

**2019 - 2020**  
**S.O.P**  
**Step Team Handbook**



**Steppers of Poteet**

**Poteet High School Pirates**

**Team Motto:**

**“One Team, One Sound, One School.”**

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## *About Us*

### **Mission Statement**

We are a diverse family that exhibits respect, discipline and leadership. In confidence, we express gratitude for each individual, and as a unit, we encourage teamwork through the art of step.

### **Introduction**

Poteet High School's Steppers of Poteet Step Team also known as, "S.O.P" was established in 2018. The focus is to grow and develop students into well rounded citizens. This goal will be achieved through hard work and effort inside and outside the classroom. This organization will hold themselves accountable based upon the school's foundation; Respect, Honor, and Pride.

### **General Information**

S.O.P Step Team is expected to be a very demanding activity. The steppers in this organization will gain the respect of the community and their school with all that they do. We plan to achieve and maintain this status through many hours of hard work and dedication.

As we carry out new traditions, we will develop through both personal growth and team accomplishments. We will implement excellent performances, positive attitudes and exemplary behavior. Therefore, this Step Team MUST be a TOP priority to ALL members.

To ensure that the team is able to maintain a high standing within our school and community, team members will:

- Have the opportunity to exhibit their stepping and athletic abilities within a team setting.
- Be given the opportunity to develop personally as they learn how to work with a team to set and achieve personal goals.
- Achieve and maintain academic excellence. All step team members will adhere to the academic guidelines given by team sponsors.
- Be positive role models within their school and community.
- Know and follow the guidelines of the Step Team handbook.

S.O.P is an organization, whom is dedicated to the goals and objectives outlined above. This activity/sport requires a yearlong commitment from ALL team members and 100% participation.

## **What is a “S.O.P” Stepper?**

A S.O.P Stepper is a member who participates in competitions, exhibitions, pep rallies, and performs at other community service based events. In order to be a part of the team you must have self-discipline, exemplify citizenship to fellow peers and show respect to your team, captains and sponsors. You also must adhere to all the guidelines, rules and expectations administered by the school and team.

The 3 fundamentals of a S.O.P Stepper are Discipline, Precision, and Attitude. These fundamentals are executed at all times of performance, including practice. “Have attitude... Don’t have an attitude!!”

Although we are here to have fun, the Step Team firmly believes in putting their education first. If you can’t make it in the classroom, then you won’t make it onto the stepping floor. So remember, S.O.P Steppers always strive for EXCELLENCE in everything they do.

## ***Team Placement***

### **Requirements**

The qualifications in this section apply to Steppers of Poteet members, such as steppers, managers, and photographers.

### **Grades for Eligibility**

1. SOP members must pass each subject each six weeks. A student shall be suspended from participating during the grade-reporting period following the grade-reporting period in which the student receives a grade lower than 70 (except for state-approved honors courses).
2. Once a SOP member has been declared academically ineligible, the following will apply:
  - a. The SOP member will not wear his/her uniform during the suspension period.
  - b. He/she will attend practice with the squad, but will not participate in activities, events or games.
  - c. When a SOP member is ineligible for two grading periods, an academic evaluation will be made and a parent conference will be convened to discuss what is in the best interest of the SOP member’s academic success. Students who are academically ineligible for three reporting periods, consecutive or nonconsecutive, will be removed from the squad for the remainder of the year to focus on their academics.
3. A SOP member will maintain an “A” or “B” in conduct. Failure to meet this requirement will cause a SOP member to be placed on a three-week suspension from participation.

## **EXTRACURRICULAR STANDARDS OF BEHAVIOR**

Student participation in extracurricular activities is encouraged. Mesquite ISD makes extracurricular activities available as an extension of the regular school program, with an important difference: participation in the regular curriculum is a right afforded to each student, while participation in the extracurricular program is a privilege that carries additional expectations for acceptable conduct.

Behavior must be exemplary and reflect the finest attributes of the Mesquite ISD student body at all times and in all places. SOP members should be aware that in or out of uniform they are representatives of the SOP squad and the school they attend and should act accordingly.

SOP members will adhere to the Student Code of Conduct and also to these Extracurricular Standards of Behavior. Students shall not participate in SOP until the acknowledgement form is signed by the student and the parent, indicating that they understand the expectations and consequences outlined herein.

Since participation in extracurricular activities is a privilege and not a right, Mesquite ISD is authorized to set higher standards for participants of extracurricular activities than for students who choose not to participate in extracurricular activities. Therefore, this Extracurricular Standards of Behavior extends beyond the Mesquite ISD Student Code of Conduct, not only in types of behavior prohibited but also in corresponding consequences and jurisdiction for imposing discipline. This Extracurricular Standards of Behavior will be enforced with all SOP members:

- Regardless of whether school is in session;
- Regardless of whether the offense occurs on or off school property;
- Regardless of whether the offense occurs at a school-related or non-school-related event;
- Regardless of whether the student is directly involved with the extracurricular activity at the time the prohibited conduct occurs;
- Regardless of whether the extracurricular activity is in-season; and
- Regardless of where or when the conduct occurs.

It is possible that a student who violates the MISD Student Code of Conduct will incur consequences from both the appropriate school administrator and from his/her sponsor for the same particular violation. It is also possible that a student participating in SOP could violate the Extracurricular Standards of Behavior and be subject to discipline by a sponsor without having violated the MISD Student Code of Conduct.

The Internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible form of communication. Maintaining a higher standard of conduct will also include SOP members being responsible for any social media communication, including but not limited to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, Vine, that appears on the Internet – even if it is marked private. SOP members are responsible for their personal social media and postings, as well as their postings to other persons' social media. The

areas of appropriateness will include but are not limited to language, pictures, suggestive poses, clothing, reference or depicting the use of alcohol, drugs, and tobacco.

Any SOP member who represents themselves, or their organization, in an unfavorable, questionable or illegal manner, including electronic media will be subject to the disciplinary actions determined by appropriate school officials and/or sponsors, including probation or dismissal from the organization.

In addition to all rules, regulations and schedule commitments required by the SOP sponsor, students shall adhere to the following guidelines in order to continue participation:

1. Maintain passing grades;
2. Give their best effort and exhibit good conduct at all times;
3. Demonstrate respect for sponsors, teammates, faculty and students; and
4. Exhibit positive leadership traits and represent their school in a positive manner.

Consequences for behavior infractions covered in the Student Code of Conduct and in the SOP Handbook will be assigned at the discretion and determination of the campus administrator and SOP sponsor and may include disciplinary consequences, probation, suspension, removal from squad, and/or prohibition from future participation in all extracurricular activities.

### **General Conduct Rules**

SOP members are expected to set a good example by conducting themselves individually and collectively in an orderly manner before classmates, visitors, and school personnel. There is to be no quarreling between any of the SOP members in public. Conduct during competitions, games and pep rallies are as follows:

- No gum chewing.
- Group and private discussions must be avoided as they reflect upon the squad.
- All SOP members must focus their attention on the competition at all times.
- Excessive makeup and/or hairstyles will not be permitted.

### **Prohibited Conduct**

In addition to the aforementioned behavior expectations, MISD SOP members are prohibited at all times from:

- Possessing, smoking, selling, or using tobacco products;
- Possessing or using drug paraphernalia;
- Possessing, selling, or delivering to another person look-alike drugs or items represented to be drugs or contraband of any kind;
- Possessing, selling, giving, delivering to another person, using, or being under the influence of marijuana, alcohol, a controlled substance, or any dangerous drug;
- Engaging in conduct that contains the elements of an offense relating to glue, aerosol paint, or volatile, mood-altering chemicals;

- Attending any event at which underage drinking or smoking is occurring (students will be allowed a slight concession for an amount of time long enough to determine that a violation is occurring and to leave the premises);
- Riding in a vehicle containing alcohol unless a parent or guardian is present and aware of the presence of the alcohol;
- Stealing;
- Conduct that causes injury or harm to persons or property;
- Using profanity, lewd or vulgar language, or obscene gestures;
- Fighting;
- Any conduct resulting in arrest and/or citations from law enforcement;
- Inappropriate touching including “making out” in public places, sexual gestures, or exposing parts of the body that are ordinarily covered up in public; and
- Inappropriate behavior in public places.

Sponsors will review all the facts and circumstances surrounding a particular violation and impose appropriate disciplinary action. Sponsors will strive for consistency in meting out punishment for Extracurricular Standards of Behavior violations, but will also exercise sound professional discretion. Violation of any of the rules outlined here will be subject to probation, suspension, and possible removal. The principal will not ordinarily interfere in a sponsor’s judgment regarding appropriate discipline but has the authority to increase or decrease the punishment based on his or her assessment of the situation. All decisions of the principal are final.

### **Campus Guidelines**

Individual campuses have additional guidelines to accompany these Standards and assign points in a demerit system. Campus guidelines will be aligned to district guidelines. Failure to abide by these Extracurricular Standards of Behavior will result in disciplinary action, up to and including probation, suspension, and removal from the program. The student’s disciplinary history will be taken into account when consequences are issued. Sponsors will be in communication with parents regarding discipline infractions and consequences.

Based on demerit systems and discipline infractions, SOP sponsors may remove a SOP member after two periods of probation or suspension have been served, and infractions continue. Any SOP member given out-of-school suspension, sent to DAEP, or expelled from school for any reason will be removed from the squad for the remainder of the school year. Some infractions; however; are so egregious they may result in immediate removal.

Prior to being dismissed, the student and parent will be notified of the reason for the action. Student and parent will be afforded the opportunity of a conference with the sponsor and principal. Students do not possess a constitutionally protected interest in SOP participation, and therefore decisions of the sponsor and principal are final. The student will not be eligible for any individual or team recognitions or awards that occur after the date of dismissal. Money will not be refunded to SOP members who quit or are removed from the squad.

## **Paperwork**

Another part of the team placement process includes returning all necessary paperwork. This paperwork includes:

- The permission slip allowing the potential step team member to participate in the activities to come.
- The application with the steppers information, as well as, essay questions and stepper assignment attached.
- Lastly, each stepper is required to have two teacher referrals (your teacher referrals cannot come from a sponsor of this Step Team). This is so the Step Team's Leadership Team can see what your teachers feel and recommend.

## ***Tryouts***

### **Team Tryouts**

All potential steppers are required to go through a try-out process. This process consists of a routine being taught and then being performed in front of the sponsors and/or judges the Leadership Team designate. Tryouts will take place at the end and beginning of each academic school year and will consist of a 4 day long process. At the end of these 4 days, the sponsors will select up to 20 people total between both tryouts. Just being a good stepper doesn't automatically determine if you will be a part of S.O.P Step Team. Your academics, teacher referrals, application, discipline, attitude and tryout will help the sponsors determine if you are a fit for this organization. **All decisions are final.**

### **Tryout Scoring Procedures**

1. Performance scoring will be based on the following categories, with each category receiving a value of 0-8 points (168 points maximum/ 56 per judge if three judges):
  - a. Knowledge of routine
  - b. Execution of step
  - c. Precision
  - d. Facials
  - e. Showmanship
  - f. Individual Step (we are looking for execution, complexity, style and precision)
  - g. Memorizing Poetry
2. Citizenship - 15 points maximum score:
  - a. One discipline referral will result in a deduction of 5 points.
  - b. Two discipline referrals will result in a deduction of 10 points.
  - c. No points will be given to candidates with more than two discipline referrals, ISS, OSS, or DAEP.
3. Grades - 20 points maximum:
  - a. Grades will come from the current semester average of the candidates.
  - b. To calculate the score in this area, applicant's 4th and 5th six weeks grades will be averaged and the average will be multiplied by 0.2.
  - c. An average below 70 will receive no points in this category.

4. Attendance:
  - a. While attendance records are not used to determine a student's inclusion on the step team, we may address the importance of attendance and students may receive consequences for lack of attendance.
5. The performance score of each judge, the conduct score, and the grade score will be added for a total score to not exceed 203 points.

### **Competition Tryouts**

There will be a tryout for every competition, but only if we have more steppers than needed for the competition. The number of people for each competition will be determined by the coaching staff. Each eligible step team member will learn the routine for the competition, and will go through the try-out process. This will help the coaching staff to determine who will be selected to represent Potteet High School and the Steppers of Potteet Step Team. **Please see Competition and Challenge Guidelines** to see how you could earn someone's spot in the competition.

## *Competitions*

Earning a spot on the Competition Team will consist of a lot of hard work, discipline, dedication and motivation. Each member has an opportunity to earn their spot. Being on the Step Team does not automatically mean that you will step in a competition show performance. Each show will have a limited number of spots available, which will be determined by the coaching staff. When this number is set, then tryouts will be announced. In the event you do not make the cut and feel that you should have, then you will have the opportunity to challenge any member of the Competition Team for their spot in a "Step Off" challenge. Remember, you are still a part of the team regardless and still required to show support for your fellow team mates.

### **Challenge Guidelines**

1. Only notify Coaching Staff of a challenge. Keep the element of surprise!
2. Challenge can take place at any given time.
3. You can only challenge one person per show, so choose wisely!
4. Don't waste our time! BE PREPARED AND READY TO PROVE YOURSELF!!!

## ***Instructional Learning***

### **Practice Schedule**

Practice will be held Monday thru Thursday and on some occasions Friday, typically the day before competition. Practice will be held in various locations throughout the school. Practice times range from 7:00a - 8:00a and 4:30p to 6:00p. If there are any changes to the schedule practices. Steppers will be notified in advance of any changes.

### **Practice Sessions**

All practice sessions are closed to any non-step team member (this also includes parents). Having closed practices helps the team to focus on the task at hand without getting distracted. If at any time the S.O.P's Leadership Team decides to have a special viewing, notification will be sent out prior to the date of the special viewing.

### **Practice Dress Code**

The practice dress code as specified at the beginning of the season will be enforced. This consists of appropriate length bottoms (shorts or sweats), and T-Shirt. Tennis shoes or sneakers that are comfortable should be worn at all times. You will need your boots to practice and prepare for performances. No tank tops, camisoles, mid drifts, etc. or anything else the sponsors may consider inappropriate shall be worn. You will be asked to go change or you will sit during practice and receive an unexcused practice. If you do not have the proper shoes you will not be permitted to practice.

### **Cell Phone Policy**

Cell phones are not to be used at any time during official team business. Which includes, practices, and inside or outside performance unless given permission to do so by sponsors. All phones should be kept on silent or on your parental ringtone. This also includes when you are on break during practices.

## ***Attendance***

### **Policy**

S.O.P Step team has a strict absence policy. The policy applies to all step team members and is in the following six categories.

### **Steppers**

You are responsible for being on time and attending all practices. Attendance records will be maintained and monitored for all practices and performances. If you miss four consecutive practices without proper notices. You will be automatically removed from the team.

### **Illness Absence**

The only truly “excused” absence is one for illness. A telephone call and/or email to the sponsor is expected for any illness absence. If a step team member has been absent from two or more practices for illness, a letter from a doctor will be required upon return to team practice.

### **Other Absences/ Tardiness**

From time to time, certain absences may occur that are not illness related. ANY of these “other” absences, whether for other school activities or family commitment, will require a letter indicating the expected absence and reason for absence sent to the sponsors before the start of the practice you will miss. ***Absence notifications must be in writing.*** Please do not pull a sponsor/coach aside during a practice or after a practice to tell them of a possible absence. Please send all absence notices by email or letter. You must present a note or pass if you are going to be late or need to leave early from practice or a performance.

### **Work Absence**

Absences due to work schedules are unexcused. Jobs must work around the Steppers of Potteet schedule. All practices, events, competition and other activities will all be presented to you at least a month in advance. If this is an issue. The Leadership Team will schedule a meeting with the stepper and their guardian to reevaluate if they are able to commit to this organization.

### **Absentee Guidelines**

If a stepper is ill, or is unable to step due to an injury or any other reason, the stepper is still expected to attend and observe practice unless directed otherwise. Steppers will be expected to follow up with other teammates as to what they missed.

### **Absences Close to Competition**

Any stepper that is absent for practice close to competition (Within 2 weeks of competition) will be re-evaluated by the Leadership Team as to whether or not the stepper is able to compete.

### **Competition Absences**

If any stepper knows they will be absent to compete in a competition they must submit a letter explaining the absence **ONE MONTH** in advance to the Leadership Team.

If a trend in absences occurs, the stepper may be asked to re-evaluate their schedule and determine whether or not they are able to commit to the team. Please be aware that all communications and absentee records are kept on file and will be taken into consideration when selecting the competition team.

## *Medical*

All medical conditions must be made known to all sponsors. It is your responsibility to bring any medicine, braces, bandages, inhalers, etc. that you need to every practice and performance. Sponsors will supply First Aid kits for limited purposes only.

## *Appearance*

### **Jewelry**

Steppers are not permitted to wear jewelry of any kind during practice or performances. Stud and stud-like earrings are allowed at the sponsor's discretion only.

### **Spirit Pack**

All step team member and staff will be required to purchase all items from the spirit pack. Cost of these items does not currently include taxes and are all subject to change.

Team Jackets	\$60
Team and Event Shirts	\$40
Team Warm Ups	\$80
Performance Gear	\$90
Team Bag	\$25
Banquet Fee	\$30
Extravaganza Extras	\$75
TSTA	\$55
Step Shoes	\$100
Travel - Nationals	TBA
<b><i>TOTAL</i></b>	<b><i>\$555</i></b>

Once money is paid there is no refund for any reason, such as but not limited to the following:

1. Dismissal from the step team
2. Or quitting the step team

If any of these things occur after the start of the season (it usually begins in November) you are still required to pay any and all step team fees, and will not graduate until all fees have been paid. All fees have to be paid by October 31st.

## **Team Wear**

All step team members and staff are required to wear their jacket, t-shirt and bring their duffel bags to all events as directed. This keeps the team looking like a team and in uniform at all times. At no time should any non-step team member have on any team wear! You earned this honor. Take pride in being a member of the Steppers of Poteet Step Team.

## **Uniforms**

All step team members are responsible for their own uniform and its location at all times. It is your responsibility to make sure you have all parts of your uniform prior to loading the bus, car, or arriving at an event. Uniforms will not be altered due to one member not having his or her full uniform. That individual will not participate at the event if this happens.

## ***Banquets***

SOP banquets require the approval of the principal and must conform to district guidelines related to banquets.

## ***Conduct***

### **Fundraising**

High school SOP members may have two fundraising activities per school year to cover the costs of color yearbook photos, uniform for competitions, food, banquet expenses, and any other necessary expense needed for the success of the organization. SOP members who are dismissed or quit will not be reimbursed fundraising monies.

### **Big /Little**

Big /Little customs are not allowed due to the added expense of obligatory gifts.

### **Hazing & Bullying**

Hazing and bullying are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. SOP members are subject to immediate removal if they engage in, encourage, aid, assist, or have knowledge of and fail to report a hazing or bullying incident [see FNCC(LEGAL)]. It is a criminal offense to engage in, encourage, recklessly permit, or fail to report hazing of a student, regardless if the person being hazed gave consent (TEC 37.152).

### **Behavior**

Good team spirit grows from respect for each other. Constructive suggestions are always welcome. Any forms of gossip, gum, foul language, public displays of inappropriate behavior, derogatory statements and belittling remarks about another team member, the routine, coach, sponsor, team manager, or parents will NOT be tolerated. Should a behavior problem arise that surpasses the sponsors, it will be taken to the school administration. You must give the sponsors, coaches and/or captains your full attention, listen to instruction, be ready to move quickly to your

position and do your best every time. Steppers must behave properly at all times. Steppers are expected to abide by the rules set forth in this handbook as well as the rules set forth by Poteet High School.

### ***Demerit/ Merit System***

*Numbers represent the total number of ironmans to be completed by the following day you are told to complete these.*

1. Late less than 10 minutes	1
2. Late 11-20 minutes	2
3. Late 21-30 minutes	3
4. Late 31+ = absent	4
5. No or wrong clothes or supplies (boots, practice wear, etc.)	1
6. Disrespect of adult or peer	1, 2, or 3
7. Bad teacher report	3
8. Gum at practice or event	1
9. Jewelry	1
10. Missing an event (no notice)	4
11. Missing an event (with notice)	3
12. Following directions	1 or 2
13. Trash	1 per piece
14. Not serving demerit by due date	1 per demerit
15. Phone out during practice	1
16. Phone out during event	2
17. ISS and/or ISIP	5

\*\*\* Other forms of discipline may be used as Coaching Staff sees fit. Violation of rules and regulations will affect your chances of making the competition team.

Merits are handed to steppers who go beyond what is asked of them for this step team, and those that do what others choose not to do in school, practice, competition, and/ or in the community. These deserving steppers will receive a pass like the three items listed below:

1. Good for 1 free iron man (less than 4 demerits)
2. Good for 1 late to practice (less than 10 minutes)
3. Good for 1 dress out day

**Note:** All merits are recorded by our Sponsor and team manager. **NO MERIT PASS** will not have your name and signature by the SOP Sponsor, along with the date.

### **Conflict Resolution**

1. All conflicts should be based on fact and backed by evidence and/or Step Team Handbook.
2. All issues will be addressed respectfully and in the proper setting.
3. Don't keep issues bottled up inside, it only builds attitude and tension.
4. Respect the process, ask questions, and deal with the underlined issues.

\*\*\* Remember we are all adults here and will conduct ourselves as such. We are a TEAM!!

### ***Leadership Team***

Carlie Rockwell	Communication and Media Management
Darrell Hubbard	Coach and Event Management
Paris Scott	Discipline and Praise Management (Merit System)
Angela McCovery	Teacher Liaison
Latrenda Knowles	Teacher Liaison
N/A	Parent Communication Director
N/A	Sergeant-at-Arms

### ***Communication***

To help us communicate with each other, an email address has been set up for you and your parents to use at any time. This will be checked daily, so if there is anything that you need us to know, feel free to send an email. Also, if you have questions, comments or concerns and do not want to ask or discuss in front of the team send an email and we will handle the situation.

**Parents: if at any point you need to contact any member of the Coaching Staff, this will be the best way.**

Team Email Address: [steppersofpoteet@gmail.com](mailto:steppersofpoteet@gmail.com)

Team Website Address: [www.steppersofpoteet.weebly.com](http://www.steppersofpoteet.weebly.com)

## ***Duties and Responsibilities***

### **Attitude & Leadership**

1. SOP members must maintain desirable attitudes and a spirit of cooperation in all classes.
2. SOP members must cooperate fully with the SOP captains and co-captains, the sponsor(s), manager, and other members of the squad.
3. SOP members will not take advantage of their position by using it to miss classes, etc.

### **Captains**

- Reports directly to Sponsors
- Assist coach(es)
- Leads Party Hops, Strolls
- Maintain Team Unity
- Conducts warm-ups

Note: Captain Status is a privilege and may be revoked if circumstances warrant.

### **Weekly Schedules**

**Captains:** If you are in school, we expect you to be at practice. In case of an emergency let sponsor know prior to you leaving school. If you are unable to advise a sponsor prior to your dismissal, please use the email that is mentioned in this Handbook. Our step team email will be checked prior to practice daily.

### **Manager(s)**

SOP managers are considered SOP members for all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; however, the managers do not attend SOP camp and are not allowed to participate in competitions. Managers are selected by the SOP sponsor. There is no tryout, and the sponsor's decision is final.

- Reports directly to Sponsors/ Coach
- Assist with any administrative duties
- Responsible for music assistance for step team performances
- Ensuring security of step team personal belongings when traveling

### **Photographer(s)**

SOP photographers are considered SOP members for all rules, regulations, policies, and procedures; however, the photographer does not attend SOP camp and are not allowed to participate in competitions. Photographers are selected by the SOP sponsor. There is no tryout, and the sponsor's decision is final.

- Reports directly to Sponsors/ Coach
- Assist with any film sessions.
- Responsible for video and pictures of competition
- Ensuring that we have footage to view for film sessions.

### **Performances**

At least 2 sponsors and 1 coach should attend each event (rotation).

## ***INHERENT RISK & CONCUSSIONS***

### **Inherent Risks of Stepping**

Stepping is reasonably safe as long as certain guidelines are followed, but there is the inherent risk of injury as in any athletic activity. Stepping is an anaerobic/aerobic activity that includes jumping, stunting, and motions. All physicals must be on file in the school office before students may participate in practices and games. Students must keep the sponsor informed of all injuries and/or chronic conditions.

The probability of injury is minimized when SOP members take certain precautions. SOP members will be expected to consistently abide by the following guidelines:

1. Always warm-up appropriately before stepping (practice competitions and games).
2. Do not attempt a stunt that cannot be performed safely and that has not been checked off by the sponsor.
3. Always use attentive spotters when stunting.
4. Report all injuries to the sponsor as soon as they occur.
5. Follow all trainer and doctor recommendations.
6. Lift weights to increase strength and guard against injuries.
7. Always wear shoes and clothing appropriate for stepping.
8. Never wear jewelry of any kind or chew gum when stepping.
9. Eat nutritious meals and get plenty of rest.
10. Ask for assistance or advice at any time.

### **Concussions**

A concussion is an injury to the brain. It is caused by a bump, blow, or jolt to either the head or the body that causes the brain to move rapidly within the skull. The resulting injury to the brain changes how the brain functions in a normal manner. The signs and symptoms of a concussion can show up immediately after the injury or may not appear for hours or days after the injury. Concussions can have serious long-term health effects, and even a seemingly mild injury can be serious. A major concern with any concussion is returning to play too soon. Having a second concussion before healing can take place from the initial or previous concussion can lead to serious and potentially fatal health conditions.

If a concussion is suspected, the following guidelines apply:

1. Immediately remove student from practice or game.
2. Seek medical attention right away.
3. Do not allow the student to return to play until proper medical clearance and return-to-play guidelines have been followed. The permission for return to play will come from the appropriate health care professional.

Any questions concerning concussions or the return-to-play protocol should be directed to the athletic trainers at the high schools.

## **Poetry**

*You will be expected to memorize these poems prior to joining this Step Team. During the team try-out process, you will be asked to recite these four poems.*

### **Invictus**

*Out of the night that covers me,  
Black as the pit from pole to pole,  
I thank whatever gods may be  
For my unconquerable soul.*

*In the fell clutch of circumstance  
I have not winced nor cried aloud.  
Under the bludgeonings of chance  
My head is bloody, but unbowed.*

*Beyond this place of wrath and tears  
Looms but the Horror of the shade,  
And yet the menace of the years  
Finds and shall find me unafraid.*

*It matters not how strait the gate,  
How charged with punishments the scroll,  
I am the master of my fate,  
I am the captain of my soul.*

### **Excuses**

*Excuses are tools of the incompetent.  
They build monuments of nothingness.  
Those who so often use them,  
Seldom amount to anything!*

### **Forbidden Words**

*I, me, my, mine  
These are words  
That does not rhyme.  
Us, we, our, together,  
These are words  
That last forever!*

## **Minute**

*I have only just a minute,  
Only sixty seconds in it.  
Forced upon me, can't refuse it.  
Didn't seek it, didn't choose it.  
But it's up to me to use it.  
I must suffer if I lose it.  
Give account if I abuse it.  
Just a tiny little minute,  
But eternity is in it.*

