

Criteria for Cheerleaders and Dance Teams **2025-2026 / Selection and Participation**

The following requirements are a matter of Knox County Board of Education records and must be adhered to exactly as written. Parents and Students must abide by these requirements for selecting Cheerleaders and Dance Teams. Please read and review carefully.

Section 1 Students may participate only at the school where he/she is enrolled and in regular attendance, enrolled and in regular attendance at a feeder school (5th graders / 8th graders) or must have a KCS transfer form on file. (Tryout Included) A student may only tryout at one KCS school per calendar year. Students must attend school for 3.5 hours to participate in tryouts or games.
Schools may only have one tryout for the upcoming school year.

Section 2 Home School Students - Minimum Eligibility Requirements

- A. In order to tryout, student must be enrolled in home school conducted by his or her parent(s) or legal guardian(s), Church-related Umbrella School or Accredited Online School (or other Home School facilitator.)
- B. The student must have a legal residence within the school zone where he/she tryout.
- C. The student must be taking a minimum of five (5) academic subjects which would count toward graduation/promotion at the school where the student wishes to participate.

Section 3 The principal of each middle/secondary school shall select a sponsor(s) to coordinate the selection and function of each team the school sponsors.

Section 4 Eligibility Rules

A. Middle School and High School

- 1. A student who engages in practice or try outs with a school in which the student is enrolled shall be ineligible to cheer the following season if the student enrolls in another school without a corresponding change in the residence of the student's parents.
- 2. Faculty recommendations or approvals are not permissible.

B. Middle School

- 1. A student shall have three consecutive years to participate from the date he/she is first enrolled in the sixth grade
- 2. No student shall be eligible to participate during any school year if he/she becomes fifteen (15) years of age on or before August 1st.

3. A student shall have been promoted academically to the next higher grade.
4. Academic Eligibility
 - a. Students must have a “C” average the prior Semester grading period to tryout.
 - b. Students must maintain a “C” average to be eligible to participate.
 - All subjects are included in determining grade point average.
 - Averages are not to be rounded up.

C. High School

1. The student must earn five credits the preceding school year if less than 24 credits are required for graduation or six credits the preceding school year if 24 or more credits are required for graduation. All credits must be earned by the first day of the school year. Academic eligibility for a student is based on the requirements of the school the student was attending at the conclusion of the previous school year. Knox County Schools requires 28 credits for graduation.

2. No student shall be eligible to participate during any school year if he/she becomes nineteen years of age on or before August 1st.

3. A student shall be ineligible to try out if he/she attended a secondary school, or schools, for eight semesters. Attendance of forty school days of any semester shall be regarded as a “semester” under this rule. If a student participates during a period of attendance, any number of days less than forty, he/she shall be charged with a semester of attendance.

4. A student who registers for two or more ninth grade subjects after having completed one school year in the eighth grade shall be classified as a high school student for participation purposes.

Section 5 Tryout Procedures

- A. Students interested in trying out for the cheerleading squad and dance team shall turn in their names to the sponsor prior to a date specified by the sponsor and cleared by the principal. The sponsor shall refer these names to the guidance department for certification of scholastic, attendance, and age eligibility.

- B. Before tryouts, each student shall turn in to the sponsor a signed and dated parent permission form stating that they understand the selection criteria, school policies and that they agree to permit their son/daughter to try out. This form shall be kept on file in the principal's office for three years from date signed. The sponsor shall keep a copy of this agreement for three years from date signed.
- C. Students must have a medical examination, ***per TSSAA/TMSAA Handbook which includes a doctor of medicine, osteopathic physician, physician assistant, or certified nurse practitioner stating that the student has passed a physical examination,*** prior to try-outs. These physicals must be dated on or after April 15th. Any known medical condition, which might interfere with active participation, should be recorded on the medical form (ex. Asthma, heart condition, epilepsy, diabetes, etc.)
- D. Selection of cheerleader and dance teams shall be by the selection committee.

Alternate Video Tryout Procedure

- E. Injury - Cheerleader candidates will be allowed to provide video to tryout in the case of an extreme injury documented with physician's letter explaining the specific injury and restrictions prior to beginning the tryout. The candidate MUST provide any video footage submitted for tryout that highlights the required skills in order for judges to award points appropriately. The candidate must complete all aspects of the program not restricted by the injury identified in the physician's letter.
- Video must show skills performed on gym floor or similar surface (no Spring Floor)
 - All video footage must be no more than (1) year old.
 - The candidate's name may not appear on the video.
 - The video must reach the cheer coach or athletic director (24) hours prior to the tryout.
- F. School Related Conflict, (and school conflict only) - All local conflicts that can be worked around should still be worked, if at all possible (such as track & field meets), those girls go first or whatever has been done in the past.
- When the student athlete finishes their last day of the clinic that they can attend
 - All others will leave (this is a closed tryout like others are on tryout day)
 - They will change into the cheer tryout required uniform or dress.
 - The coach will video the entire tryout from start to finish.
 - Video will be presented to the judges in their spot on the tryout night with the random draw of the numbers as with all others.
- They must understand if there are call backs for certain skills, only the ones on the video will be able to be shown.
- G. A tryout packet will be provided to all candidates. The packet will include clinic information, sample scoresheet, and pertinent information for tryout.
- H. Due to federal and state privacy laws protecting student records, a student or parent shall not view the evaluation forms of other participants.

Section 6 Selection criteria by selection committee

- A. The selection committee shall be composed of a minimum of three and a maximum of five members that have no connection with the immediate school or students trying out. These members, selected by the school's sponsor, shall each have a minimum of two years' experience as a college cheerleader/pom poms squad member, dance team member, cheerleading sponsor/pom poms squad sponsor/dance team sponsor or instructor in a national cheerleader/pom poms squad/dance team association camp.
- B. The selection committee shall score each student independently of each other. The candidates will be judged on criteria developed by the Knox County School System.
- C. Scoring and tallying shall be supervised by a school administrator. All scores and tallies are to be kept on file in the principal's office for three years from the date signed. Scores and tallies are confidential and may be released only at the direction of the Superintendent or his/her designee.
- D. Tryouts are closed. The only people allowed in tryouts will be judges, participants, cheer coaches, school administrators, and score tabulators.
- E. Judging will be done with a minimum of (3) outside judges and (1) score for the coach. Coaches will judge during clinic days and score will be added to score sheet prior to tryout day. (Coach- 25% and Judges-75%)

Section 7 A maximum of sixteen members are allowed on the court or mat during the game except at halftime. Keep safety in mind, less than sixteen (16) is recommended for gyms with limited space.

Section 8 Selected members shall serve only one academic year unless they are reselected for future participation.

Section 9 A progressive discipline policy is to be established at each school by the sponsor and approved by the principal detailing squad/team requirements, discipline and a progressive methodology regarding disciplinary actions. The policy shall include the process for removing a participant from the squad/team. Parents are to be given a copy of these rules and discipline policy before tryouts begin.

Section 10 Transportation to games, practices and camps shall be the responsibility of the students' parents, unless furnished by the individual school, and under the supervision of the principal's designee.

Section 11 Team/squad members are **REQUIRED** to participate in the Knox County Schools' athletic insurance program.

Section 12 All fund raising, and expenditures shall be supervised by the sponsor and approved by the principal/school board.

Section 13 Uniforms

A. High School

All cheerleader uniforms and paraphernalia are property of the Knox County Schools. The cost of cheerleading and uniforms will be treated as any other non-revenue sport in each school. Parents will be responsible for the cost of their child's personal items only (cheerleading camps, shoes, socks, jacket, etc.). Parents will not be responsible for any fees or uniform cost unless items are lost or damaged through irresponsible use or care. Only selected cheerleaders are to participate in fund raising for cheerleading purposes. School principals are to ensure that personal item costs will not become cost prohibitive for any student.

B. Middle School

School principals shall insure that the cost of being a cheerleader does not keep any qualified student from being eligible.



MIDDLE SCHOOL CHEERLEADER JUDGING FORM

Candidate's Number _____

Judge # _____

Scoring: 1 (low) to 5 (high)

I. Individual Cheer

a.	Entrance – Enthusiasm – Spirit - Gymnastics	0	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Appearance and Smile	0	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Incorporation of Jump	0	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Projection - Voice Clarity	0	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Poise and Confidence	0	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Sharpness	0	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Gymnastics	0	1	2	3	4	5

SUBTOTAL _____

II. Jumps

a.	Required	0	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Required	0	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Optional	0	1	2	3	4	5

SUBTOTAL _____

III. Dance

a.	Synchronization	0	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Motions	0	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Knowledge of Routine	0	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Eye Contact – Facial Expression	0	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Incorporation of Jump	0	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Overall Performance of Dance	0	1	2	3	4	5

SUBTOTAL _____

IV. Group Chant

a.	Projection	0	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Poise and Confidence	0	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Sharpness	0	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Synchronization	0	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Group Awareness	0	1	2	3	4	5

SUBTOTAL _____

TOTAL _____

Judge's Signature on File _____

Judge's Number _____

Date _____



HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADER JUDGING FORM

Judge No. _____

No. _____

JUDGING FORM

I. Cheer

- A. Appearance (0-10) _____
- B. Eye Contact/Expression/Confidence (0-10) _____
- C. Projection/Voice Clarity (0-10) _____
- D. Sharpness (0-10) _____
- E. Overall performance of cheer (0-10) _____
- F. Jump (0-15) _____
- G. Incorporation (0-15) _____
- H. Motions (0-20) _____

II. Chant

- A. Eye contact/Facial Expression (0-10) _____
- B. Projection/Voice clarity (0-10) _____
- C. Sharpness (0-10) _____
- D. Motions (0-20) _____

III. Dance

- A. Eye contact/Facial expression (0-10) _____
- B. Synchronization (0-10) _____
- C. Knowledge of routine (0-10) _____
- D. Overall performance of dance (0-10) _____
- E. Motions (0-20) _____

SUBTOTAL _____



HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADER JUDGING FORM

OPTIONAL (Use at least 2 categories – can use all 3)

IV. JUMPS

A. Jump 1 (0-10)

B. Jump 2 (0-10)

C. Jump 3 (0-15)

V. TUMBLING

A. Skill 1 (0-10)

B. Skill 2 (0-10)

C. Skill 3 (0-15)

VI. STUNTS

A. Stunt 1 (0-10)

B. Stunt 2 (0-10)

C. Stunt 3 (0-15)

Subtotal

Subtotal (pg. 1)

TOTAL
