



LUBBOCK-COOPER ISD

Spirit Squad Guidelines 2024-25

The purpose of the Lubbock-Cooper ISD Cheerleading/Pom/Mascot program is to create, promote, and uphold school spirit in accordance with University Interscholastic League (UIL), National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS), and LCISD rules and regulations. Members of the program are expected to demonstrate leadership qualities and actively encourage school spirit, pride, and sportsmanship. Members play an important role in maintaining a positive school environment by exhibiting leadership skills, respecting individual differences, building consensus, striving for academic excellence, and modeling appropriate behaviors at all times, both within and outside of school.

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COMMITMENT

The rules and procedures outlined in these guidelines are in effect from the date of the mandatory parent meeting preceding the tryouts through next year's tryout date. Candidates selected for the squads are required to commit to the program for the entire school year.

GOVERNING AUTHORITY

LCISD follows the guidelines provided by UIL to govern and regulate cheerleading, pom, and the mascot program. The guidelines include the no pass/no play policy, eight-hour practice limitations, athletic periods, and other applicable regulations. The programs will also adhere to the eligibility requirements specified by TEA.

TRYOUTS

Procedures for squad member selection are based on the guidelines outlined in this handbook. Coaches/sponsors will be responsible for preparing and distributing an informational packet to all candidates based on the specific spirit organization. This is based on the specific spirit squad organization. This information will include specific tryout dates, times, attire, and procedures. Students interested in trying out for a spirit squad must complete the online signup form and attend the mandatory pre-tryout meeting.

Eligibility and Requirements

To be eligible to try out for cheerleading, pom, or mascot, students must meet the following conditions:

- Candidates must be enrolled in LCISD. Students must be enrolled three weeks prior to the sign-up deadline for the specific spirit organization, and must remain continuously enrolled in LCISD.
- The program will adhere to all UIL and LCISD eligibility requirements, including:
 - Candidates must be passing all courses for grading periods prior to tryout dates (listed below) with a minimum grade of 70 in ALL courses.
 - Grading periods for cheer/mascot include GP1, GP2, and SM1.
 - Grading periods for pom include GP1, GP2, SM1, and GP3.
- Candidates must meet state guidelines for compulsory attendance.
- Candidates may not have an unexcused absence on the day of tryouts.
- A portion of each candidate's tryout eligibility will be determined by actionable disciplinary offenses, to include:
 - Tardies and truancy;
 - Office referrals;

- In School Suspension (ISS) and Out of School Suspension (OSS); and
- Disciplinary Alternative Education Program (DAEP) placements
- A parent/guardian of each candidate must attend the mandatory pre-tryout meeting. (If unable to attend, the parent/guardian must contact the program sponsor prior to the mandatory pre-tryout meeting date to make alternate arrangements.)
- Candidates and parents/guardians must complete and submit all required paperwork as instructed by the coach/sponsor and by the communicated deadline.
- Previous spirit organization financial balances must be settled prior to tryouts.

Closed Tryouts

- Parents may not attend any portion of the tryout process. Please drop off your student and pick them up at the designated end time.
- Violation of this rule by a parent/guardian may result in disqualification of the parent/guardian's child.
- Tryout candidates are required to remain in the holding area throughout the entire tryout process.
- Tryouts will follow a rolling schedule. It is the responsibility of each candidate to be aware of their group's designated tryout time. If a candidate misses their scheduled time, there is no guarantee that they will be accommodated to try out with another group.

Tabulation of Scores

Judges Scores - 80%

Discipline - 20%

- Student conduct resulting in actionable offenses will be factored into scores as follows:

No offenses = 100%

One offense = 80%

Two offenses = 60%

Three or more offenses = 0 %

Current year DAEP placement = 0%

Judges

- Candidates will appear before a panel of judges including an LCISD coach.
- Judges will sign an oath prior to tryouts, committing to fairness and impartiality in their ratings. Every effort will be made to ensure that the outside coaches have no prior relationships with candidates, although this cannot be guaranteed.
- Specific judging criteria will be included in the campus packet provided by the squad coach/sponsor.

Callbacks

Callbacks will be at the discretion of the judges.

Injury and Extenuating Circumstances

If a candidate encounters extenuating circumstances, they must contact the coach/sponsor as soon as they become aware of their injury, prior to the tryout, and provide medical documentation.

Mascot Tryout

Candidates will perform a 1:30-minute to 2:00-minute skit that includes props and crowd-leading elements, with music, to demonstrate their ability to perform.

- Candidates must submit their skit music to the coach/sponsor prior to tryouts.
- Candidates may not try out for both cheer/pom and mascot.
- Tryouts are closed to the public and will be conducted in front of a panel of judges including an LCISD coach.

STRUCTURE OF SQUADS

Squad composition will be determined by the natural break of scores following tryouts, with a maximum squad count outlined below:

- High School Cheer Composition
 - Up to 12 members on the Freshmen squad (freshmen only)
 - Up to 12 members on the JV squad (sophomores, juniors, seniors*)
**Liberty High School Junior Varsity for 2024-2025 (freshmen and sophomores)*
 - Up to 18 members on the Varsity squad (juniors and seniors only*)
**Liberty High School Varsity for 2024-2025 (sophomores and juniors only)*
 - Up to five members on the First Mates/Mascot crew (any grade levels)
- High School Pom Composition

- Up to 12 members on the JV squad
- Up to 18 members on the Varsity squad
- Middle School Cheer Composition
 - Up to 10 members for 7th grade squad
 - Up to 10 members for 8th grade squad
 - One mascot will be chosen
- Honorary Spirit Members
 - No more than two members per campus

COMPETITION SQUADS

Cheer and Pom

All members of the high school cheer and pom programs will have the opportunity to try out for their respective high school's competition squads. However, being a cheerleader or pom member does not guarantee a spot on the competitive cheer or pom squad. Each school will determine whether to attend and/or compete in competitions. If the coach/sponsor decides that the competition squad will compete, these competitions will be considered mandatory events. Since the competition squad is optional and separate from the regular squad, each school program will govern the tryout process and expectations for these teams.

EXPECTATIONS OF SPIRIT SQUAD MEMBERS

Members are expected to be fit to participate in all squad activities and possess athletic skills in their respective fields. They are the representatives of their school, and therefore, they are held to a higher standard of behavior both on and off campus compared to their peers. Members are considered ambassadors of the squad and the school at all times.

As leaders, members are expected to set good examples and demonstrate high moral standards for other students. They are required to maintain respect for the school, fellow squad members, and the sponsor at all times.

As part of their accountability, the following list outlines the expectations conducive to being a Lubbock-Cooper ISD cheerleader, pom squad member, or mascot:

- Plan and initiate activities that encourage student body and community support and involvement in the promotion of athletic events and other important school activities.
- Exemplify individual and group behavior that aligns with their position and adheres to the rules stated in the LCISD Student Code of Conduct as well as the Extracurricular Code of Conduct.
- Play a leadership role in fostering teamwork and helping the school achieve its goals and objectives.

- Display the ability to learn and remember routines at a skill level suitable for group performance.
- Continuously improve upon skills demonstrated at tryouts throughout the entire school year.
- Maintain a positive attitude, demonstrating respect for coach/sponsor, administrators, teachers, community leaders, captains, and teammates.
- Adhere to all practice, game, and event procedures, including but not limited to:
 - Attendance
 - Be present and on time
 - Communicate with coach/sponsor if unable to attend
 - Schedule a teammate to take your place if unable to attend, when applicable
 - Awareness of game situations
 - Game and chore responsibilities assigned
 - Follow uniform and appearance guidelines

Failure to meet these expectations will result in consequences determined by the program coach/sponsor.

INHERENT RISK OF INJURY

As with any athletic activity, spirit squad participation carries an inherent risk of injury. Cheer and pom are anaerobic/aerobic activities, and include jumping, turning, stunting, tumbling, flexibility, and partner work.

Current physical forms must be on file with the school athletic trainer before any spirit squad member will be permitted to participate in practices, camps, performances, competitions, and sporting events.

The risk of injury can be minimized by strict adherence to precautionary guidelines. Spirit squad members are required to abide by the following:

- Never attempt stunting, tumbling, or partner work without a coach/sponsor present.
- Obtain the coach/sponsor's approval and ensure their presence before attempting new stunts or partner work.
- Always practice in an open and unobstructed area.
- Warm up adequately before cheering, dancing, or engaging in any practice or performance.
- Report all injuries to the coach/sponsor immediately after they occur.
- Follow all recommendations provided by trainers and doctors.
- Wear appropriate clothing and shoes as outlined in the Spirit Squad Guidelines.
- Avoid chewing gum during practice and performances.

- Always tie back hair to keep it away from the face and shoulders.
- Maintain a healthy diet, get sufficient rest, and prioritize self-care.
- Seek assistance or advice when needed.

Keep coaches/sponsors informed of all injuries and/or chronic conditions before the beginning of the season.

ACADEMIC EXPECTATIONS

All members must maintain at least a 70 average in each class. The coach/sponsor will check grades every nine weeks. If any grade drops below a 70 average at the end of a nine-week period, the member will be considered ineligible and will have three weeks to improve the grade. If a member fails and becomes ineligible for two subsequent grading periods, they will be removed from the squad.

A member who is ineligible to participate due to failing grades remains responsible for all duties and tasks associated with being on the squad (e.g., pirate rallies) and must attend all in-school practices and required meetings.

ATTENDANCE

- Written communication regarding absences is crucial. To fulfill our obligations, coaches/sponsors need to know about any outside schedules and times when a member will be absent as soon as that information becomes available.
- Excused absences will be allowed for the following reasons:
 - Student illness- If missing a performance or game, a parent/guardian should notify the sponsor and doctor's note must be provided.
 - Family emergencies
 - A school-related activity that conflicts with an event.
 - Special circumstances will be addressed on an individual basis.
- If a member is unprepared for a performance due to missing a practice, they may be asked not to participate during that performance.
- Members should be aware of the practice and performance schedule and make these obligations clear to employers, outside gyms/studios, etc. Work, competitive cheer/dance events, makeup work, tests, and doctor's appointments should be scheduled outside of practice/performance time. It is the member's responsibility to inform all coaches/sponsors of their absence.
- Punctuality to all scheduled events is essential. Members must not be late to classes nor ask their teachers to dismiss them without a pass from the coach/sponsor. If a member arrives after the

scheduled time for an event/game (e.g., practice, beginning of the game, start of the third quarter), it will result in a consequence determined by the coach/sponsor.

- All cheer, mascots, and pom squad members are required to attend all summer and off-season practices. These practices are only effective if all members attend. The coach/sponsor will schedule practices after consulting school activities. Members and parents do not have the authority to call a practice without the consent of the coaches/sponsors.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A member who uses social media, including but not limited to Instagram, Twitter, Snapchat, BeReal, etc., or electronic communications such as cell phones, text messages, or emails, to transmit vulgar, obscene, threatening, lewd, sexting, or harassing words or images, whether on or off school property, may be subject to disciplinary action by the coach/sponsor. These disciplinary actions may include, but are not limited to, suspension for part or all of a game(s), and permanent or season-long removal from the program.

CONSEQUENCES OF ACTIONS

All members are expected to adhere to squad standards. Disciplinary consequences will be imposed for tardiness, disrespect, failure to adhere to conduct codes/expectations, and similar infractions in alignment with LCISD Board policy, the LCISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct, and the LCISD Student Code of Conduct. The coach/sponsor will exercise discretion in determining the appropriate consequence, which may include workouts, drills, wall sits, or even removal from the squad.

Remember: Any disciplinary actions will be communicated exclusively between the coach/sponsor, squad member, and parent.

UNIFORM AND APPEARANCE

Uniforms will be provided by Lubbock-Cooper ISD and replaced every two years. The coach/sponsor, in consultation with the principal and approval from the LCISD Department of Public Information, will select the uniforms. Squad members will be issued uniforms, which must be returned to the school in clean and good condition at the end of the year. Any expenses for repairing or replacing damaged or soiled uniforms will be the responsibility of the member.

- Uniform items should fit appropriately, neither too tight nor too short. Members will not be allowed to participate in events if their uniforms are deemed too tight or too short.
- Alterations:
 - All uniform alterations should be completed before the start of camp each year.
 - Alterations should be limited to simple adjustments and should not involve cutting.

- Please remember that additional alterations may be necessary throughout the year and should be addressed individually and promptly.
- All alteration costs are the financial responsibility of each cheerleader/pom squad member.
- Altering the length of the uniform bottoms is not permitted without prior approval.
- Members must adhere to grooming standards as directed by the coach/sponsor, including but not limited to the following:
 - Makeup should be natural and wholesome-looking.
 - Hair must be pulled back and away from the face.
 - Jewelry of any type, including studs, inner ear piercings, and nose rings, is not allowed.
 - Proper undergarments should always be worn and should not be visible when in uniform.
 - Nails must be kept short, not exceeding a quarter of an inch, for the safety of others.
 - Tattoos must be covered at all times during events/games with bandages or tape.
- Each member will receive a backpack for storing their items during away games and home games. Each member is responsible for their backpack, and any damages to the backpack will be the financial responsibility of the member.
- If a member arrives with an incomplete uniform, they will not be able to participate in the event until the uniform is complete.
- Wear proper attire as directed. The uniform is worn to official functions only. Uniforms are not to be worn by anyone other than the cheer/pom member without permission from the coach/sponsor.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION CREDIT

- All members are required to be in the cheer/pom class period. During this time, all squad members will suit out into practice attire and work on various activities and events. Failure to meet expectations in class (ie, wrong attire, no shoes, etc.) will result in a lower participation grade for the day. 1st time out of attire will result in a daily grade of 90%, 2nd time an 80%, three or more times will result in a 70%.
- Involvement in an LCISD spirit program qualifies you for a PE Credit if you complete all of your obligations for the year. Members may be required to do conditioning as part of the practice workout.
- Involvement in an LCISD spirit program qualifies for a PE credit if all obligations for the year are fulfilled. Conditioning may be included as part of the practice workout.

TRANSPORTATION

Members will be transported to and from contests in authorized school vehicles unless alternative arrangements have been made in writing prior to the performance or event. Students will only be released to

the parent/guardian on record. If a student is being picked up by a parent, they must be signed out through the coach/sponsor at the end of the event. No member will be allowed to leave without being officially signed out.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

The district will provide the basic uniform for each member. Additional items such as camp wear, clothing, sweaters, and practice attire may be purchased by the parent/guardian. Parent/guardian must receive approval from the coach/sponsor and campus principal before making the purchase. Members are required to attend summer camp and will be responsible for a portion of the associated fees. A detailed list of approved items and financial obligations will be provided to parents during the mandatory pre-tryout meeting.

FUNDRAISING

Appropriate fundraising practices and procedures are outlined in the LCISD Fundraising Guidelines document. Individuals responsible for fundraising should refer to the document, district policy, and UIL Booster Club Guidelines for complete directions. The following information is important for all members and parents:

- Each member shall participate in fundraising activities.
- Fundraising activities must align with the educational goals of the district.
- Fundraising efforts will be coordinated by the coach/sponsor and/or Booster Club officers, approved by the Athletic Director and/or the Director of Administrative Services, and require a written request detailing the funding need, type of fundraising activity, projected amount to be raised, purpose of the funds, and the duration of the activity. Efforts should be made to avoid conflicts with other school organizations conducting fundraisers.
- Coaches/sponsors are responsible for maintaining a detailed account of income and expenditures related to student funds, with all transactions processed through a campus activity account.

COACH/SPONSOR CONTACT INFORMATION

The primary means of contact between parents and coaches/sponsors should be through email or the sportsYou app. Texting or calling should only be used when the squad is on a school-related trip or activity. If provided, coach/sponsor contact information should not be distributed or used inappropriately, such as for prank calls, contacting coaches/sponsors at late hours, or sharing contact information with non-cheer squad members.

Please note the following chain of command for addressing concerns or issues:

Coach/Sponsor
Assistant Principal over Cheer/Pom Squads
Campus Principal
Executive Director of Administrative Services
Deputy Superintendent

Immediate responses to email may not always be possible, but coaches/sponsors will aim to respond within the next business day. For more urgent matters, you are welcome to call the school and ask to speak with a coach/sponsor, or utilize the sportsYou in-app communication feature.

HONORARY SPIRIT SQUAD MEMBERS

LCISD High School and Middle School Administrators have the authority to choose up to two students per campus with exceptional life circumstances to serve as honorary spirit squad members. These honorary spirit squad members will have the opportunity to participate in cheer or pom squad activities according to the following guidelines:

- The coach/sponsor will determine the schedule for teaching the school fight song and two cheers or dances to the honorary spirit squad members. Instruction may take place before or after school, or during the school day based on the availability of the honorary spirit squad members.
- During the first half of four home football games and four home basketball games, honorary spirit squad members will perform alongside the cheer or pom squad. They will not participate in away games.
- Honorary spirit squad members have the option to purchase one uniform that matches either the cheer squad or the pom squad. In cases where an honorary member is unable to afford the uniform, the school will make arrangements to cover the cost.
- The selection of honorary spirit squad positions will be determined annually by High School and Middle School Administration. To qualify, students must be able to perform cheers and dances with accommodations, follow two-step instructions, and have the capacity to remain in a designated area with minimal staff support. Campus administrators retain the right to dismiss an honorary spirit squad member. Please note: selection as an honorary spirit squad member for one school year does not guarantee continuation in that position in subsequent school years.