

North Little Rock School District

Spirit Group Handbook 2022 - 2023

I. TRYOUT INFORMATION

A. ELIGIBILITY

In order to be eligible to participate in clinic and tryouts, the following eligibility requirements must be met:

1. Candidates must be enrolled and attending a school in the NLRSD.
2. Candidates of all grade levels must have passed at least four academic courses in the fall semester of 2021, three of which must be core courses. "Core" courses include english, mathematics, science, and social studies. All students must also be academically eligible per AAA standards. An academic course one which can be counted toward graduation and has a course content guide.
3. Candidates must have a current physical examination (not a wellness checkup) and consent forms to the coach one week prior to the tryout clinic. Candidates must turn in BOTH the application form for the Spirit Group tryouts and the Parent Permission form signed by a parent/guardian one week prior to the tryout clinic. Both forms can be found at the front of the NLRSD Spirit Handbook.
4. Candidates and a parent/guardian must attend the mandatory introductory meeting before clinic and tryouts. The meeting will address dates, tryout procedures and skills, as well as commitment, duties, cost and responsibilities.
5. Candidates may have no more than four (4) unexcused absences in any class and no more than two (2) long forms in the semester the tryout is held.

ALL ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
MUST BE MET PRIOR TO THE FIRST
DAY OF CLINC IN ORDER TO BE
CONSIDERED FOR ANY OF OUR SPIRIT
GROUP TEAMS.

B. SQUAD ORGANIZATION

CHEERLEADERS:

- The 8th grade cheerleading squad will have a maximum of 14 members, including a maximum of four (4) males. The squad number will be determined by either a natural break or the 14th position being filled.
- The 9th grade cheerleading squad will have a maximum of 18 members, including a maximum of five (5) males. The squad number will be determined by either a natural break or the 18th position being filled.
- The Varsity cheerleading squad (9-12) will have a maximum of 28 members, including a maximum of six (6) males. The squad number will be determined by either a natural break or the 28th position being filled.

DANCE TEAM:

- The 9th grade dance team will have a minimum 18 students. The squad number will be determined by either a natural break or the 18th position being filled.

- The Varsity dance team (9-12) will have a maximum of 22 members. The squad number will be determined by either a natural break or the 22nd position being filled.

C. SELECTION

1. Members will be selected by a panel of qualified individuals selected by the coaches in consultation with the building administration and Athletic Director. The head coach will serve as one of the 4 qualified individuals and may select one other coach to serve as a judge.
2. The top scoring candidates, according to the final tabulations, will be placed on the respective squads until all positions are filled.

D. TRYOUT PROCEDURES

1. To be eligible to participate in the clinic and tryouts, each candidate must attend the mandatory parent meeting or contact the coach prior to the meeting. The parent must also submit the application, permission form, physical and consent forms.
2. A bus will be provided for 8th grade students who are trying out during the week of the spirit group clinic and tryouts from the middle school to the high school.
3. Skills that may be judged for cheer tryouts include, but are not limited to: motions, jumps, dance, tumbling, stunting, and overall spirit. Unless the candidate is injured with medical documentation, no video will be accepted.

9th grade students are allowed to tryout and be placed on the Varsity spirit squads. If they are placed on a Varsity squad, they will not cheer at the 9th grade level, they will only be on Varsity.

4. Skills that may be judged for dance tryouts include, but are not limited to: dance techniques, motions, performance, style, and rhythm. Unless the candidate is injured with medical documentation, no video will be accepted.
5. Male candidates are eligible to try out for spirit squads at all grade levels and will/may perform a separate routine of comparable difficulty at the tryout.
6. During spirit group tryouts only administrators, coaches, Athletic Director, and judges are allowed in the tryout.
7. Away from judges and coaches, the tabulators collect, compute, and combine the judge's tabulation sheets. All judges' evaluations and tabulations are immediately locked and stored in the principal's office.
8. When all tryouts for the day have been completed, candidates are free to leave the tryout site unless school is still in session.
9. The final list of new squad members will be posted on the NLRSD Facebook page and Twitter. Members will be listed by tryout numbers in numerical order.
10. If a student is placed in In School Suspension (ISS), ASAC, or is suspended home, they may not attend any school sponsored activities during the imposed suspension. This would include tryout clinic and tryouts.

II. SPIRIT TEAM MEMBER STANDARDS & EXPECTATIONS

A. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Squad members will be responsible for performing at all required events, promoting school spirit, and creating a positive atmosphere at all times.

1. Game Duties

All members shall report to the contest site a minimum of 30 minutes prior to the scheduled start time.

- **Varsity Cheerleaders** will attend all home and away football and basketball games, pep rallies, and at other planned events with the permission of the coach and principal. They will perform at halftime of all home football and basketball games – alternating with the dance team between girls and boys games.
- **Varsity Dance Team** will attend all home and approved away football games and all home girls/boys basketball games, pep rallies and at other planned events with the permission of the coach and principal. They will perform at halftime of all football and basketball games – alternating with cheer between girls and boys games.
- **9th Grade Cheerleaders** will cheer at all home and approved away football games and home girls/boys basketball games, pep rallies, and at other planned events with the permission of the coach and principal.
- **9th Grade Dance Team** will attend all home and approved away football games and home girls/boys basketball games, pep rallies, and at other planned events with the permission of the coach

and principal.

- **8th Grade Cheerleaders** will cheer at all home and approved away football games and all home 8th grade girls/boys basketball games, pep rallies and at other planned events with the permission of the coach and principal.

Transportation to games, camp, competitions and other events may be provided by the North Little Rock School District depending on bus availability.

2. Camp

- All spirit group members are required to attend camp.
- 8th grade cheer will attend the District approved spirit group camp.
- 9th-12th cheer and dance squads may hold a District camp or may substitute a more competitive overnight camp with the approval of the principal and Athletic Director.
- All expenses to attend a summer camp will be the responsibility of the members themselves. Fundraising projects or donations may be needed to offset costs.

3. Cheer and Dance Competitions (Varsity Teams only)

- If competition dates interfere with a scheduled game for which the squad has spirit responsibilities, the competition must be approved by the coach, Athletic Director, and principal.
- Each competitive team may participate in a maximum of five competitions provided they are sanctioned by the AAA and are held in the state of Arkansas. Participation in competitions outside the state of Arkansas must be approved by the NLR School Board.

- All expenses to attend competitions will be the responsibilities of the members themselves. Fundraising projects or donations may be needed to offset costs.
- All members of Varsity Cheer and Dance teams have the opportunity to tryout for the competitive squad. Some of these members may be utilized as alternates for competitions. The alternate positions may fluctuate during the year due to injuries, commitment, behavior, skills, etc., and will be decided at the discretion of the coaching staff.
- If a member decides they do not want to be a member of the competition teams, they may give up their spot. In doing so, they forfeit any money raised to be used toward competition fees/ items. They are also not required to attend practice, competitions, and events pertaining to the competition team.
- 9th grade candidates are eligible to tryout for the varsity teams because they are competitive. Only candidates with high level skills needed for the competition team will be considered for placement on the varsity squad. If a 9th grade candidate is selected, they will be a member of the varsity game day squad and competition team and not the 9th grade cheer squad.

4. Practices and Attendance

- Early morning, after school and weekend practices during the school year will be scheduled at the discretion of the coach. Once practices have been scheduled, work or other such obligations will not be considered an excused absence.
- Excused absences include those listed in the NLRSD handbook or any absence approved in advance by the head coach.
- School events, which keep members from attending any or all of a practice, game, or spirit event, must be discussed in advance with the coach before they are considered excused.
- Members must follow the school attendance policy as established in the student handbook of the NLRSD. Students must attend half a day or they shall not participate in any school activity on that day or night unless written permission is granted through the principal's office.

B. COMMITMENT

Since membership is a voluntary, auditioned process and does not allow for substitutes or alternates to be available to fill vacancies, those students chosen to be spirit group members must make this team a top priority. Occasionally, a student may desire to participate in another activity in order to take advantage of, and enhance, his/her secondary education. When this case arises, the following guidelines apply:

- **Any member may participate in another extracurricular activity only if it is mutually acceptable to, and can be appropriately arranged by the coach and the sponsor of each activity ahead of time. Your commitment is first to the team.**
- **In all cases the final decision shall be that of the principal and the athletic director.**
- Members shall not allow work, sports, school functions, or other outside activities to interfere with cheerleader/ dance commitments.
- Financial obligations must be paid by the agreed and announced deadline. If this does not occur the member may be benched or removed from the squad.

C. SPIRIT GROUP STANDARDS

All team members are required to maintain good behavior and represent the squad with good conduct both in and out of uniform.

1. Social Media

Team members should conduct themselves in an appropriate manner on ALL social media sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Vine, Snapchat, etc. Any inappropriate social media posts, such as foul language, videos of participating in fights, videos or pictures of inappropriate or indecent behavior such as drug use, or gang affiliation may be subject to disciplinary action, which could result in dismissal from the squad.

2. Demerit System

A district approved demerit or point system will be used by each coach and accumulation of demerits **will begin immediately following spring tryouts.**

- Parents will be informed in writing when a spirit group member receives demerits. The coach will also submit a copy of the demerit(s) to the Athletic Office.
- For every 5 demerits accumulated, the member will be benched, which is defined as being in uniform, sitting in an area designated by the coach for one game and any performance associated with that game.
- Demerits will be doubled each time an offense is repeated.
- **An accumulation of 15 demerits will result in removal from the squad for the remainder of the school year pending a review by the Athletic Discipline Committee.**

- **It is recommended that an Athletic Discipline Committee includes the Athletic Director, Principal and coach(es).**
- **Any act that warrants suspension from school may be grounds for immediate dismissal from the squad and will be at the discretion of the Athletic Discipline Committee, Coach, Athletic Director, Principal and the Director of Student and Equity Services.**
- **Any act that degrades the reputation of NLRSD or NLR Spirit Groups may result in immediate removal by the Athletic Discipline Committee.**

Demerits will be given as follows:

Late arrival to or early pickup from practice, game or required activity	2
Late being picked up from practice or performance	3
Hair in face during performance	2
Wearing jewelry in uniform (class, practice, game)	2
Chewing gum in uniform (class, practice, games)	2
Inappropriate behavior (discretion of coach)	1-5
Poor performance (not prepared)	3
Untidy uniform	2
Not in required uniform	2
Arguing with captains	2
Not obeying school rules	2
Public displays of affection	2
Failure to perform	5
Causing conflict between members	5
Unexcused absence from practice or req activity	5
Unexcused absence from game	10
Suspension from class	
(SAC, ASAC on/off campus)	10

Insubordination to a spirit group coach will result in removal from the squad.

D. GRADE REQUIREMENTS

Each member shall follow the scholastic eligibility requirements as adopted by the Arkansas Department of Education and the Arkansas Activities Association. The requirements are as follows:

1. Students participating in the 2022-2023 spirit groups, grades 10-12, must have passed four academic courses in the

semester prior. 9th grade spirit groups must have passed three courses from the “Core” plus one additional course.

2. Senior high, 10th – 12th grades, for the 2022-2023 spirit groups must earn a minimum GPA of 2.0 and pass four academic courses in the second semester of 2021-2021 to be in full compliance with the rules and regulations of the Arkansas Activities Association and the Arkansas Department of Education.
3. Senior high spirit group members who do not have a GPA of 2.0 but have passed four academic courses in the spring semester of 2022 will be eligible to remain on the spirit team provided they are enrolled in the Supplemental Instruction Program (SIP). To maintain eligibility under SIP and be eligible to continue for a second semester, the student must show improvement of at least one-tenth of one point in his/her GPA. To continue participation, the second semester of SIP, the student must have reached the 2.0 GPA and pass four academic courses.

E. OFFICERS

1. The captains(s) will be elected from and by cheerleader/dance team members with the coach being permitted one vote. The captain(s) will keep a record of all activities and notify members of practices, bus schedules, game times, etc.
2. The head coach has the right to veto or dismiss the captains of their duties and will notify the building principal and the athletic director before dismissal takes place.

F. UNIFORMS

1. The uniform is the squad members’ most prized possession. Members must be in complete uniform before performing.
2. Uniforms will not be bought, made, remodeled, or worn by another person in any way without the written permission of the coach. The participant is responsible for the upkeep of the uniforms. Each member shall have all uniforms belonging to the school cleaned according to manufacturer label and returned to the coach within one week of the final activity.
3. The uniforms are the property of the NLRSD and selection shall be made by the coach and the athletic director. Once a uniform is selected and approved, the entire uniform is to be worn by each of the members for all activities and on the day of a game/contest unless excused by the coach. Each member will be responsible for repair of damage or loss at full replacement costs.
4. Athletic department approved uniforms shall be the apparel worn by the members while representing the school at coached events. Members shall not deviate from the standard uniforms by mixing various combinations or personal warm ups without written permission from the coach.

G. MASCOT

1. Mascot participation and conduct shall be regulated by the established athletic rules and regulations and by the cheerleading coach. The mascot is expected to abide by the policies set forth in the NLRSD Spirit Handbook.
2. The mascot will be chosen in the fall and must be a junior or senior. They will

be previewed and approved by the coach and principal in such areas as grades, behavior, etc.

3. The mascot will be chosen on the basis of a one-minute skit tryout in uniform to be judged by a 3-member faculty panel. A point system will be used. Scores will be tallied and all candidates for mascot will be informed of the panel's decision.
4. The mascot is required to wear the official mascot outfit to pep assemblies and athletic events and will represent the NLRSD at other events deemed necessary and proper.

H. OTHER

Any issue or infraction not listed in the handbook will be discussed by the Athletic Disciplinary Committee and appropriate action will be taken.

NORTH LITTLE ROCK SCHOOL DISTRICT PARENT PERMISSION FORM

Dear Parent:

Your child has shown a desire to become a cheerleader/dance team member with the North Little Rock School District. If chosen, there are certain responsibilities and obligations, which he/she must assume in order to qualify and remain a member of the squad.

You should have received a Spirit Handbook and attended an informational meeting where you received a list of the rules and regulations. He/she will also be expected to follow the Arkansas Activities Association's "Guidelines for Eligibility". Please read the information with your child and then sign the form below if you want your child to participate in tryouts.

_____ has my permission to participate in the clinic and tryout in hopes of being selected as a Cheerleader/Dance team member. My signature below acknowledges the following:

1. I have read the spirit group rules and regulations;
2. I agree to assist the spirit group coach in helping my daughter/son comply with these rules;
3. I understand that the school assumes no financial obligation for any injury that may occur, and
4. I understand and agree that all finances must be completely paid by the due date agreed upon.

Parent Signature

Date

Financial Agreement

A basic uniform of skirt or trousers with a shell top will be provided by the North Little Rock School District. Parental financial obligations are: shoes, socks, bloomers, body suits, pompoms, warm-ups, bag, spirit camp fees, camp clothes, and the repair of damage or loss of the district provided uniform at full replacement cost. A damaged uniform may be defined as but not limited to stains, rips, tears, or burns. Other items are optional and not required for participation. Any item purchased by the student becomes the property of the student and money invested in these items will not be refunded. If a member leaves a spirit group because of demerits or loss of interest, no money raised through fund-raising activities will be refunded.

Parent Signature

Student Signature