will result in automatic removal from the squad.
- All demerits will be erased at the end of each season.

I have read the entire IWHS Cheerleader Handbook and understand all the rules and regulations set forth in it. I understand that I will be held accountable and responsible for all of the information listed in it. I also



understand that if I do not follow the rules and regulations, I am subject to the appropriate disciplinary action. I further understand that IWHS cheerleaders are held to the highest standards possible and I will respect and honor the privilege given to me to represent IWHS in the best manner possible.

Cheerleader Name {printed}: \_\_\_\_\_ DOB: \_\_\_\_\_

Cheerleader Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Grade 2018-19: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Name {printed}: \_\_\_\_\_

Parent/Guardian Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_

Doctor: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Allergies/Other Info: