



# Handbook

## 2023-2024

### **Coaches:**

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# Football Season

## **Appearance:**

- Full uniform – Shell, skirt, briefs, hair done correctly, squad bow, lipstick, and proper white socks.
- NO JEWELRY!
- Body liners, and warm-ups might be worn to the game - **always have them with you in your cheer bag.**
- If warm-ups are worn, all cheerleaders should look the same.
  - Meaning if one girl has their warm-up jacket on, all girls have it on.
  - Except for Seniors on Senior Night and Homecoming Lettermans are not an alternative to warm ups.
- Every Friday during football season you must follow the assigned required uniform dress at school for spirit or games.
- When wearing any cheer uniform, hair will be done as laid out by captains/coaches.
- When in uniform at school, the only jacket that should be worn is the warm-up jacket / Sweatshirt (unless otherwise specified, no other type of generic Jacket may be worn around school).

## **Arrival:**

- You will remain at school prior to the football game, all athletes will eat together in one room and **eat what is provided. If a cheerleader chooses they can bring a sack lunch from home they may not have food delivered through things such as uber eats.**
- If you need to be taped up make sure to have that done 30 minutes prior to the time of departure.
- You need to have taken care of all restroom trips prior to the warm up.
- JV will cheer at the homecoming football game, and may have other opportunities if clinics are offered to perform with those clinic attendees.

## **Varsity and cheer teams playing games:**

- Captains will go to the opposite side to play games with the opposing team and exchange the gift basket during the third quarter.

## **National Anthem:**

- You need to be in formation in front of the crowd facing the American flag with your right hand over your heart and your left hand behind your back. Right hand (with Red pom).
- During the national anthem, remember the men, and women who are serving you every day.

Make sure to take this time and honor them. There will be **NO** talking during this time.

- You will remain with your hand over your heart silent until the colors are off the field then you may cheer.

## **Cheerleader Introductions:**

- Varsity cheerleaders will be introduced at the beginning of a home football game and you will be expected to throw at least the team minimum when you are introduced.

## **Half-Time**

- Varsity- Cheerleaders will watch Blue Belles and Band perform. If we are away you will walk to the other side of the field to watch from the front. You will sit and be attentive cheering Blue Belles and band on at appropriate times during their performance. There should not be side chatter.
- After the Blue Belle/ Band performance if there is time you can take care of restroom needs, talk to your parents, talk to your friends, go to the concession stand, or take care of anything else you need to during half time. Keep in mind our PDA policy while in uniform.
- You need to be back on the track when there are 3 (JV) 5 (Varsity) minutes left on the clock, ready to cheer.

## **Kick-Off:**

- When the team runs out for the kick-off, you will do preps (JV) and extensions (Varsity) that will face the football team.
- The flyers will have poms in hand and will be shaking them above their head in a high V waiting for the ball to be kicked.
- The preps will pop off in a ripple in the direction the ball is kicked. (JV)
- The extensions will pop off in a ripple in the direction the ball is kicked. (Varsity)
- No stunt group will come out of the clean position until all stunt groups have dismounted then they will spirit and return to stand lines .

## **Touchdowns:**

- After Leander scores a touchdown you need to spirit to the crowd with tons of Energy (standing tumbling, and jumps), watch to see if they score the extra point after the touchdown.
- Varsity: If present flag runners will run the flags along with several other cheerleaders will run behind the endzone or on track to throw a running tumbling pass.
  - Standing tumbling lines may be implemented, at coaches/ captain's discretion, to occur in the end zone after each touchdown. The team minimum should be thrown if this occurs.

## **After the Game:**

- JV - you will need to make sure the track is cleaned and all signs and other items are returned to the cheer gyms storage closet.
- Varsity - Once they line up for the school song, cheerleaders will link pinkies **and** Sing the school song. After the school song is over the track needs to be cleaned up and all items collected. You will report to the gym immediately following the game for dismissal BEFORE mingling with family/friends.
- If no managers are present the CHEERLEADERS are responsible for ensuring everything including megaphones and the wagon return to the cheer gym.
- You are not dismissed until EVERYONE is in the gym, it has been cleaned, and we break out.

## **Formation:**

- Unless you are stunting or tumbling you need to be in formation in front of the crowd standing at attention watching the football game or cheering with the squad.
- You should not be chatting with the girls standing next to you.
- Standing at attention means that you are standing with your weight even and not leaning on one leg or the other. Your hands should be behind your back with your left hand holding your right fist .
- When in stand lines and Poms are not in use, your right hand must be in double L's behind your back held by your left hand.

## **Stunts and Tumbling:**

- You can stunt, tumble, or jump at any appropriate time during the game.
- The only stunts and tumbling you can do is what you have checked off with the coach to ensure that we are only performing stunts and tumbling that are safe and solid.
- Cheerleaders must throw the running tumbling pass they did at tryouts at least once during a football game or an appropriate consequence may be given.
- Cheerleaders must do the assigned amount of skills per quarter (5-8 coaches will clarify) this should include a mix of stunting tumbling and jumps including the standing tumbling skill they threw at tryouts.

## **Cheers and Chants:**

- The Captain and / or Co-Captain will start a cheer and continue 3 times with motions. If the crowd starts cheering with you, continue to yell the cheer until the captain calls "last time".
- As soon as you hear a cheer / chant will be passed down from the Captain / Co-Captain; you

are to be paying attention to the calls and games. When the cheer is called you will turn with your right foot over left to face the stands.

- Make sure you are paying attention and staying involved with the game at all times. If something good happens, you need to be spirited.

### **Between Quarters and Time-Outs:**

- For every time-out and between 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> quarter and between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter you will be doing a cheer or stunting/ tumbling to get the crowd and team pumped up.
- There should **NEVER** be a time-out where there is not a cheer / chant / stunting / tumbling being led. This is our time to shine! The football team has stopped and the crowd will be looking for something to watch. We need to take advantage of this time to showcase our talent and spirit!

### **Injured Player:**

- If there is an injured player from either team you **SHOULD NOT** be talking, cheering, stunting, or tumbling.
- You need to kneel on your right knee in formation and have your right arm extended with double L's. If the injury continues the captain will indicate when to switch arms and or knees.
- Once the player is standing, clap as the injured player is being taken off the field.
- In the event poms are in hands when an injury occurs, Poms can be dropped and placed under knees.

### **Water and Restroom Breaks:**

- There should be no more than 2 girls getting water at a time during a game.
- You are to have the correct and assigned water bottle at all times. Which should be placed under your megaphone.
- You need to take care of restroom needs before the game or at halftime unless it is an emergency.

## **Basketball Games**

### **Attire:**

- Full uniform – Shell, skirt, spandex, hair done correctly, squad bow, lipstick, white socks, and poms.

- NO JEWELRY!
- Body liners and warm-ups might be worn to the game - **always have them with you in your cheer bag.**
- If warm-ups are worn, all cheerleaders should look the same.
  - Meaning if one girl has their warm-up jacket on, all girls have it on.

## **Arrival:**

- At least thirty minutes before the game you need to be in the cheer gym in complete uniform with makeup and hair done (call time will be communicated in advance by coaches).
- Stretch, warm up stunts, tumbling, and review cheers.
- Ten minutes before scheduled game time, walk into the gym as a team and set up on the sidelines.

## **Performance:**

- **Continuously** call chants and cheers, be aware of when the team switches from offense to defense. There should not be large periods of silence.
- Get the crowd involved, if the crowd starts a chant you can join in (If appropriate, remember to stay positive).
- You should be jumping and tumbling throughout the game.
- Free-throws: Lots of Spirit
  - You should have your right arm extended and right leg crossed over left when Leander is shooting a free throw. If they make it you will turn in a circle over your left shoulder with your right arm leading.
  - When the opposing team is shooting a free throw you may shake poms.
- Timeouts: Do the cheer/chant planned before the game, incorporate stunts, be aware of when the team breaks and goes back on the court (Captain and/or Co-Captain will look out for it and call last time)
- If the blue belles are performing, stay and watch them before leaving for half-time. Report back **before** the one minute mark.

## **Playoffs**

### **Varsity:**

- Will be required to attend all playoff games; Football and Basketball games should the teams advance.
- Cheerleaders will wear what Coach and/or Captain assigns to wear for that specific event.



## JV:

- Will be allowed to ride the bus to the playoff games. At Coaches discretion.
- May cheer at Football playoff games if the team goes so far. At Coaches discretion.
- May cheer at Basketball playoff games if both Boys' and Girls' play on the same night.

## Volleyball Games

### Attire:

- Full uniform – Shell, skirt, spandex, hair done correctly, squad bow, lipstick, white socks, and poms.
- NO JEWELRY!
- Body liners and warm-ups might be worn to the game - **always have them with you in your cheer bag.**
- If warm-ups are worn, all cheerleaders should look the same.
  - Meaning if one girl has their warm-up jacket on, all girls have it on.

### Arrival:

- At least thirty minutes before the game you need to be in the cheer gym in complete uniform with makeup and hair done (call time will be communicated in advance by coaches).
- Stretch, warm up stunts, tumbling, and review cheers.
- Ten minutes before scheduled game time, walk into the gym as a team and set up on the sidelines.

### Performance:

- The cheerleaders will be in stand lines and will cheer on the volleyball team during timeouts, rotations, and games.
- Call chants and cheers, be aware of what is happening. There should not be large periods of silence.
- Get the crowd involved, if the crowd starts a chant you can join in (If appropriate, remember to stay positive).
- You should not be cheering while our team is serving.

## Soccer / Softball / Baseball/ Other Fans in the Stands

## **Attire:**

- Full uniform – Shell, skirt, spandex, hair done correctly, squad bow, lipstick, white socks, and poms. If different coach/ captain will communicate what you should wear.
- NO JEWELRY!

## **Performance:**

- The cheerleaders will sit in the stands and cheer on the teams, as if they were regular fans.
- Visiting with squad members and friends should be reserved for after the game.
- Standing up and yelling chants and cheers is acceptable, but the whole team needs to do it. They can start cheering and yell along with the student body, if the chants are appropriate.
- The cheerleaders attend the games to positively represent the program, the school, and the athletes they support
- After the game, report to the coach.

## **Transportation**

- All athletes are required to ride the bus to events.
- If you would like to ride home with your parents you must fill out and have a parent sign the transportation release form 24 hours before the team travels unless specified for an earlier date. A phone call or email does not count and will not be accepted in place of the transportation release form found on the cheer website.

## **Pep-Rally / Special Events**

### **Attire:**

- Cheerleaders will be in complete uniform or what is specified for that event (pep-rallies, community service etc.)
- NO JEWELRY!

### **Performance:**

- On the day of a pep-rally you are expected to be at the cheer gym at the designated time.
- During the pep-rally it is a cheerleader's job to get the school pumped. You need to always be smiling and look happy to be there!
- You will be in stand lines while all the students are walking into the gym / field. At this time, You should be jumping, spiriting, tumbling while the student body and staff are arriving. It is your

responsibility to be alert and full of energy. If the band is playing you should be doing the dances.

- While the MC's, teachers, principal or special guest are talking you are to be sitting / standing on the sideline listening and cheering on what they have to say.
- When it is our turn to perform, you will spirit out on the mat / field to your beginning spot and wait for the music to come on.
- Once our performance is over you are expected to spirit off the field / mat then immediately start helping move mats off the court if necessary.
- During the Victory Chant , you are expected to play along. GET INTO IT the student body feeds off of you. If you aren't doing it they don't know what to do.
- When you are in uniform you are expected to be on your best behavior and represent the cheer program to its highest standard.
- Once the pep-rally is over the band will play the fight song on the way out. You will continue to perform the fight song dance until the band stops or everyone is out of the gym / out of the stands.
- You will have 15 minutes after the pep rally clean-up is over to dress out and head back to class.

## **Practice Expectations**

- Cheerleaders are expected to be in the correct practice clothes, head to toe, at every practice. This includes no jewelry.
  - Failure to comply will result in demerits being issued.
- The beginning of every practice will include stretching and warm-ups. This begins 10 minutes after the start of class. Regardless of leadership present, stretching must begin on time. Standing by the entrance/ exit door is not allowed.
- Phones should be left in the locker room and should not be brought into the gym unless otherwise clarified by the coach.
- During stretching, cheerleaders must sit in assigned stretch lines or in the stretch circles based on what the captain and / or coach decide on. You will count out loud all counts for the stretching exercises.
- Cheerleaders are expected to stay on task during THE ENTIRE practice. This includes but is not limited to stretching, warm ups, transitions, performance.
- Cheerleaders should not be rolling on mats, throwing poms, playing with megas, leaping over megas or any other horseplay activities during practice time. Consequences including but are not limited to infractions will be issued if this behavior occurs.
- There will be no talking while in "set position".

- There will be no talking other than to count during stretching. Infractions will be issued.
- Cheerleaders are expected to transition to each new task quickly and without side chatter.
- The gym and locker room must be cleaned prior to cheerleader departure. For every item left out, an appropriate consequence will be issued. Take pride in OUR space.

# **Tumbling**

## **Requirement**

### **Varsity**

To meet the requirements for Varsity, a candidate must have a standing back tuck (without a spot) and a running round off back handspring. There may be up to two exceptions for SENIORS who meet the score requirement (both in individual categories and overall), but do not meet the standing tuck requirement. These seniors must have been a member of an LISD Cheer Program for three years prior.

All LISD cheer guidelines will be followed when squads are selected.

### **Junior Varsity**

To meet the requirements for Junior Varsity a candidate in grades 10 or 11 must have a standing back handspring (without a spot), and meet the score requirement (both in individual categories and overall). For incoming ninth grade students there is not a tumbling requirement; however the candidate's score must still meet the minimum requirement. All LISD cheer guidelines will be followed when squads are selected.

### **Probation**

Candidates will be scored throughout the entire week of tryouts . No minimum score will be used to determine teams. Rather, the top scoring candidates will be selected for varsity and from that natural break to the next, will determine JV. If the school minimum member requirement is not met, probationary positions may be offered. A candidate who is offered a probationary position will have until the first day of inhouse camp to master the required skill. Candidates may attend tumbling

classes, private lessons, or ask other qualified experts to help assist with this. If the member requirement is not met by the first day of camp that candidate will be unable to cheer at events or games until the skill is mastered. The Spring Football game may be an exception.

## **Tumble Check**

- All members of the cheer team are required to participate in a weekly tumble check.
- A member must throw a minimum of what they threw at tryouts in order to cheer at that week's game/ event.
- If a cheerleader does not fulfill the tumble check they will sit out that week's game/ event.
- If injured at the time of each week's tumble check (doctor's note provided), you must be able to make up those tumble checks once cleared by your doctor.

## **Attendance Requirements**

- Only the following will be considered an excused absence:
  - Personal illness/accident (resulting in missing school with doctors note)
  - Funeral or death in the family
  - UIL or school-related performance/event
- If a cheerleader misses any game day/ event practice the week of an event/performance for any reason, the cheerleader will not participate in that event/performance. THIS INCLUDES, but is not limited to, GAMES. Cheerleaders are given schedules of dates with as much advance notice as possible.
  - Exceptions may be made for events that have received prior approval from the coaches but discipline actions such as demerits could still occur.
- In case of illness, it is expected that the cheerleader will notify the coach a minimum of 2 hours prior to missed class/practice time AND fill out the absence form on the google classroom/ website. .
  - Failure to do so will result in demerits being issued in addition to the missed event/game for the week. A cheerleader that has missed any after school practice due to illness, must bring a doctor's note to prevent a strike from being issued.
- If a cheerleader is unable to participate at the event/performance for the week, they are still required to attend in full uniform (if the cheerleader attended at least two periods of school the corresponding day in accordance with UIL policy).
- Jobs, College visits, family in town, vacations, SAT / ACT, competition cheer etc. are not an excuse to miss any of these events.
- An absence from school is defined as missing half (two periods) or more of the school day. If this occurs per UIL guidelines you may not cheer at a UIL event that day.

- If a cheer member is going to be absent from a practice, class, and/or scheduled event, the **athlete, not the parent**, must notify the cheer coach **(at least 48 hours prior to the conflict)** before missing. **The cheerleader, not the parent,** must complete the LHS Cheerleader Upcoming Absence Form. See our google classroom/ website for the form. A strike may still be applicable (see LISD Cheer Discipline Process) if an unexcused absence is approved.
- Cheer members will cheer at all games and events assigned by the coach, a calendar of anticipated dates will be distributed with as much notice as possible. Please note sports and events schedules often change with little notice as soon as the coach knows the athletes will be told of these changes to plan accordingly. .

## **Competition team**

- Competition team participation is required for all Varsity members and may be extended to Junior Varsity members
- Tryouts for varsity members will be used to help determine placement and formations throughout the routines. Tryout for JV members will be used to determine if they can join the competition team and in what capacity (ex. alternate)
- The tryout process will be similar to that of team tryouts and all details will be communicated to members with at least two weeks notice- they may be held at the same time.
- The competition team does have an added expense that may fall on the parents if fundraising is not enough to cover it.
- Cheerleaders on the competition team must follow UIL and Varsity Brand Dress standards this includes but is not limited to natural hair colors, and nude SHORT nails.
- Cheerleaders who miss 2 UIL practices will be removed from the competition team unless for funeral, or sickness with a doctor's note provided.
- All applicable rules outlined in this handbook apply to the competition team and their practices as well.

## **Other Requirements**

- Cheerleaders are expected to adhere to all LISD Cheerleading, Fine Arts and Athletic Guidelines.
  - This includes the Digital Citizenship contract in the LISD Cheer Handbook, Captains and Coaches may check members social media accounts to insure they are following these guidelines and representing the Leander Cheer Program well.
- While in any Leander Cheer Attire including but not limited to uniform, practice attire, Game Day wear, cheer members should not demonstrate any Public Displays of Affection with significant others.
- Grade checks will occur as often as once a week. For every missing and/or failing class grade, a

consequence will be assigned.

- Students are responsible for keeping their Rank One Forms and Physicals up to date at all times. If students do not have these up to date, they are ineligible from participating in ALL events, practices and/or performances.
- Cheerleaders may run off up to 5 clothing infractions in a school year. They will run 1 mile per infraction during a designated time. The amount of infractions removed may not exceed five per school year spent as a member of the cheer program.

**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.**