

THE Cotillion Club HARLINGEN

2026-2027 Bylaws

Mission Statement: The Cotillion Club of Harlingen is a social and educational organization for young women with a connection to the Harlingen community. Young women are selected to join as juniors in high school and retain their membership through their senior year. Members receive programming on a wide range of topics and participate in experiences that allow them to learn and practice proper social behaviors. Events held throughout the two-year membership period promote networking and friendships among members and provide opportunities for community service.

The Cotillion Club of Harlingen Girl's Constitution:

Article I - Name

The name of this organization shall be The Cotillion Club of Harlingen.

Article II - Purpose

The purpose of the Cotillion organization is to provide a social and educational organization for young women with a connection to the Harlingen community. Young women are selected to join as juniors in high school and retain their membership through their senior year. Members receive programming on a wide range of topics and participate in experiences that allow them to learn and practice proper social behaviors. Events held throughout the two-year membership period promote networking and friendships among members and provide opportunities for community service.

Article III - Membership

Section A. Membership shall be limited.

Section B. To be eligible for membership, a girl must have a connection to Harlingen or attend or have attended Harlingen area schools. She must be unmarried and an incoming junior in high school. Potential members must also exhibit high moral and ethical standards, be responsible, and have not been presented in another debutante ball.

Section C. New members of this organization shall be selected no later than the first payment deadline.

Section D. All new members are formally presented at the Presentation Ball. New members not presented at the Presentation Ball can be removed for membership by the Executive Board. No refunds are given when membership is withdrawn.

Section E. The Executive Board of the organization shall reserve the right to withdraw membership of any debutante without notice at any time for inappropriate conduct. No refunds are given when membership is withdrawn for conduct unbecoming of a Cotillion Club of Harlingen debutante.

Section F. Members must RSVP to all invitations, whether it be an acceptance or regret, by the RSVP deadline. Failure to respond to the deadline will result in the member NOT being allowed to attend the event. No showing an event or cancelling event acceptance late can result in a financial penalty.

Section G. Members are responsible for notifying their Advisor of any change of address, telephone number, or e-mail address.

Section H. Before the start of the senior year, junior membership is reviewed. The Executive Board of the organization reserves the right to withdraw membership at any time for inappropriate conduct as is stated in Section E.

Section I. Absences: Debutantes missing more than 2 events in a year may potentially be removed from membership.

Section J. Early Graduation: Debutantes who graduate from high school early and are in good standing with the Cotillion Club of Harlingen will automatically be considered an alumna of our organization and can be handled on a case-by-case basis.

Article IV – Dues & Assessments

Section A. Dues for new members shall be \$900; \$300 payment is due upon invitation acceptance and the remaining \$600 by August 1. Dues include the two-year membership, a Cotillion Club of Harlingen shirt and sweatshirt and Junior Debutante Ball pictures. If dues are not paid on or before the due date, the member's name will be removed from membership. Dues are not refundable. Dues cover the costs of junior and senior year activities.

Section B. An assessment of the cost of social functions shall be made for each out of the Valley house guest of a member who attends any social function.

Section C. The number of yearly functions shall be left to the discretion of the Executive Board.

Section D. An non-refundable application fee of \$50 will be required at the time of application submission.

Article V - Amendments

This constitution may be amended or revised by a majority vote of the Advisory Board in attendance, provided the amendment to be voted upon has been submitted in advance to the Executive Board.

Article VI - Traditions

Section A. Junior debutantes shall wear white, floor-length gowns and appropriate white gloves to the presentation ball. Short gloves may be worn with elbow-length-sleeved gowns. Long gloves should be worn with strapless, sleeveless, and short-sleeved dresses. Gloves are to be solid white with no adornment. No lace gloves will be permitted. White dress flat shoes (preferably white flat ballerina like shoes) are required. Debutantes should refer to the Junior Member Gown & Accessory Standards Table in the Guidelines section for detailed information.

Section B. Fathers or male guardians/father-figures escorting their daughters for the presentation and male dates escorting members to the ball shall be in black and white formal attire. Traditional black tuxedo, white shirt, black bow tie and cummerbund only. No tails and no western-style attire. Traditional black tuxedo dress shoes and black socks are required. No boots or tennis shoes are allowed. Formal military dress uniforms are acceptable. No piercings or visible tattoos permitted. Presenters and Escorts should refer to the Presenters & Escorts Attire Guidelines for detailed information.

Section C. Escorts accompanying members to the presentation ball must be male, in good standing, and between the ages of 15 and 20 and between a freshman in high school to a freshman in college. Individuals 21 years of age or older are NOT allowed to escort a debutante to the presentation ball.

Section D. No corsages are to be worn during the presentation by the debutantes. Flowers and boutonnieres are furnished to all new members and their presenters and escorts.

Section E. Senior members and advisors are required to wear floor-length gowns, other than white, to the presentation ball. Debutantes should refer to the Senior Member & Advisor Gown & Accessory Standards Table in the Guidelines section for detailed information.

Section F. Male escorts must be in formal attire – traditional black tuxedo, white shirt, black bow tie and cummerbund only. No tails and no western style attire. Dress shoes and socks must be black. No boots or tennis shoes are allowed. No piercings or visible tattoos permitted. Presenters and escorts should refer to the Presenters and Escorts Attire Guidelines for detailed information.

Section G. Gowns should be ready

Section H. A presentation ball will be held each year.

Section I. All members are expected to honor the specified hours of each event. This includes staying at the

Section J. A foreign exchange student may be issued an invitation to each function as a house guest of her American

Section K. A pendant shall be presented to each senior member at the mother daughter tea in the senior year.

Section L: Guidelines & Rules:

Dress Code for Cotillion Club of Harlingen Functions (Juniors, Seniors, & Advisors):

Dresses only. No pants, shorts, or rompers allowed. Dress length should be no shorter than the ends of fingertips. No blue jeans, open-back dresses or cut outs. Spaghetti straps are allowed. Strapless dresses are allowed. All cleavage must be covered.

Closed or open-toe heels, flats or wedges are appropriate. Tennis shoes, rubber-soled flip-flops, and boots are not allowed.

No body piercing except for the ears. All tattoos must be covered (makeup, bandage, cardigan, etc.)

The only exceptions to the dress code are when stated on the event invite. Ex. At Spring Fling boots are allowable, casual clothing at ball rehearsal, etc.

If an attendee is found to not be in compliance with the dress code, they will be asked to leave the event. If there are questions about something you are thinking about wearing for an event, do not hesitate to reach out to your advisor beforehand.

Ball Presentation - Junior Members

Junior Member Gown and Accessory Standards Table:

Gown Color	Gown must be white. Gown cannot be off-white, eggshell, or ivory. Gowns cannot be raw silk as they do not appear white.
Skirt length and shape	Gowns must be floor length but not touching the floor. The bottom of the skirt should be no shorter than one inch above the floor (measured with shoes and petticoat). Hem must be uniform on all sides. The skirt must begin at the natural waist. No slits, drop waist, mermaid style, tight fitting, or form-fitting skirts are allowed.
Petticoats	Petticoat must be worn to add fullness to the skirt and act as a slip. No hoop petticoats are allowed.
Backline	Back of the gown must be at or above the regular everyday bra line. No backless or cutout below the bra line are allowed.
Style	Sheer necklines, off the shoulder, one shoulder, and halters may be worn. Spaghetti straps and strapless gowns are allowed.
Neckline	Gowns must be modest in design. No low necklines and no cleavage showing. Cleavage must be covered. Dress should be appropriate to the frame of the girl.
Dress Adornments	White seed pearls and white or clear sequins may be used for adornment if they do not reflect color. No colored or iridescent sequins or rhinestones with silver backings are permitted. No sheer fabric or cutout lace is allowed on the dress other than the sleeves or neckline.

Gloves	Gloves must be worn and must be white with no adornment. No lace gloves are permitted. Length of the glove depends on the length of the sleeve. Long-sleeved gowns require short gloves. Short-sleeved gowns require long, above the elbow gloves. No $\frac{3}{4}$ length gloves that are just below the elbow are allowed. Elbows must be covered either by the glove or the sleeve of the gown.
Shoes	Shoes must be white. Style may be closed-toe flat or ballet shoes. Shoes may not have any adornments, beading, sparkles, glitter, etc. No slip-on mules, wedges, open-toed sandals, tennis shoes or boots are allowed.
Jewelry	All jewelry must be simple. Earrings must be small; studs, pearls, gold, silver, or diamonds are acceptable. No dangles should be worn. Necklaces must consist of a single strand of pearls, a thin gold or silver chain, or a small pearl or diamond drop. No rhinestone necklaces are allowed. No rings, bracelets, or watches may be worn as the debutante will be wearing gloves.
Hair	No adornment may be worn in the hair. Hair may be worn up or down but no visible clips, barrettes, flowers, hair ties, etc. may be worn. No sparkle products are allowed in hair.
Make-up	Make-up should be natural looking. No sparkle lotion or sparkle make-up is permitted. Nail polish should be pale or natural in color.
Flowers	No corsages are to be worn to the presentation. Cotillion will provide the appropriate flowers for the ball.
Other	All tattoos must be covered and no piercings other than single ear piercings are allowed.

Junior Ball Gown Approval Procedures & Considerations:

- All gowns must be approved by the Dress Committee by the approval date.
- If your gown is being made by a seamstress who cannot complete the gown by the approval date, you must make arrangements with your advisor.
- All items on the ball gown checklist must be approved in order to be presented.
- If you have any questions about the gown and accessory standards, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Dress Committee, so that they can provide guidance. Contact information will be provided at the Mother-Daughter Tea event.
- Debutantes will not be able to carry handbags during the presentation. They will need to be given to their escort during the presentation.
- Due to the ball date, weather occasionally requires a wrap. You may consider having something appropriate available.
- Ball gowns and accessories may not be changed after approval.
- Any debutante who shows up for the ball in attire out of compliance will not be presented.

Dress Code for Presenters and Escorts:

- Black tuxedo is required. NO tails, double-breasted, western cut, or vests allowed.
- Shirts will be plain white tuxedo shirts and worn with a black bow tie and cummerbund.
- Tuxedo dress shoes and socks will be black. No boots, regular dress shoes or tennis shoes are allowed.
- Military formals will be allowed, but the jacket must remain on unless a white dress shirt is worn beneath it.
- No exposed undershirts are allowed during the dance.
- No hats of any kind are allowed.
- No earrings or gauges of any kind are allowed.
- Tattoos must be covered.

Presentation & Ball Rules:

- Escorts will watch the presentation. They will not be permitted to leave the premises.
- Debutantes are responsible for their escort's behavior. All escorts must behave in a gentlemanly manner during the presentation. No talking, shouting, cell phone, or electronic device use is allowed. Debutantes must make sure their escorts understand the time commitment to attend the presentation and ball. Debutantes and escorts will not be allowed to leave the ball until exactly 11pm.
- Once the presentation is completed, the Master of Ceremonies will announce the first dance for presenters and junior debutantes. Escorts will line up to receive debutantes from presenters, dance with debutante and then proceed to the ball.
- Presenters, mothers, and other guests will leave the presentation after its completion and are not be allowed to enter/attend the ball unless they are attending the dinner.
- Any photographs of the debutante or with the debutante should be taken before the presentation, not after the presentation. Debutantes and escorts move directly into the ball and are not allowed to have pictures at the transition between events.

Ball Presentation - Senior Members & Advisors**Senior Member & Advisor Gown and Accessory Standards:**

Gown Color	Gowns can be any color except white or similar to white.
Petticoats	Petticoats may be worn to add fullness to the skirt and act as a slip. No hoop petticoats are allowed.
Backline	Back of the gown must measure no more than 2 inches below the bottom of the everyday bra line. No backless or cutouts below this measurement are allowed.

Style	Sheer necklines, off the shoulder, one shoulder, halters, spaghetti straps, and strapless gowns are allowed. No transparent or transparent-looking corset bodices are allowed.
Neckline	Gowns must be modest in design. No deep or plunge necklines are allowed. Cleavage must be covered. Dress should be appropriate to the frame of the girl.
Skirt length and shape	Gowns must be floor length but not touching the floor. Hem must be uniform on all sides. Slits must not be higher than the bottom of fingertips. No form-fitting, drop waist, or mermaid style skirts are allowed. Dress should be appropriate to the frame of the girl.
Shoes	Any color dress shoe and style may be worn. No slip-on mules, tennis shoes, sandals, flip-flops, or boots may be worn.
Jewelry	Simple and tasteful.
Hair	Simple and tasteful. Can be worn up or down.
Make-up	Make-up should be natural-looking. No sparkle lotion or sparkle make-up is permitted. Nail polish should be pale or natural in color.
Flowers	No corsages.

Senior Ball Gown Approval Procedures & Considerations:

- All gowns must be approved by the Dress Committee by the approval date.
- If your gown is being made by a seamstress who cannot complete the gown by the approval date, you must make arrangements with your advisor.
- All items on the ball gown checklist must be approved in order to attend.
- If you have any questions about the gown and accessory standards, please do not hesitate to reach out to the Dress Committee, so that they can provide guidance. Contact information will be provided at the Mother-Daughter Tea event.
- Due to the ball date, weather occasionally requires a wrap. You may consider having something appropriate available.
- Ball gowns and accessories may not be changed after approval.
- Any debutante who shows up for the ball in attire out of compliance will not be allowed to attend the ball.

Dress Code for Senior Escorts:

- Black tuxedo is required. NO tails, double breasted, western cut, or vest allowed.

- Shirts will be plain white and worn with a black bow tie and cummerbund.
- Traditional black tuxedo dress shoes and black socks must be worn. No boots or tennis shoes are allowed.
- Military formals will be allowed, but the jacket must remain on unless a white dress shirt is worn beneath it.
- No exposed undershirts are allowed during the dance.
- No hats of any kind are allowed.
- No earrings or gauges of any kind are allowed.
- Tattoos must be covered.

Senior Ball Rules:

- Debutantes are responsible for their escort's behavior. Debutantes must make sure that escorts understand the time commitment to attend the cotillion ball. Debutantes and escorts will not be allowed to leave the ball until 11pm.

The Cotillion Club of Harlingen Advisory Board Constitution:

Article I - Advisory Board Membership

Section A. The Advisory Board shall be composed of members who shall serve for a minimum of three (3) years. New members shall be selected annually by the Executive Board to fill vacancies. Members may continue to serve for additional terms by mutual consent. If possible, the Advisory Board shall be composed of proportional representation from each high school.

Section B. New advisors shall be provided an orientation and invited to the spring function.

Section C. It shall be the duty of the President to call an orientation meeting for the newly selected advisors.

Section D. All advisors shall pay \$100.00 annual dues by the Mother Daughter Tea held in August each year. All paid advisors have voting rights.

Section E. Continued membership on the Advisory Board is contingent upon attendance. Replies to all functions/meetings are required. Advisors cannot miss more than 2 events yearly. In addition, attendance at the presentation ball is mandatory. A review of participation will take place yearly to determine continued advisor membership.

Section F. Advisors may be removed for behavior that reflects negatively on the Cotillion Club of Harlingen.

Article II – Executive Board

Section B. The Officers of the Executive Board shall consist of the President, Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Ball Chair, Ball Co-Chair, and Ex-Officio who shall each serve a one (1) year term. A maximum of 3 consecutive terms is allowable in a position.

1. President - The president shall:
 - a. Oversee all functions of the organization and coordinate with event chairs for all activities
 - b. Preside at all meetings of the organization
 - c. Complete the calendar for the year
 - d. Serve the organization in a strictly impartial manner
 - e. Be responsible for the proper transfer of information to the newly elected president
 - f. Handle arrangements for all regular and special executive meetings
 - g. Be available to assist with any membership functions
2. Vice-President - The vice-president shall:
 - a. Assume the duties of the President in her absence
 - b. Be the Chair of the Programming Committee
 - c. Be responsible for ordering the Cotillion Charms
 - d. Manage all Debutante disciplinary issues
3. Treasurer - The treasurer shall:
 - a. Collect all advisor and debutante dues as well as monies for any other cotillion activities, items, and fundraising efforts
 - b. Be responsible for reimbursements and payment of invoices
 - c. Have custody of the organization's funds and provide an accurate Treasurer's report at all general meetings
 - d. In collaboration with the Executive Board and Chairs, prepare the year's budget
 - e. Assist incoming Treasurer with preparation of the budget for the upcoming year

4. Secretary - The secretary shall:
 - a. Record the minutes of all meetings. Minutes shall consist of all motions and pertinent information discussed at meetings
 - b. Keep all meeting minutes in a centralized location for sharing with general membership and transferring to the next Secretary
 - c. Work with the Executive Board and Chairs to ensure proper language and communication with debutantes and their mothers
 - d. Make arrangements for the printing of the invitations to new members
 - e. Be responsible for setting up a roster of all membership
5. Ball Chairs - Ball Chair & Co-Chair shall:
 - a. Coordinate all functions of the presentation and ball with the assistance of their committee members.
6. Ex-Officio - The Ex Officio position shall be held by the past-president. In this position, they shall:
 - a. Provide guidance to the Executive Board on matters related to the organization and its membership.

Section D. A nominating committee shall present a slate of new officers and committee chairs at the spring board meeting. The newly elected officers, along with the new advisors shall assume their duties at the close of the spring meeting

Article III – Meetings

Section A. The President may call special meetings at her discretion.

Section B. There shall be a minimum of two regular meetings of the Advisory Board during the year.

Section C. At the spring board meeting, the Executive Board slate and committee chairs shall be presented by the nominating committee. Advisor committee placements for the next year will also be presented at the spring board meeting.

Section D: A summer executive board and chairs meeting shall be held no later than June 15th to finalize calendars and event details for the coming year and to address any necessary constitutional changes. Any constitutional changes should be read twice before adoption of said changes.

Article IV - Responsibilities

Section A. The Advisory Board shall select and invite for membership eligible candidates as defined in the Girls Constitution.

Section B. The Executive Board shall review membership of debutantes for the purpose of inviting, re-issuing membership, or withdrawing membership of debutantes.

Section C. Invitations, decorations, and all arrangements for events are the responsibility of the assigned Committee.

Section C. Advisors shall display proper etiquette, appropriate attire, and expected behavior.