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PURPOSE AND PHILOSOPHY

- A. **PURPOSE OF MANUAL:** This manual has been prepared to provide a better understanding of the regulations and policies pertaining to dance team members of MSHSAA member schools and the provisions for the dance teams at the MSHSAA sponsored events. This publication will serve as a guide to the participating schools and will provide for greater consistency. Supplementary information relating to dance teams may be included in the MSHSAA Journal or a Special Bulletin to all schools.
- B. **PHILOSOPHY OF INTERSCHOLASTIC ACTIVITIES:** Interscholastic activities are intended to supplement the secondary curricular program. These activities can provide the student with educational experiences and learning outcomes that contribute toward the development of good citizenship. This can be accomplished only when the emphasis is placed upon teaching "through school activities." Interscholastic activities can be justified only when this is its primary philosophy and purpose.
- C. **PHILOSOPHY OF DANCE TEAMS:** Being a dance team member is a privilege and honor. Dance team members should be the school's most effective student leaders. Dance team members have the responsibility to serve as a performing group for the various interscholastic activity programs within the school. The areas of entertainment and competition should be placed in perspective within the educational program. These activities should serve to develop leadership, confidence and skill.

Dance teams are in a position of great influence and high standards of conduct are essential. Personal behavior communicates! Appropriate behavior will help earn the respect of the student body and this is the core of developing effective school spirit and student involvement. Dance teams are a very important component of the interscholastic program. A clear minded assessment of the basics will help these young leaders face the challenges of today.

- D. **SUPERVISION OF DANCE TEAMS, PLAYERS AND FANS:** MSHSAA By-Laws hold a school responsible, both at home and away, for the conduct of its players, students, coaches, and fans. Coaches and sponsors are required to supervise their respective groups of young men and women. A coach's respect for others and school property is necessary in order to instill in his/her students a respect for others and school property. Students staying overnight in hotels or motels in conjunction with any interscholastic athletic contest should be well chaperoned. The good conduct of students will leave a good impression for the entire school.

SECTION 1: USING THIS MANUAL

All dance team coaches and principals are urged to read the instructions in this manual carefully. Information on eligibility standards, tournament regulations and suggestions for conduct and sportsmanship are included in the manual.

Dance teams shall be defined as **dance groups**, **pom-pom squads**, **winter guard** and any other school performing group that primarily involves dance. (By-Law 280.1)

NOTE: Beginning this year, new wording has been underlined, and areas of emphasis are in bold text.

SECTION 2: GENERAL INFORMATION AND ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS

- A. **INTRODUCTION:** Being selected as a dance team member is a privilege and honor which carries with it many responsibilities.

It should be understood that your appearance and conduct at dance team activities will reflect on your school. Those who chose you for the position did so because they think you will make a favorable impression and it is your responsibility to live up to their expectations. A dance team member is one of the school's most effective, visible and powerful student leaders and the person who Makes Things Happen! The challenge facing today's young leaders rests in a clear minded assessment of basics.

- B. **OBJECTIVES:** Once the dance team has been selected, the coach should see that a list of objectives is established to serve as goals that the group will attempt to attain. This list should include the following in addition to specific outcomes which might be unique to your school.
1. To promote the type of sportsmanship that will help students acquire the basic attributes of good citizenship.
 2. To develop a wholesome school spirit.
 3. To develop loyalty to your school.
 4. To promote a cooperative spirit between the student body and the faculty and the school administration.
 5. To help your school achieve the most worthwhile educational objectives of its interscholastic activities program.
- C. **RESPONSIBILITY FOR SUPERVISION:** No individual student, team, or activities group shall be permitted to participate in interscholastic events without being accompanied and supervised by a member of the

school faculty or administrative staff of the applicable member school. A school faculty member or administrator for the applicable member school must be present at all events and practices in which cheerleaders participate whose primary responsibility is to supervise the cheerleaders. It is not allowable for one faculty member from one school in a multiple high school/middle school district to supervise all students of all schools of the multiple high school/middle schools districts under this provision. (By-Law 103)

D. STANDARDS FOR DANCE TEAM COACHES:

1. First Aid Requirement: A school head cheerleader coach, dance team coach and directors of other similar groups who are entering secondary school coaching for the first time or after being out of coaching for more than three years shall be required to satisfactorily complete an MSHSAA Sports First Aid Course as a prerequisite to coaching for a head coach position and within the first year of coaching as an assistant coach. (By-Law 151.0)
2. Rules Meeting Attendance: Each school shall be responsible for requiring its head cheerleader coach and head dance team coach(es) to attend an MSHSAA spirit rules meeting. When a coach/director does not attend, the school shall justify the absence in writing to the MSHSAA office. (By-Law 152.0)

The safety regulations contained in the National Federation Spirit Rule Book and the MSHSAA Cheerleader and Dance Team Manual shall be followed. All dance team coaches must read and understand the regulations contained in this publication.

3. Approval of Non-Certified Cheerleading Coaches and Dance Team Coaches: A non-faculty head coach (cheerleading or dance team) who does not possess a professional teaching certificate must successfully complete the MSHSAA Coaches Education Program as a prerequisite to approval. A non-faculty assistant coach must satisfactorily complete the MSHSAA Coaches Education Program as a prerequisite for approval to serve in a subsequent school year.

E. STUDENT ELIGIBILITY STANDARDS FOR DANCE TEAMS: All dance team members shall meet the standards listed under By-Laws 100, 105, 210-219, 231, and 280 of the MSHSAA Official Handbook.

1. Dance teams shall be allowed a maximum of four in-state or out-of-state contests (competitive events) during the school year (from the opening day of school to the official closing day at the end of the academic year).
 - These activities shall meet the following standards:
 - a. The safety regulations contained in MSHSAA By-Law 105 or any which are more restrictive that are established by the event sponsor shall be followed.
 - b. Any dance team event which involves students from more than one school sponsored by a nonschool organization or a

college or university or which will involve schools from other states shall have the approval of the Board of Directors. Application for approval shall be submitted no later than 30 days prior to the event.

An interschool dance team event sponsored by a member school which involves only Missouri schools shall have the approval of the high school administrator.

- c. Events involving students from more than two schools approved for commercial or promotional purposes and which cause a loss of class time shall not be approved for schools outside their respective local communities.
 - d. This section shall not be interpreted to prohibit a local board of education from adopting any higher standards that it considers appropriate for its school community.
 - e. A school that violates any of these standards shall be suspended from participation in any interscholastic dance team activity for a period not to exceed 365 days. It shall further be considered a violation for member schools to participate in an interscholastic dance team event with a member school so suspended. **(By-Law 281.0)**
2. Awards: **Only** symbolic awards and a **merchandise award with a manufacturer's suggested retail value not to exceed \$25.00** are permitted. No cash awards shall be offered. (See By-Law 231.2 a & c for definition of allowable awards.) All awards shall be made by the school or by the organization sponsoring a dance team contest as permitted in By-Law 281 above. (This standard does not prohibit a school from accepting expenses for transportation, meals for students, and other similar expenses.) **(By-Law 282.1)**
3. Physical Exams and Insurance:
- a. The school shall require of each student participating in dance team activities a certificate of an issued physical signed and authorized by a physician, advanced nurse practitioner in a written collaborative practice with a physician, or a certified physician's assistant in collaboration with a sponsoring physician stating that the individual is physically able to participate in dance team activities of the school. A student shall not be permitted to practice or compete for a school until a complete, signed certificate is on file at the school. The medical certificate is valid for the purpose of this rule if issued on or after February 1 of the previous school year.
 - b. A student shall not be permitted to participate in any dance team activity for a school until it has verification that she has basic accident insurance coverage. **(By-Law 283)**
4. Certification of Dance Teams Eligibility Using the MSHSAA Online Membership System:
- a. Each student, prior to participating in an interscholastic contest, must be certified as eligible through the MSHSAA Online

Membership System by an administrator of the junior or senior high school the student attends. Changes in eligibility at the beginning of second semester shall be made on the system by an administrator.

- b. New additions shall be certified as eligible as described above prior to allowing the student to participate in an interscholastic contest.
 - c. If a participant is omitted from the eligibility certification process in error and is certified in writing by the principal to have been eligible at the time of the participation, the Board of Directors shall have discretionary authority to determine whether a penalty is appropriate and the nature and duration of such penalty. The principal shall submit a report to the executive director explaining the circumstances of the omission error. (By-Law 284.1)
5. Dance Team Conditioning Requirements: Each squad must have a minimum of 10 days of conditioning practice and each individual must have participated in a minimum of 10 school conditioning practices on 10 different days during the three consecutive weeks immediately preceding the first calendar date on which the first dance team activity is scheduled. (By-Law 285.0)
 6. A school that violates any of these standards shall be suspended from participation in any interscholastic dance team activity for a period not to exceed 365 days. It shall further be considered a violation for member schools to participate in an interscholastic dance team event with a member school so suspended.” (By-Law 286)

SECTION 3: GUIDELINES, CONDUCT AND SPORTSMANSHIP SUGGESTIONS

- A. **DANCE TEAM CONDUCT GUIDELINES:** Dance teams should be informed of standards of conduct which they are to meet. Dance team members should be impressed with the necessity of conduct above reproach. The importance of dance team members as representatives of the school and the community should not be underestimated.

The following are suggested standards for dance team members in addition to those listed in the National Federation Spirit Rule Book:

1. Dance team members should always be on their best behavior. Other people will judge your school by their conduct. A good motto to remember is “You never get a second chance to make a good first impression”.
2. Dance team members should realize the importance of setting the proper influence.
3. Uniforms should be worn only for games and pep assemblies unless permission is given by the dance team coach for other school related activities.

4. All dance team members should have and abide by a written constitution established by the dance team coach and school administration. Acknowledgment of this constitution should be verified by the signature of the dance team member and his/her parents.
- B. **GENERAL GUIDELINES:**
1. Hair must be worn in a manner to minimize risk for participants. Hair devices if worn, must be secure and appropriate for the activity. (See National Federation Spirit Rules Book)
 2. Do not practice in loose or slippery clothing. Body lotion, oil or perspiration can also be dangerous. (See National Federation Spirit Rules Book)
 3. Be sure fingernails are trimmed. (See National Federation Spirit Rules Book)
- C. **SAFETY GUIDELINES FOR DANCE TEAMS:** Each school is responsible for establishing and enforcing safety standards for the conduct of its dance team program. The safety regulations contained in the National Federation Spirit Rules Book shall be followed. The following guidelines have been developed by the MSHSAA Dance Team Advisory Committee and approved by the Board of Directors to serve as a guide for the school to use in drawing up its own standards. The lists in the following areas are not intended to be all inclusive.
1. **Rule 1 of the National Federation Spirit Rule Book contains definitions only. Refer to Rules 2 and 3 for determining legality of specific skills, stunts or transitions.**
- D. **SPORTSMANSHIP:** The promotion of sportsmanship is a prime responsibility of dance team members.
1. Good sportsmanship is conduct which imposes a type of self-control involving honest rivalry, courteous relations, and graceful acceptance of results. School spirit is a reflection of these attitudes and behavior. If a school is to succeed in one of its prime functions, that of developing good citizenship, it is necessary that student groups radiate proper sportsmanship conduct. Sportsmanship is good citizenship in action.
 2. Dance team members should call attention to the importance of sportsmanship. Show good sportsmanship at exclusively dance team competitions and festivals. Treat all parties involved at all times with respect.

SECTION 4: DANCE TEAM PROVISIONS AND POLICIES FOR DISTRICT AND STATE BASKETBALL TOURNAMENTS

Dance teams are invited annually to perform at the State Basketball Tourna-

ment. Groups interested in performing must make their desire to perform known in writing to the MSHSAA Office, Attention: Julie Calfee. Groups will be selected and notified in early February.

- A. At the discretion of the district manager, pep bands, dance teams, drill teams, etc. from participating schools may be invited to perform for district basketball tournaments. Should the manager choose to do so, the following procedure shall be followed.
1. **Bands**—The district manager may invite, through the school principal, bands to perform for specific evenings of the tournament. As there may be more bands that would want to perform than opportunities, bands will be selected on a first come, first serve basis. The band will perform at specified times which may include time-outs (except injury time-outs), half-time, and before and after each game of the session.
Bands may not come to perform only for the games in which their team plays. The participating band for the evening must remain neutral for their performance. The purpose for their performance is to provide entertainment and not to provide a competitive advantage for any team.
 2. **Dance Teams, etc.**—The district manager may also invite, through the school principal, school performing groups to perform at half-time of each game. If so, groups will be invited to perform for the half-time of the game in which their school is participating. If both schools involved in the game have a group performing, each group will be allowed a maximum of 3 minutes (including entrance to and exit from the floor) performance time. If only one school accepts the invitation to perform, that group will be allowed up to 6 minutes performance time (including entry to and exit from the floor).
 3. Admission for bands and performing groups shall be free for actual participants and coaches for the evenings that they perform. Actual participants will be admitted as a group with their coach.
 4. If the district manager does not invite performing groups and bands, schools **may not** contact the manager and request permission to bring a performing group and/or band. If the manager does not invite all schools involved in the tournament, there shall be no performing groups and/or bands at the tournament (including groups from the host site).
 5. Due to the fact that many of the sectional and quarterfinal games are played at college or university facilities, bands and other performing groups will not be allowed to perform at these games. The logistical problems involved would preclude this from being a possibility.
- B. Performing groups and bands will perform at the State Basketball Tournament (Show-Me Showdowns) semi-finals and finals and these groups will be selected by the MSHSAA staff. The groups at the final site should be neutral (not from a school whose team is participating in their assigned game(s)).

SECTION 5: UNIFORMS

Uniforms should be functional and should be those which the school would approve. Uniforms and warm-up suits would all be appropriate attire for dance team members. When standing at attention, apparel must cover the midriff. All dance, drill and pom teams must wear athletic shoes or appropriate dance shoes that cover the toes and entire sole of the foot. Consideration should be given for climate conditions in which the uniform(s) will be worn. The uniforms should be comfortable and provide freedom of movement. Excessive bagginess in uniforms should be avoided because of safety. Jewelry, etc. shall not be worn while performing or during practice.

SECTION 6: PREVENTION AND CARE OF INJURIES

It is very important that the dance team understands the importance of incorporating a good warm-up and stretching program prior to all practices and games. The squad will be much more effective and dynamic if the participants are physically fit. The maintenance of a good level of physical fitness and proper warm-ups will not only produce a dance team that is energetic and pleasing to watch, but will also greatly reduce the risks for injuries and accidents.

- A. The dance team coach shall assist in the development of a conditioning and warm-up program for the dance team squad.
- B. Proper techniques in stunts should be used at all times.
- C. When stunts are done, the squad must have spotters as needed for the particular stunt.
- D. The dance team coach must acquire a very basic knowledge of first aid and be prepared to treat minor injuries, strains, sprains, contusions, cuts, etc. (see Section 2-D-1). A basic first aid kit should be located at the site of practice, games, or contests in case an injury occurs.

SECTION 7: ETHICS

Dance team is an activity which helps students develop skills in leadership, discipline, acrobatics, and many other areas. A properly designed dance team program can have a positive impact on the educational development of the students involved.

One concept that dance team coaches have an obligation to convey is that of integrity. Students can learn, through modeling, that rules put in place by the National Federation are to be followed without exception. Through strict enforcement by dance team coaches of the National Federation Spirit Rules, students will benefit from a safe environment in which to participate

and learn that rules governing an activity are to be followed and never ignored.

The fundamental concept of integrity can be re-enforced by clearly communicating these rules and expecting that they be followed daily by all dance team members.

Dance team coaches also have an obligation to observe other dance team squads and take action if rules violations are observed. Coaches can approach the coach of the squad, the school athletic director, or principal and discuss the violation if that approach seems appropriate. If that approach does not seem appropriate, the coach should advise the MSHSAA Office of the violation by phone or in writing and the school will be contacted by the MSHSAA staff. It is important that rules violations be communicated to the appropriate parties in one of these methods for the safety of the participants and to assist in the uniform enforcement of the Spirit Rules.

SECTION 8: POINTS OF EMPHASIS

- A. Students are required to have physicals before participating in dance team activities. **(Section 2-E-3)**
- B. Students are required to show proof of basic accident insurance before participating in dance team activities. **(Section 2-E-3)**
- C. Required rules interpretation meetings on National Federation major rules changes will be held for all dance team coaches **(see MSHSAA web site for listing of rules meetings and Section 2-D-2)**.
- D. Eligibility rosters must be kept on file at the local school. **(Section 2-E-4)**
- E. Ten days of conditioning practice are required for dance team participants. **(Section 2-E-5)**
- F. Dance team coaches who do not possess a professional teaching certificate must successfully complete the MSHSAA Approved Coaches Education Program before serving as an interscholastic dance team coach. **(Section 2-D-3)**
- G. Dance team coaches are required to complete MSHSAA Sports First Aid Course. **(Section 2-D-1)**
- H. When discarding props (signs, etc.) that are made of solid material, or have corners or sharp edges, team members must gently toss or place the props on the performing surface (NFHS 2-1-4).
- I. The use of mini-tramps, spring boards, **spring assisted floors** or any height-increasing apparatus is illegal for use during performances/competitions (NFHS 2-1-7).

APPENDIX A

SPORTSMANSHIP...A TEAM EFFORT

A mainstay of our interscholastic athletic program is good sportsmanship. If our interscholastic activities are to be worthwhile and afford continuing supplemental educational experiences for our boys and girls in relationship to our educational goals and objectives we must have good sportsmanship at our schools.

Good sportsmanship is built and maintained through a collective effort by administrators, coaches, players, dance team members, and spectators. A team effort is necessary in your school if good sportsmanship is to exist.

To help prepare "your team" for the season the following suggestions just may give you the edge over the opponent...poor sportsmanship.

1. Administrators must work to create the best environment possible for interscholastic activities. This shall include facilities, officials, game equipment, supervision and behavior of all involved.
2. Administrators shall communicate clearly the expectations of behavior on the part of all those involved with athletics and the consequences for inappropriate behavior.
3. The administrative staff should develop a plan of action to address inappropriate behavior at interscholastic events. This procedure should be discussed with dance team coaches and clearly explained to other personnel involved with supervision.
4. Administrators and dance team coaches should discuss and develop a procedure to deal with difficult situations regarding sportsmanship.
5. Identify how the dance team members can assist in developing and promoting good sportsmanship.
6. The dance team coach, with the administrator's guidance, should work with the group to effectively deal with spectators and learn to recognize situations which need adult intervention.
7. The dance team coach should know who to contact in the event the unsportsmanlike acts are not easily resolved. Dance team members nor their coach should not permit themselves to be placed in a "no win" situation with the crowd. However, their techniques should be developed to lessen the likelihood of unsportsmanlike conduct.
8. Dance team coaches must continue to emphasize to the squads what an important role they play in the school's overall program.
9. At the beginning of school have the administrator, dance team coach and squads meet together to discuss and clearly understand each other's role and how they will work together for good sportsmanship.
10. Dance team members, with help from the coach and administrators, can actively work to promote good sportsmanship. This can be accomplished by developing expectations for behavior for 1) their school, 2) all schools within a conference and 3) expectations for visiting schools.
11. The expectations can appear in programs, posters, etc. These expectations can be provided to all visiting schools. These are just a few "pre season" suggestions to help your group be good sports and expect the same from others.

APPENDIX B

Hazing: Willful conduct directed at a student that is intended to physically or emotionally intimidate, punish, embarrass, humiliate, ridicule, or place any student in a disconcerting position for the purpose of initiation, affiliation, inclusion or membership in any team or organization.

Harassment: Unwelcome conduct by a person that is sufficiently serious, persistent or pervasive, so that it affects another person's ability to participate in or benefit from the school program or activity by creating an intimidating, threatening or abusive environment.

It is the policy of the MSHSAA Board of Directors that hazing and harassment have no place in school-sponsored activity programs and pose a significant risk to the physical and mental welfare of students. Coaches, directors, sponsors and administrators must take an active role in the prevention of all forms of hazing and harassment. Students directly or indirectly involved in hazing incidents, on or off school grounds, could be considered ineligible by the school administration under the MSHSAA citizenship standard, By-Law 212.

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