

LISD

MIDDLE SCHOOL CHEER PROGRAM HANDBOOK 2018-2019

Leander Independent School District

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Cheer Handbook

Middle School
2018 - 2019

Our Purpose:

Cheerleading is a vibrant part of the Leander ISD community.

For campuses and the community, cheerleading exists in order to promote:

- Tradition
- Spirit, and
- Leadership
- For participants, cheerleading exists to provide students:
- Leadership opportunities
- A sense of family
- Participation in athletics for students with particular skills
- Occasions to learn and exhibit sportsmanship and citizenship
- Assistance in achieving academic excellence, and
- Opportunities to fail forward

These opportunities help students grow and mature, both physically and emotionally, resulting in citizens who model the LISD Ethical Principles.

Program Membership:

Membership in the cheerleading program consists of the following:

- Seventh and eighth grade students who meet the criteria listed in this handbook.
- Cheer coaches who are well-qualified individuals with a passion to lead, coach and mentor the cheerleaders in the program.

Cheer Expectations:

- Cheerleaders who move to LISD after the clinic process and camp must meet financial obligations and go through required training.
- Members of the cheer program will devote and pledge themselves to the guidelines outlined in the handbook.
- A cheer member will serve from the day of selection until the last day of school in that academic year.
- Each cheer member should be aware of the amount of time required for participation in the cheer program. Cheer an honor that requires commitment, hard work and dedication. Cheerleaders and managers are committed to one full year of participation.
- Each cheer member will be required to attend the cheer classes. Classes will consist of physical conditioning, preparation for games / events, some tumbling, jump techniques and stunting. Physical conditioning may include running, weight training and other exercises. Managers will also be expected to participate in summer camp and physical conditioning.

Cheer members must be aware that LISD cheer commitments will take priority over other outside commitments. Academic commitments, extra-curricular activities and outside cheer squads need to be considered before trying out for cheerleading. Any non-school related commitment will not be considered a reason to miss any cheer event or game. Absences related to outside commitments will result in a “strike” (see Cheer Discipline Policy).

Duties & Responsibilities:

ACADEMICS

- Any cheer member who receives a grade below 70 at the end of a grading period, or who fails to meet the goals in his / her Individual Education Plan (IEP), may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time determined by U.I.L.
- Any cheer member who becomes ineligible will not be allowed to perform or wear his / her uniform for any reason during the term of ineligibility. The head coach will determine if the cheer member is required to attend an event without participation.
- Any cheer member who has been ineligible for any two six-weeks grading periods during the current school year will be dismissed from the squad for the remainder of the year and not be able to return the following year.

ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION

- It is important that LISD cheer members realize the level of commitment that is necessary to make a team successful. Attendance at all games and cheer events is mandatory. Absences jeopardize the entire squad and hinder its success. A strike will be applicable.
- An absence to a game / event will only be excused in the following circumstances:
 - Personal illness / accident (which results in absence from school).
 - Funeral or death in the family.
- If a cheer member is absent from school, he / she may not participate in a cheer activity that day or evening. Missing any part of the school day constitutes an absence.
- If a cheer member is going to be absent from a practice, class and / or scheduled event, he / she must notify the cheer coach, in writing, at least **48 hours prior** to the conflict. A strike may be applicable.
- Attending all pep rallies (before, during or after school), practices, games, events and fundraising activities are required. Participation in non-school related activities will not be considered excused absences from cheer. A strike may be applicable.
- Cheer members are representing LISD cheer at all times (during and after school hours) and are expected to conduct themselves accordingly.
- All cheer members are required to attend summer camp and summer practices. Cheer members not attending these events will be dismissed from the squad.
- Any cheer member who has been ineligible because of strikes during the current school year will be dismissed from the squad for the remainder of the year and not be able to return the following year.

FINANCIAL

- Payments for uniforms must be made to the vendor on the day of the fitting.
- If a student is unable to participate in the cheer program because of financial reasons, parents should contact the cheer coach.

LEADERSHIP

- A cheer member is someone who is willing to set aside his / her own personal agenda for the entire program's pursuit of excellence. This is done by living the ethical principles through hard work, dedication and self-discipline.
- Members will demonstrate good sportsmanship, promote school spirit, and display genuine concern for others.

PHYSICAL

- Cheerleaders will develop the following essential skills:
 - Clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm, and coordination.
 - Physical moves that may involve jumps, balance, agility, and upper body strength.
 - Stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness.
 - The ability to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in a variety of weather conditions.

PRACTICES

- The cheer coaches, prior to the last day of school, will determine mandatory summer practices and camp dates.
- Practice will be held during the cheer class period and before or after school with the coach's supervision.
- The coach may assign additional afternoon or morning practices, with a 48-hour notice to the cheer members.
- Practices will be conducted on the safety mats if stunting or tumbling is involved. Some stunting and / or tumbling may be done on hard surfaces during pep rallies and athletic events.
- All practices are closed to the public.
- No cell phones are to be used during practice.
- Participants must attend all practices in order to perform at an event. Members will be held accountable for any absences.

SAFETY

- All participants must have a current physical form on file to participate.
- All participants must be trained and qualified for proper landing and spotting techniques before they are allowed to stunt or tumble.
- All participants must go through appropriate stunt and tumbling progression qualifications and follow NFHS / AACCA safety standards at all times.
- No playing around, laughing, or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt, tumbling, or practice session.
- Absolutely no jewelry will be worn during practices, games, or events.
JEWELRY INCLUDES BODY PIERCING!
- No tumbling or building of any stunt is permitted unless a cheer coach is present and has granted approval. Because of the increased athleticism of today's cheerleaders and the complexity of some stunts and tumbling passes performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic sport, of serious injury.

** Coaches reserve the right to suspend any cheerleader from stunting if they do not follow the above rules.*

TRANSPORTATION

- All cheerleaders must be picked up within 15 minutes of the end of an event or practice. Failure to do so will result in the cheerleader being unable to participate in the next scheduled event. Written notice must be given to the coach prior to the end of an event if a cheer member will have alternative transportation.
- The second time a cheerleader is not picked up by the allotted time, he / she will receive a strike.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital for a successful cheer program.

Coaches expect the following communication from parents:

- Concerns regarding their son/daughter expressed directly to the coach at the appropriate time and place.
- Discussion with the coach and/or school administrator on issues such as:
 - Emotional and physical needs of a student,
 - Student plan for success,
 - Student behavior,
 - Student safety.

Issues which are not appropriate for discussion with a coach are as follows:

- Squad selection of cheers, chants, stunts or elements of a performance,
- Any situation that deals with other students or cheer members.

Parents should expect the following communication from coaches:

- Requirements for the student and the cheer squad
- Locations, dates and times of practices, games and events,
- Squad requirements for special equipment, uniform, squad rules/regulations, travel arrangements and off-season expectations,
- Procedures in the event the student becomes injured during a game, practice or event.

Process of appeal between parent, school and coach:

If at any time a cheer member or parent feels he/she needs to discuss a problem or complaint, please follow the appropriate channels:

- Campus cheer coach: call and set appointment.
 - Outline and define objectives for a meeting and discuss facts only.
 - If you have a concern or need to discuss a problem, please make an appointment with the cheer sponsor.
 - If the meeting with the coach does not provide satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian should contact the campus assistant principal.
 - Without prior permission from the campus principal or designee, parents/guardians may not interrupt class instruction or a game.

CHEER WORKSHOP/CLINIC PROCEDURES

BEFORE WORKSHOP/CLINIC

- All candidates must be enrolled in LISD on or before the first day of the workshop.
- All candidates must attend the mandatory parent / candidate workshop meeting.
- As part of the workshop process, cheer coaches will be looking at each candidate's report cards, behavior records and attendance.
- Parents and candidates are responsible for completing, signing and returning all forms handed out at the mandatory workshop meeting. These forms must be returned by the due date. Parents should read all information carefully, and sign the forms giving their son or daughter permission to participate.
- Out-going eighth grade cheer members may teach the cheer and dance sections of the workshop. The eighth grade cheer members will assist during the entire workshop.

DURING WORKSHOP/CLINIC

- During the workshop process, the following are evaluated by the judges: jumps, tumbling, cheerleading ability, motions, memory, overall impression, and dance ability.
- During the workshop, students should wear athletic attire, including tennis shoes.

CODE OF CONDUCT

LISD Cheer Program Discipline Process

A LISD cheer member is a respectful, disciplined athlete who serves as a role model for his / her peers at all times. This is a visible position. Each squad member will be held to the high standards outlined in this handbook and the LISD Student Code of Conduct.

Behavioral infractions will be handled in the following manner: **This discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the LISD CHEER program.**

LEVEL I-

Immediate Reminders: The cheer coach will determine the reminder at the time of the infraction. Consequences of behaviors that occur during a game will result in removal from some football, volleyball, and basketball game traditions and/or quarters/periods. The list below includes, but is not limited to, examples of some behaviors which would require immediate reminders:

- ◆ Tardiness to practice or class
- ◆ Forgetting practice clothes or arriving to practice/game without proper attire and/or hair not pulled back
- ◆ Wearing jewelry in practice, game, or performance
- ◆ Chewing gum, eating candy, or snacking during a game, practice, or activity without permission
- ◆ Being disruptive, horsing around, talking excessively during a game, practice, or activity
- ◆ Socializing with friends or family without permission
- ◆ Failure to bring designated materials when required (i.e. notebook, paper, handbook)
- ◆ Failure to help hang or remove signs when assigned
- ◆ Failure to paint signs when assigned
- ◆ Failure to turn in any paperwork or project money
- ◆ Failure to be in complete uniform
- ◆ Failure to cover visible tattoos

LEVEL II -

Below are examples of behaviors that may warrant Level 2 infractions, but are not limited to these behaviors. Any of the following behaviors listed will result in a strike:

- ◆ Disrespect/insubordination toward the cheer coaches
- ◆ Behavior unbecoming a cheer member
- ◆ Disrespect toward a teacher or administrator
- ◆ Disrespect toward a fellow cheer member.
- ◆ Disrespect/inappropriate language
- ◆ An absence to a game/practice/event
- ◆ Leaving a performance, practice, or event
- ◆ Refusing to work or pay attention at practice
- ◆ Unsportsmanlike conduct at a game or performance
- ◆ Talking on cell phones during a game, practice, or activity
- ◆ Academic dishonesty
- ◆ Assignment to ISS
- ◆ Receiving a referral (for behavioral issues)
- ◆ Repeatedly (more than three times) forgetting to remove jewelry
- ◆ **Receiving 5 “reminders” for any combination of Level One Infractions**
- ◆ Missing an event, practice, performance, or game due to school detention or Saturday school
- ◆ Having unnatural hair color at an event.

Strikes will be given based on a cheer member’s behavioral infraction. The coaches will document each behavioral infraction.

- ◆ If at any time a cheerleader has received **three strikes or resigns**, he/she will be removed from the cheer program for the remainder of the year [Any cheer member who is removed or resigns from the cheer program, for any reason, will need to be moved from the cheer class to a parallel physical education class in order to earn the P.E. credit for that semester or another class.]
- ◆ Any student who is removed from the program for grades or behavior/strikes/resignation must submit a formal appeal request to try out for the cheer program the following year. Appeals will be granted on a case-by-case basis determined by a LISD cheer coach and administrator. Any student who does receive a waiver to tryout will be on a contract with the program and will be removed for a breach of that contract. Moreover, they will not be eligible to run for a leadership position.

The following will occur when a strike has been issued:

Strike One- Parent notification and conference with student

Strike Two- Meeting with parent, student, coaches, and an assistant principal

Strike Three- Parent notification and immediate removal from team

All strikes are permanent.

LEVEL III –

Below are examples of behaviors that will warrant Level 3 infractions and result in immediate removal from the cheer program:

- ◆ Any assignment to LEO
 - ◆ Failing any two six weeks
 - ◆ Alcohol
 - ◆ Drug use
 - ◆ Smoking
 - ◆ Destruction or vandalism of school property
 - ◆ Suspension from school (OSS)
 - ◆ Stealing
 - ◆ Gross and/or serious misconduct
 - ◆ Receiving three strikes
 - ◆ Bullying/Cyber bullying/Harassment/Slander (the action or crime of making a false statement damaging to a person's reputation.)
 - ◆ 15 Level I Reminders (3 Strikes)
- ◆ Violations of student code of conduct may also be handled by campus administration in conjunction with the LISD Cheer Discipline Process.
 - ◆ **Temporary suspensions may be issued at the Coaches discretion** as well as the following circumstances:
 - Inability to perform at performance/games due to short term, long term, chronic or catastrophic health conditions.
 - Ineligibility due to academic non-compliance (for the first time).

Consequences for being removed or resigning from a squad will be enforced at any LISD campus should the removed/resigning cheerleader transfer to another LISD campus.

General Information

- Packets will be handed out at the parent / candidate meeting to explain the workshop process.
- All students who attend the workshop and meet the clinic expectations will be placed on the LISD cheer squad.
- Any student currently enrolled in Leander ISD MUST ATTEND the workshop clinic AND summer camp in order to participate in cheer the following academic year.
- Any student who is currently enrolled in Leander ISD who does not attend the workshop clinic and / or the summer camp WILL NOT be eligible to participate in the cheer program for the upcoming academic year.
- A cheer workshop will be held during the second semester of the school year.
- Any student whose cheerleading account is not paid in full will not be eligible to attend the workshop.
- All candidates must be in good discipline standing.
- A completed physical form must be submitted to the cheer coach prior to the beginning of the cheer clinic.
- The cheer workshop clinic is closed to the public. Parents are asked to drop off their son or daughter and leave the facility. Candidates will be provided with a specific pick-up time and location.
- There will be NO CELL PHONES allowed in any of the workshop areas. Candidates are asked to leave cell phones at home. A phone will be readily available in the case of an emergency.
- If a candidate fails to show up for his / her assigned workshop time, he / she will not be permitted to finish the workshop. It is important that all candidates report to the designated workshop site on time.
- Candidates must attend every day of the after-school workshop clinic.

This handbook is a living document. If an incident should arise that is not specifically addressed in this document, the coach and / or school administrator will address the incident on an individual basis. In addition, in order to support the cheer program, the coach and / or administrators reserve the right to revise this handbook at any time.

Any situation that may arise that is not specifically address in the handbook will be dealt with on an individual basis by coaches and school administrators.

Latest revision 2/9/2017

Leander ISD does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, or disabilities in providing educational services, activities, and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with the Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Educational Amendments of 1972; Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended; and Title II of the American With Disabilities Act. For information on compliance with these, contact LISD Administration representative. Each parent and cheer member/ candidate will be provided a current copy of the LISD Cheer Program Constitution/Handbook. An electronic copy of the current handbook will be accessible on the LISD webpage and a copy will be filed with each campus principal, each campus cheer coach, the Athletic Director(s).

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