

LISD
High School
Cheer

PROGRAM
HANDBOOK
2023-2024

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Table of Contents

Purpose Statement	3
Program Membership	4
Commitment, Leadership, Discrimination	4-5
Academics, Attendance and Participation	5-6
Sporting Event Expectations	6
Financial	6-7
Physical	7
Uniforms	7
Transportation, Captains, Communication	7-8
Tryout Procedures	8-10
General Discipline Process	10-12
Tobacco, Alcohol, and Illegal Drug Discipline	12-14
Digital Citizenship	15-16
Parental Involvement and Lettering	16
Competition and Safety	16-17

Cheer Program & Mascot Handbook

INTRODUCTION

The Cheer program is an integral part of the total school experience and membership is considered a privilege, not a right. The policies, procedures and regulations in this handbook are in compliance with school board policies and administrative procedures. They are designed to provide for successful experiences for students and the efficient operation of the Cheer Team programs. This handbook supersedes all prior publications governing LISD Cheer Team programs and shall be used by all principals, coaches and members in grades 9-12. Its purpose is to help answer student/parent questions and be a guide for defining the procedures of the organization. You, the member, are accountable and responsible for all guidelines contained within this handbook and for any additions that your respective coach might add.

Statement of Nondiscrimination: Leander Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of race, religion, color, national origin, sex, or disability in providing education services, activities and programs, including vocational programs in accordance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, as amended; Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972; and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, as amended. Contact:

- Bryan Miller, Title IX Coordinator, for concerns, regarding discrimination on the basis of sex.
- Angela Patrick, Section 504 Coordinator, for concerns regarding discrimination on the basis of disability.

Leander Independent School District does not discriminate on the basis of disability by denying access to the benefits of District services, programs or activities of a public entity, or being subjected to discrimination by any public entity. To request information about the applicability of Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), interested persons should contact Kimberly Shaffer.

PURPOSE

Cheerleading is a vibrant part of the community that comprises Leander ISD.

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

- Tradition
- Spirit
- Ambassadorship

For participants, cheerleading exists to provide students:

- Multiple Leadership Chances
- A Sense of Family
- Participation in an extracurricular activity for Students with a Particular Skill Set
- Occasions to Learn and Exhibit Sportsmanship and Citizenship
- Assistance in Achieving Academic Excellence
- Opportunities to Fail Forward

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

PROGRAM MEMBERSHIP

To respect the diversity of the six high school campuses, the cheer coaches will use data to determine the makeup of each team and the number of squads in each high school's cheer program.

Each high school will have a Varsity and Junior Varsity Squad with the option to carry a freshman squad. The decision to carry a freshman squad will be based on the data presented on the day of tryouts. In the event that a campus carries a freshman squad, the freshman squad will consist of only freshmen and the Junior Varsity squad may consist of freshmen, sophomores and juniors. The Varsity squad will consist of sophomores, juniors, and seniors.

The Cheer Teams will be made up of the following class ranks:

The Freshman/Junior Varsity Squad may consist of Freshmen, Sophomore and Junior girls/boys. The Varsity Squad may consist of Sophomores, Juniors and Senior girls/boys.

Varsity: Squads may have a maximum of 30 cheerleaders.

Sub-Varsity: Squads will have a minimum of 8 in order to form a team.

- The Mascot will be one or two students, who are classified as a freshman, sophomore, junior, senior.
- Managers will consist of freshman, sophomore, junior, or senior students. They will submit an application to specific campus cheer coaches for consideration. Each campus coach will determine the criteria to be selected as manager.
- The Cheer Coach will be a well-qualified individual who has the passion to lead, coach, and mentor the cheerleaders in his/her program.

In addition -

- Cheerleader openings that occur after camp will not be filled.
- Although we understand that unfortunate circumstances may arise, LISD CHEER will only conduct one tryout per year. If you are unable to participate in this tryout, you must wait until the following year. If a student encounters a non-disciplinary situation outside of their control (funeral, injury, etc.), limited exceptions may apply. A candidate may petition for an exception prior to the tryout clinic by notifying their cheer coach. The decision will be made by the cheer coach and administrative representative. Administrative decision is final.
- In the event that a current cheer student transfers to another campus after tryouts, the student will not be eligible to cheer on the squad at the transfer campus. It may be possible for the student to be a cheer manager but that will be at the coach's discretion.

COMMITMENT

Members of the cheer program will devote and pledge themselves to components outlined in the handbook below. A cheer member will serve from the day of selection until the last day of school the following academic year.

- Each cheer member should be aware of the amount of time cheerleading requires. It is an honor that requires not only commitment, but also hard work and dedication. Being part of the cheer program is a year-round commitment.
- Each cheer member (excluding the Crew members) will be required to be in the cheer class(es) at their respective campus. Classes will consist of physical conditioning, prep for games/events, tumbling, jump technique, and stunting. Physical conditioning may include, but is not limited to, running, weight training, push-ups, crunches, etc. Managers and mascots will participate with physical conditioning but may also be given separate expectations per each campus cheer coach.
- Coaches will conduct regular skills checks to ensure that athletes are continuing to build and perfect their skills. Athletes that fail to perform skills required by the cheer coach may be benched from games and performances.
- Cheer members need to be aware that their LISD cheer commitments will come first. Jobs, driver education, outside cheer teams, etc. need to be considered before trying out for cheer squads. Any outside commitment will not be considered as a reason to miss any cheer event/game. Absences related to outside commitments will result in a "strike" (see LISD Cheer Discipline Process).
- 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. They will not be eligible for "lettering" status, scholarships, or the Cheer Banquet at the end of the season.
- 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 any class available if P.E. credit is not needed and approved by campus administration.
- Any student who is removed from the program for grades or behavior/strikes or resigns 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, campus administrator and district cheer 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.

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

LEADERSHIP

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

DISCRIMINATION

Leander ISD's Local Policy FFH states:

Statement of Nondiscrimination: The District prohibits discrimination, including harassment, against any student on the basis of race, color, religion, sex, gender, national origin, age, disability, or any other basis prohibited by law. The District prohibits dating violence, as defined by this policy. Retaliation against anyone involved in the complaint process is a violation of District policy and is prohibited.

Any consequences for violating the above policy will be determined by campus and district administration. Consequences will be determined based on the severity of the infraction and may include suspension or dismissal from the team or athletic activities.

ACADEMICS

- Any cheerleader who receives a grade **below** 70 at the end of a Six-week grading cycle, or who fails to meet the standards in his/her Individual Education Plan (IEP) may not participate in extracurricular activities for the allotted time set by the LISD UIL Eligibility Schedule.
- Any cheerleader who becomes ineligible will not be allowed to perform, travel with the squad, or wear his/her uniform for any reason for the term of ineligibility.
- Any cheerleader who has **failed any two six-weeks grading periods** during the cheer year (tryout process to tryout process) will be dismissed from the squad for the remainder of the year. If the student fails the last six-weeks grading period, the student will begin the next school year on a grade contract, explaining that failing another six weeks would result in removal from the team.
- Any cheerleader who receives a grade **below** 70 at the end of a grading period in an approved Advanced Placement class will be required to apply for a UIL participation grade waiver. The failing grade has to be between a 60-69 to be eligible to apply for the waiver.
- A participation waiver request must be filed with the appropriate administrator by the due date.
- All cheerleaders will be allowed one participation waiver, in one course, for one grading period, per semester in an approved Advanced Placement class only. The first semester waiver will not be transferable to the second semester.

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 not only crucial, but also mandatory as absences jeopardize the entire squad and hinder success.

- Attending all practices, games, events, and pep rallies is mandatory.
- **Jobs are not an excuse to miss any of these events.**
- An absence to a game/event will only be considered excused in the following circumstances:
 - Personal illness/accident (resulting in missing school) with supporting doctors documentation
 - Funeral or death in the family

- UIL or school-related performance/event
- If a cheer member is issued an unexcused absence from school, he or she may not participate in the cheer activity that day or evening. Parent notes will not be accepted. An absence is defined as missing half (two periods) or more of the school day.
- Failure to attend required practices, in and out of the school day, may result in removal from an activity.
- If a cheer member is going to be absent from a practice, class, and/or scheduled event, he/she must notify his/her cheer coach in writing and at least 48 hours prior to the conflict. A strike may still be applicable (see LISD Cheer Discipline Process).
- Cheer members will cheer at all games and events assigned by the coach.
- Cheer members are representing LISD at all times, during and after school hours, so please conduct yourself accordingly.
- Crew members will be responsible for attending events at the coach's discretion. Crew members will need to wear the appropriate attire to all events.
- Managers for squads will need to attend events at the coach's discretion. Expectations for this position will be set by each campus cheer coach.
- Mascots are responsible for attending all events decided upon by the campus cheer coach. They will be treated as a member of the cheer squad and held to all of the same expectations. Mascots are responsible for the care and upkeep of their mascot uniform.
- All cheer members, except for the Crew, are required to attend the coach's designated summer camp and summer practices. Alternative camps are not an option for individual members.
- All cheerleaders are required to cover visible tattoos and remove all body piercings while representing the cheer team (this includes practice).
- Athletes must wear practice clothing as they were intended to be worn. Shirts must be worn at all times.

SPORTING EVENT EXPECTATIONS

The main focus for LISD CHEER is to support our school and teams in any way possible. In order to allow our members to be involved in other organizations, jobs and to be able to succeed academically, we will be following the schedule of games below. Coaches will provide at least two weeks notice for discretionary games, however less notice may be given for extenuating circumstances such as playoffs.

- Football: Varsity - all home and away games; JV- all home games (alternating A/B games); Freshmen all home games (alternating A/B games)
- Basketball: Girls: All home district games; Boys: All home district games (except for those over school holidays)
- All other athletic sports (support via attendance to games, signs, volunteers, etc)
- **Playoffs: Squads will make every attempt to attend playoff games.**

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- A payment schedule may be set for all payments due.
- All cheer members must be current with their payment schedule. Not being current may result in missing cheer events or games. In the event that a cheer account is not current, permanent suspension may result at the discretion of the coach and administration. In that case, the cheer member will still be responsible for the amount due to their program.
- Cheer members who owe a balance on their account will not be eligible to try out the following year unless the amount is paid in full.
- Cheer members may attend and participate in all team fundraising activities, in which all money earned will be contributed to the general cheer booster fund.
- Financial obligations are handled by the respective campus' cheer booster club. All payments should be made to the respective booster club.
- See "Cheer Cost" page in the tryout packet for questions or explanation of cheer cost.
- A late payment fee may be instituted if the pay schedule is not met.
- Cheer members who quit, resign or are dismissed from a team, will be responsible for unpaid balances.
- No money will be refunded.

PHYSICAL

Cheerleaders must be capable of performing the essential functions for a cheerleader.

- Cheerleaders will demonstrate clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm, and coordination.
- Cheerleaders will perform physical moves that may involve jumps, balance, agility, and upper body strength.
- Cheerleaders will exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness, and will be able to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in heat and cold weather.
- Parent notes will not excuse a cheerleader from physical activity. Cheerleaders that are ill or injured must be restricted/cleared by a nurse, doctor or trainer.
- Cheerleaders must uphold the skill level demonstrated (i.e. tumbling, jumps, etc.) at tryouts while striving for continuous improvement. Failure to uphold skills may result in consequences to be determined by the coach.
- In addition to the above mentioned, a student physical must be on file with the cheer coach prior to tryouts.

UNIFORMS

Members may not wear the group's uniform unless the coach so designates. Members must wear all parts of the performance uniform while in public. The uniform should be respected at all times and not shared with non-members of the organization.

A complete uniform check will be held prior to an activity or performance - this includes hair and makeup. Hair color shall be natural color only. No visible piercings are allowed. Belly button and nose piercings are not allowed during practice or while cheering at games, performances, or events. No visible tattoos are allowed while in uniform/costume.

Members will be required to purchase practice wear, shoes, and other personal items listed by the coach. These items will be paid for by the member.

TRANSPORTATION

The cheer team must ride together as a group to and from all games or activities with coaches. JV/ Freshmen do not follow this guideline, as they only cheer at home games. In the event the F/JV teams do travel; they must ride together as a group to and from the game/activity and follow the same rules as the varsity traveling squad. Requests to return home by any other means must be submitted in writing or email to the coach 24 hours prior to departure. The cheer coach will decide if the request is reasonable. If no request is made, the member will return on the bus with the coach. Phone calls are not acceptable. **There will be no exceptions.**

Overnight Travel:

There may be times when teams will be allowed overnight trips. In these instances, the athlete must:

- Abide by the curfew set by the head coach
- Not be in different gender rooms at any time
- Travel to AND from the event with the team
- Be aware that coaches may ask to check the athlete's bags before leaving for the trip.
- Adhere to the expectations for students in the LISD Student Code of Conduct.
- Not consume or be in possession of alcohol, tobacco, or other drug use (including electronic cigarettes, vapes or inhalants)

CAPTAINS/CO-CAPTAINS

- Each campus will determine the selection date in which captains/co-captains are selected.
- Failure to adhere to the campus captain/co-captain contract and district cheer handbook standards could result in disciplinary action and may result in removal from the leadership position.

COMMUNICATION

Communication is vital for a successful cheer program.

Expectations for Parent to Coach communication:

- Concerns regarding a son/daughter expressed directly to the coach at the appropriate time (times in which a cheer activity would not be disrupted) and place.

- Issues appropriate for discussion with the coach and/or school administrator:
 - Mental and physical state of a student
 - Student plan for success
 - Student behavior
 - Student safety
- Issues not appropriate for discussion with a coach:
 - Squad selection of cheers, chants, stunts, or elements of a performance
 - Any situation that deals with other students/cheer members
 - Due to student FERPA privacy laws, coaches are limited to discussing other students and cheer members.

Expectations for Coach to Parent communication:

- Requirements the coach has for his/her student and the squad
- Locations, dates, and times of practices, games, and events
- Squad requirements of 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

Communication between parent, school, and coach/Process of Appeals:

If at any time a cheer member or parent feels he/she needs to discuss a problem or complaint, the appropriate channels must be followed. A request for appeal must be submitted to the head coach within **3 days** of the suspension.

1. Contact campus cheer coach - call and set up an appointment.
 - Outline and define objectives for a meeting and stick to discussing facts only.
 - Do not confront the coach before, during or after a practice, game or event.
 - Meetings of this nature do not promote resolution of the situation, but often escalate it.
 - Do not attempt to enter the cheer class without prior permission from the campus principal or his/her designee. Parents/guardians are restricted to visits under district guidelines for campus visitors.
 - If the meeting with the coach does not provide satisfactory resolution, a parent or guardian should move to the next step in the process.
2. Contact the campus Assistant Principal (who serves as campus administrator) to set up a meeting with the cheer coach and the AP. If this meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, proceed to the next step.
3. Contact the Principal to discuss concerns about the cheer program or situations involving your student. If this meeting does not provide a satisfactory resolution, proceed to the next step.
4. Contact Megan Liles (Fine Arts Director-Visual and Performing Arts) to set up a meeting.

GENERAL TRYOUT INFORMATION

- Cheer tryouts will be held in the second semester of the school year.
- All candidates must have all debts paid to the cheer program prior to being eligible to try out.
- Candidates must attend every day of the after-school tryout clinic unless excused by the coach, administration, and district administration.
- Candidates enrolled in LEO or serving an Out of School Suspension (OSS) at any time during the tryout process are not eligible to tryout for the cheer team.
- A physical must be turned in as part of the tryout process. Any student who does not have a physical on file with the trainer or has one that is expired must have a new one turned in on the tryout paperwork due date.
- LISD tryouts and clinics are closed to the public. Parents are asked to drop off their daughter/son and leave the LISD facility. There will be no areas for parents to wait. Candidates will be given an ending time for their tryout session. Parent pick-up will be in a specific location that will be announced during the tryout clinic. All cheer candidates will be escorted in/out by a cheer coach or administrator.
- There will be **NO CELL PHONES** allowed in any of the tryout areas. Candidates are asked to leave cell phones at home or in their car, but we will also pick up ones that are brought to the school. We will have a phone readily available in case of emergency.
- If a candidate fails to show up for his/her assigned tryout time, he/she will not be permitted to tryout at all. It is important that all candidates report to the designated tryout site on time.
- There will be no “tryout by video” at any time.
- **All Coaches’ decisions are final.**

BEFORE TRYOUTS

- All candidates must be enrolled in an LISD school or provide official documentation of residency such as lease agreement, deed, title, etc. on or before the first day of the tryout clinics. At the time of tryouts, candidates considering a transfer to another LISD school must try out for the school they are planning to attend. If the transfer is not approved, the student will be unable to cheer at any LISD high school for the upcoming year.
- As part of the tryout process, cheer coaches will be looking at each candidate's behavior records and attendance to determine Character Evaluation points (see Tryout Packet for explanation and break down of Character Evaluation). Character points will be deducted if a candidate receives any Level II and/or III infraction.
- Parents and candidates are responsible for reading and completing all forms on the Rank One website. These forms must be completed by the set time and date. Parents need to read all information carefully and sign forms to give permission for their daughter/son to participate.
- Candidates are expected to learn and perfect skills and technique prior to attending the tryout clinic. The following skills will not be taught during the clinic: stunting and jump technique and tumbling skills.
- The Tryout Cheer and Band Dance will be posted online prior to tryouts. The Cheer and Band Dance choreography will not be taught at the clinic. Candidates are responsible for learning the material prior to attending the clinic. Cheer and Band Dance will be reviewed at the Clinic.
- Out-going seniors for each campus will teach the tryout cheer and dance. The senior cheer members will help the entire week of tryouts.
- The following will be evaluated during clinic week: character and coach evaluation. Please see the "Tryout Packet" for further clarification of judged areas and point scales.
- Mascots will also try out for their position at each high school.
- Each candidate and parent have the total responsibility to review and verify (with signature) character evaluation scores (attendance & discipline). This signed verification is due on the last day of the tryout clinic.

DURING TRYOUTS

- During the tryout process, the following are all evaluated by the Coach(es): jumps, tumbling, cheer, stunts, performance and dance ability.
- During the tryout, no part of any official cheer uniform may be worn (i.e., specific squad bows, special squad socks, etc.). White cheer shoes will be permitted, but with nothing attached to the shoe to signify involvement with a previous or current squad.

AFTER TRYOUTS

- Each campus' cheer coach will decide upon managers and the Crew members. Each campus will have specifications/requirements for these positions.
- Results will be posted via the internet after all tryouts are finished. Each candidate will be aware of the notification process before they leave the LISD tryout site.
- Candidates that do not make a team have a one-week window from the time of tryouts to pick up their scores from the high school front office. Candidates that do not make a team have a one-week window from the time of tryouts to choose to schedule a conference, at a mutually agreeable time, with the cheer coach.
- Upon making the cheer team, the discipline process, as outlined below goes into effect.

LISD CHEER PROGRAM DISCIPLINE PROCESS

An LISD cheer member takes on the role of a respectful and disciplined athlete who should be a model for her/his peers at all times - in school, after school, and in the community. This is a very visual position and your peers are looking at you. Along with this position comes a great deal of responsibility, good work ethics, and a spirit of cooperation with parents, coaches, other cheerleaders, and other students. **Each squad member will be held to these high standards in and out of school, in and out of uniform, throughout the cheer year (tryout process to tryout process).** All accountability will be handled in such a way as to teach the squad member the ethical principle that applies to the circumstance. The coaches of each campus program will determine all consequences based on the following prescribed discipline process and LISD Student Code of Conduct. In addition, coaches will not discuss discipline/consequences with the entire team in regard to any one cheer member due to privacy issues. Cheer members and parents should refrain from asking coaches about any incident/discipline/consequence not involving them.

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. They will not be eligible for “lettering” status or attend the Cheer Banquet at the end of the season. [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 that fits their schedule.] 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 campus administrator and district cheer 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.

The following are levels at which behaviors will be handled. This discipline process begins when each member becomes part of the LISD CHEER program.

LEVEL I -

Below are **examples** of Level I infractions but are not limited to these behaviors. Level I infractions will be documented by the coach to serve as a documented reminder for the student athlete. Consequences of behaviors that occur during a game may 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 Level I infractions:**

- 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

Athletes will receive a strike upon receiving 10 Level I infractions

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 of 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 out 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 (a student will not be able to perform or participate in activities until the completion of their ISS placement (end-of-day at midnight). The student is still required to attend scheduled practices that don't interfere with the ISS placement.
- Receiving a referral (for behavioral issues)
- Receiving any combination of 10 "Level I" infractions
- Missing an event, practice, performance, or game due to school detention or Saturday school
- Not adhering to Leander ISD dress code
- Failure to follow Digital Citizenship guidelines listed below (pg 14)

LEVEL III –

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

- Any assignment to LEO
- Becoming academically ineligible any two six weeks
- Destruction or vandalism of school property
- Suspension from school (OSS)
- Stealing
- Gross and/or serious misconduct
- Receiving three strikes
- Failure to follow Digital Citizenship guidelines listed below (pg 14)
- Bullying/Cyber bullying/Harassment/Slander as referenced on page 14-15 (the action or crime of making a false statement damaging to a person's reputation.)
- 30 Level I Reminders (3 Strikes)

*Violations of the student code of conduct may also be handled by campus administration **in conjunction** with the LISD Cheer Discipline Process.

PLACEMENT IN ISS

Athletes placed in ISS will not be allowed to participate in extracurricular competitions/performance until completion of the ISS placement (end-of-day at midnight). The student is still required to attend scheduled practices that don't interfere with the ISS placement. Consequences for receiving an ISS placement will be determined by the Coach and could include removal from the team/program.

SUSPENSION/REMOVAL

Each coach will have the authority, with the concurrence of the Fine Arts Director and Campus Administration, to suspend, remove, or place on probation for an extended period of time, any athlete for major or minor infractions of rules for that team. Any student suspended or removed from the cheer team must be given:

1. The reason(s) for the suspension/removal.
2. The time and provisions of the suspension/removal.
3. The procedures for reentering the program, if applicable.
4. Information on class schedule change or options.
5. The opportunity to appeal. Parents of the suspended/removed dancer will be notified within 24 hours of suspension by the director.

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

The following rules concerning tobacco, alcohol and illegal drugs apply to all Leander ISD Cheerleaders at all times during the calendar year. Violations to these rules will remain with the cheerleader during their entire high school career and the cheerleader will be placed on a behavior contract for each offense:

TOBACCO

***NO SMOKING OR USE OF ANY TOBACCO PRODUCTS, THIS INCLUDES E-CIGARETTES AND VAPES.**

The athlete who violates the above stated rules shall be subject to the following:

First Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. The student will complete 15 hours of community service. The Head Coach or designee will monitor.
3. One Strike Issued
4. An additional strike will be issued if violation occurs at school or school sponsored event and can result in ISS or a behavior referral

Second Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. The student will complete 30 hours of community service. The Head Coach or designee will monitor.
3. One Strike Issued for second offense
4. An additional strike will be issued if a violation occurs at a school or school-sponsored event. Removal from the program may occur.

Third Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. 3 Strikes issued for third offense. Cheerleader is removed from the program

ALCOHOL

***NO DRINKING OR POSSESSION OF ALCOHOLIC BEVERAGES**

The athlete who violates the above stated rules shall be subject to the following at minimum:

First Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. The student will be suspended from participation from all extracurricular competitions/performances for a minimum of 3 weeks.
3. The student will complete 30 hours of community service. The Cheer Coach or designee will monitor. Students must enroll in the LISD Drug Education and Counseling Program by initially completing a substance abuse assessment with ADAPT Coordinator and following any suggestions discussed, and providing proof of completion. One parent must be in attendance with the student for the substance abuse assessment.

**In order to return to active competition participation, the student must be in good standing with the cheer program, completed criteria outlined in #2, #3, and #4.*

4. One Strike Issued

*Additional strikes can be issued if violation occurs at school or school sponsored events and which result in ISS or LEO. Removal from the program is possible

**On a first offense only, if a student self-reports, the suspension will be for 2 weeks with a total of 15 hours of community service.*

Second Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. The student will be suspended from participation from all extracurricular competitions/performances for a minimum of 6 weeks. Removal from the cheer roll sheet will be at the head coach's discretion.
3. The student will complete one hundred (100) hours of community service. The Cheer Coach or designee will monitor.

4. Students must enroll in the LISD Drug Education and Counseling Program by initially completing a substance abuse assessment with ADAPT Coordinator and following any suggestions discussed and providing proof of completion. One parent must be in attendance with the student for the substance abuse assessment.
5. Two Strikes will be issued.
6. An additional strike can be issued if violation occurs at school or school sponsored event which will result in cheerleader removal.

Third Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach
2. 3 strikes will be issued and the cheerleader will be removed from the program.

Note: If the offense occurs during the offseason/summer, the suspension from participation will begin with the first week of activity. If the offense occurs during a sport season or period of extracurricular activity, the suspension will begin with the next extracurricular activity as determined by the coach.

ILLEGAL DRUGS

***NO USE OR POSSESSION OF ILLEGAL DRUGS**

The athlete who violates the above stated rules shall be subject to the following at minimum:

First Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach.
2. The student will be suspended from participation from all extracurricular competitions/performances for a minimum of 3 weeks.
3. The student will complete 30 hours of community service. The Cheer Coach or designee will monitor.
4. A negative drug test taken at a family’s physician’s office or any other drug testing agency must be submitted to and approved by the Campus Administration and the Head Coach at the expense of the student prior to returning to competition status. ONLY hair follicle or urine specimens will be accepted as a drug test. The Campus Administration, the Head Coach and ADAPT Coordinator will work with the athlete to create a timeline for this to be completed.
5. The student must enroll in the LISD Drug Education and Counseling Program by initially completing a substance abuse assessment with ADAPT Coordinator, following any suggestions discussed and providing proof of completion. One parent must be in attendance with the student for the substance abuse assessment.
6. Two Strikes will be issued
7. An additional strike can be issued if violation occurs at school or school sponsored event which will result in cheerleader removal.

**In order to return to active competition participation, the student must be in good standing with the cheer program, completed criteria outlined in #2, #3, #4, and actively enrolled in #5.*

**On a first offense only, if a student self-reports, the suspension will be for 2 weeks with a total of 15 hours of community service. #4-#5 will still be followed.*

Second Offense:

1. Parent notification by the Head Coach.
2. 3 strikes will be issued and the cheerleader will be removed from the program.

Note: If the offense occurs during the offseason/summer, the suspension from competition will begin with the first week of competition/activity.

ARRESTS AND CITATIONS

Citations or arrests on or off campus in regards to smoking, using/selling or possession of illegal drugs, drug paraphernalia, drinking alcoholic beverages, vandalism or any similar behavior may result in suspension or dismissal from the cheer team program. Any cheer team member must notify the Director immediately upon any arrest or citation. Failure to notify the Coach may result in suspension or dismissal from the program.

THEFT (ON CAMPUS)

Taking things from other students, school, etc. will not be tolerated. Consequences will be handled individually by the coach and campus administration and may result in expulsion from all cheer activities for up to one calendar year from the date of the incident. At the end of one calendar year from the date of the incident all parties concerned may review the case, and his/her conduct during the previous year will determine reinstatement into the extracurricular cheer program.

BULLYING

Bullying is prohibited by the District and could include hazing, threats, taunting, teasing, confinement, assault, demands for money, destruction of property, theft of valued possessions, name-calling, rumor-spreading, or ostracism.

If a student believes that he or she has experienced bullying or has witnessed bullying of another student, it is important for the student or parent to notify a teacher, counselor, principal, or other District employee as soon as possible to obtain assistance and intervention. The administration will investigate any allegations of bullying or other related misconduct.

Any bullying reported to a coach will be turned over to campus administration to investigate.

ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM (LEO)

Any team member placed in the Alternative Education Program (LEO) will be ineligible for participation in the cheer program for the duration of their placement. At the conclusion of the LEO placement, the Fine Arts Director, Campus Administration, and Head Coach will determine a reinstatement plan for each individual team member. Reinstatement is not guaranteed. Suspension from competitions/performances and the ability to return to the cheer period(s) and team will be addressed in the plan.

DIGITAL CITIZENSHIP

Cheerleaders are high-profile representatives of the Leander Independent School District, and their behavior is subject to scrutiny by their peers, the campus, community, and the media. The actions of a single student-athlete can reflect positively or negatively not only on the individual student-athlete, but also on his or her team and coaches, the entire school campus and the LISD Cheer community. Therefore, cheerleaders are expected to represent themselves and LISD with honor, dignity and integrity at all times –including when interacting on social networking websites and in other online environments.

The popularity of social networking websites (e.g. Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc.) has grown tremendously during the last few years. These websites can serve as valuable communication tools when used appropriately. The use of social media, however, has the potential to cause problems for both the cheerleaders and the school environment. Almost anything a cheerleader posts on a social networking site may be viewed by others, and both the media and the general public are more likely to view the profiles of cheerleaders than the profiles of other students.

The LISD Cheer Program has developed this Student-Athlete Social Networking Guideline in order to:

- provide recommendations and suggestions for cheerleaders to help them use social media in a safe and responsible manner
- outline important rules that cheerleaders must follow when using social media

Important Suggestions & Recommendations Regarding Social Networking Sites

Some students mistakenly believe social networking websites have a veil of privacy about them and assume their profiles are viewed only by a close circle of friends and fellow students. To the contrary, the content on most of these sites is accessible by anyone in the general public unless security and privacy features are used. The public nature of these websites has created personal safety and personal welfare concerns. For example, cheerleaders have been stalked or sexually harassed and assaulted as a result of their Facebook profiles. Fans of opposing teams have taunted cheerleaders based on information obtained from social networking sites. Cheerleaders also should be aware that potential employers and graduate school admissions officers now regularly screen applicants by conducting “Google” searches of an applicant’s name and by reviewing the applicant’s social networking profiles. Students are being passed over for interviews and denied admission to universities based on the content of their profiles.

Cheerleaders should be very careful about what personal information they share on the internet.

For their own security, protection and welfare and that of their teammates and friends, the LISD Cheer Program strongly recommends and advises student-athletes to:

- Keep phone numbers, physical addresses, birthdates, current whereabouts, travel plans and other personal information strictly confidential. This information should not be contained in a student-athlete's personal online profile.
- Limit the access of others to e-mail addresses and screen carefully those whom a student-athlete may accept as "friends" on a social networking site.
- Use whatever security and privacy features are available to restrict the ability of others to view a cheerleader's site or to post pictures, messages and other content on a cheerleader's site.
- If an individual contacts a cheerleader via a social networking site and the nature of the contact makes the cheerleader concerned for his or her safety or uncomfortable in any way, the cheerleader should immediately contact a parent, a coach, or a campus administrator.

Rules Regarding Social Networking Sites

Participation in the LISD Cheer Program is a privilege and not a right. As a condition of being a cheerleader in LISD, cheerleaders must abide by the following rules related to the use of the internet and social networking sites:

- Any postings or communications via social networking websites which disrupt either the educational or cheer environments or which advocate the violation of any school or team policy would be unacceptable.
- Cheerleaders may not post online any pictures, information or other content that could be deemed inappropriate of themselves, fellow student-athletes, teams, coaches, the LISD Cheer Program or the campus (examples: obscene images or language, nudity, pictures at parties with alcohol, references to drugs, sex, or illegal activities).
- Cheerleaders may not post any content online that is unsportsmanlike, derogatory, demeaning or threatening toward any other individual, teammate, coach, faculty member, or entity (examples: derogatory comments regarding another school; taunting comments aimed at a student-athlete, coach or team at another school). No posts should depict or encourage unacceptable or illegal activities (examples: bullying, hazing, sexual harassment/assault, gambling, discrimination, fighting, vandalism, academic dishonesty, underage drinking, and illegal drug use).
- Cheerleaders may not post any content online that would constitute a violation of the LISD Student Code of Conduct.
- Cheerleaders may not post any information that is sensitive or personal in nature or is proprietary to the LISD Cheer Program or the school which is not public information (examples: tentative or future team schedules, cheerleader injuries and eligibility status, travel plans/itineraries or information).
- Cheerleaders are required to abide by all laws related to the use of the internet (including state and federal privacy laws such as FERPA and HIPPA), and cheerleaders are personally liable for any violations of those laws.

Cheerleaders in LISD are required to abide by rules set forth in these guidelines.

The failure to do so will be considered a violation of the cheerleader code of conduct and/or the LISD student code of conduct. The violation may result in disciplinary action by the LISD Cheer Program and the campus.

Upon confirmation of a violation, there will be a meeting with the athlete, parents and Head Coach. The athlete will be directed to remove any offensive items from the website(s). The coach will provide an action plan/contract to deter future instances of similar behavior, which will be presented to the campus administration and parents. Items in the action plan/contract may include but are not limited to training in the proper use of social media, or other actions deemed appropriate by directors or campus administration. Based on the severity of the infraction, consequences may include strikes, suspension or dismissal from the team or activities.

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

Each campus has a Cheer Booster Club. These groups are encouraged to support the cheer program. The cheer coach leads this organization but is not responsible for its voting, finance, executive board, etc.

LETTERING

- In order for a member of the varsity cheer team to receive a letter or patch and qualify to purchase a jacket, she/he must participate in 15 cheering performances or activities. If a member has already been awarded a letter from another sport/activity, a cheerleading patch will be awarded.
- If a cheer member is removed from the program for any reason, he/she may not be awarded a letter/patch for that year.
- A cheer member must have permission from their cheer coach to order the before mentioned letter jackets or patches.

COMPETITION TEAM

- All members of the LISD Cheer Program will try out for their respective high school's competition team. The candidate must be a member of their school's cheer program in order to try out for the competitive team. Since the competition squad is its own entity, each school program will govern the tryout process and expectations for these teams. They will be held to this constitution and the rules/regulations set for them by the respective campus' cheer coach.
- If a coach determines that they would like to compete in the co-ed division, subsequent tryouts for male athletes will occur at the coaches discretion.
- Students and their parents will sign a Competition Team Tryout Application and Agreement before competition tryouts AND a Competition Team Contract upon acceptance to the competition team.
- Before trying out for the competition team, cheerleaders and their parents should understand that accepting a competition team spot is a binding commitment. Resignation will likely result in the following actions: disciplinary strike, loss of competition fees, and the resignation could be a factor in acceptance on future competition squads.

SAFETY

The safety of all of our cheer members is of utmost importance. We do a number of things which we believe will stress the importance of using safety strategies and encourage the members of the team and coaches to practice good safety skills.

- 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.
- All participants and coaches must go through appropriate stunt progressions, qualifications, and follow NFHS/USA Cheer safety standards at all times.
- No playing around, laughing, or general socializing will be permitted during any stunt/practice session.
- Absolutely no jewelry will be worn during practices, games, or events. Jewelry includes all body piercings.
- No tumbling or building of any stunts is permitted unless a cheer coach is present.

Because of the increased athleticism of today's cheerleaders and the complexity of some stunts performed, there is a risk, as in any athletic sport, of serious injury.

- Cheer Camp - all members of the cheer team (and coaches) are required to attend summer cheer camp at which time there are entire sessions presented on proper cheer safety.
- Certification - cheer coaches are UIL CCP certified as well as either USA Cheer or NFHS certified. Becoming certified, coaches are trained extensively in all safety areas.
- Use of mats - cheer members use mats for practice and for some performances.
- Each campus athletic training department presents the following topics to cheer programs: concussion training, safety training, injury prevention, how to handle injuries, rehabilitation of personal injury, and the importance of working out, stretching, and staying in good physical condition.

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. The resolution of this incident may not be addressed team wide especially when privacy issues are involved. In addition, in order to benefit the cheer program, the coach and/or administrators reserve the right to revise this handbook at any time.

(Last revised 1-17-23)

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 Brian Miller at (512) 570-0152. 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) and the LISD Central Administration Office.



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