

LULING INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT



LULING HIGH SCHOOL:
SPIRIT TEAM GUIDELINES

CHEER & DANCE TEAM

2019-2020

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ORGANIZATION

- This constitution has been written and adopted for the Luling High School Spirit Teams (Cheerleader and Dance Teams). Luling High School and the Luling High School Spirit Teams govern the squad and its constitution.
- The purpose of Luling High School Spirit Teams is to:
 - Promote school spirit, pride, and loyalty.
 - Promote interest in school activities and perform at school games.
 - Develop responsibility, teach self-respect, encourage honest effort, strive for perfection and develop character.
 - Teach teamwork and pride in a quality performance through maintaining high standards.
- A coach(es) will be hired by the Luling Independent School District upon recommendation of the Principal.
- Coach(es) will be responsible for the daily running and activities of the Luling High School Spirit Teams.
- Coach(es) will be responsible for administering all disciplinary procedures.
- Coach(es) may place certain restrictions on team members.
 - The Luling High School Cheerleader Team will consist of two squads:
 - ⇒ A Varsity squad composed of up to 12 cheerleaders and one mascot (incoming 10th - 12th grade).
 - ⇒ A Junior Varsity squad composed of up to 8 cheerleaders (incoming 9th – 11th grade).
 - The Luling High School Dance Team will consist of one varsity team composed of up to 20 dancers (incoming 9th – 12th grade).

TEAM YEAR

The rules and procedures outlined in these guidelines are in effect from the time the student is selected to the team until the next tryout date.

UIL & TEA

It is the practice of Luling Independent School District to utilize the University Interscholastic League (UIL) guidelines to regulate and govern the spirit teams program with regard to no pass/no play, eight-hour practice limitations, athletic periods, and all other applicable regulations. The spirit teams program will follow the eligibility requirements as outlined by TEA and UIL.

TRYOUT – ELIGIBILITY & REQUIREMENTS

- A student must be enrolled in Luling ISD on the sixth day of the spring semester to be eligible to tryout.
- Students must have passed all courses the semester prior to tryouts.
- A student must meet state guidelines for compulsory attendance.
- A student must have no outstanding balance of prior financial obligations.
- A student must have never received deferred adjudication and/or a conviction for a Class B misdemeanor or higher-class crime conviction.
- Students who have been expelled or sent to DAEP on mandatory placements during the current school year are ineligible to tryout.
- A student is not eligible who has resigned or been dismissed from cheer and/or dance team during previous high school years.
- Parent and student must attend the mandatory meeting with coach before the tryout clinic in order to understand the commitment and responsibility before being able to tryout.
- All forms must be signed and returned before being eligible to tryout for the team.
- Dance candidates transferring into Luling High School after eligibility date, and who have earned a place on the dance team at their former school, may be allowed to tryout for the LHS Arabelles. If transferring after tryouts, candidates may be considered with a letter of recommendation from their former dance team director and a video displaying required dance skills.

- The deadline for consideration of dance transfer candidates will be the last day of the current school year to accommodate for summer dance camp registration/attendance and financial responsibility.

COMMITMENT

Candidates selected to be a member of the respective teams are expected to make a commitment to the activity for the full team year. Any member who voluntarily quits the team before the end of the team year without the approval of the principal and coach(es) will not be allowed to tryout on the LISD campus.

TRYOUT GUIDELINES

Procedures for member selection are based on the guidelines in this handbook. Parents will not be allowed in the building during any phase of the tryouts.

Candidates and a parent **must** attend an orientation meeting scheduled by the coach(es) in order for the student to tryout and understand the obligations of being on the respective team.

Cheer candidates: must wear a white T-Shirt (no midriff), black soffe shorts, white socks, and a white bow. Hair shall be in a ponytail and out of the face.

Dance candidates:

- *Practice* - Candidates must wear appropriate practice wear: dance shorts, leggings or jazz pants with tank or t-shirt. Hair shall be worn up and out of the face, no jewelry.
- *Tryouts* - Candidates must wear black jazz pants with black leotard or tank top, half shoes or black jazz shoes. Hair shall be worn up and out of the face, no jewelry.

Mascot Candidates: The mascot candidates will be required to do a 1.5 minute routine using props, signs, etc. The mascot will keep the Eagle head on at all times. ~~Since the mascot is part of the Varsity traveling squad, they are required to be an incoming 10th through 12th grader.~~

Candidates and parents must sign a form stating that they understand and will comply with all information in this handbook as well as other pertinent information prior to the student being allowed to participate in the tryout process. The following forms must be signed and turned in to the coach(es) by Mock Tryouts:

- Spirit Team Handbook Parent/Student Acknowledgement
- Medical Release Form
- Inherent Risk Form
- Parental Information and Consent Form for Concussion
- Parental Release Form
- Extracurricular Code of Conduct
- Participation Physical Evaluation—Medical History
- Participation Physical Evaluation—Physical Examination
- Medication Request Form

JUDGES

Judges will be selected from an outside third-party organization, respectively. Judges should not be hired if they have tutored or taught the candidates during the current school year. It is best practices to hire judges who have not worked with students in the Luling area whenever possible.

CLOSED TRYOUTS

Tryouts are closed to everyone except judges, principals, and coach(es). There will be no students, parents, or existing team members in the tryout areas, nor will they be involved in the collection or tabulation of scores. No parents are allowed in the gym during tryouts. Students and coach(es) may not utilize electronic devices during tryouts. Any deviation from the tryout requirements by the candidates may result in the disqualification of the candidate. Any student who arrives at the tryout site after tryouts have started will not be allowed to try out.

TRYOUT SCORING

There will be up to 3 independent judges. Judges are referred to Luling ISD through established cheer/dance organizations or colleges. Each judge is given a complete rating sheet (see attachment). The scores based upon the skills as identified on the rating sheets will elect the candidates.

- Judge(s) scores will be totaled to elect candidates. The candidates with the highest total scores before the natural break will be selected to the team.

TRYOUT PROCEDURES

- Mandatory Parent Meeting
- Practices
- Mock Tryout
- Tryouts

JUDGE'S PANEL TRYOUTS

The candidates will tryout in small groups. Candidates will be required to demonstrate various technical skills (i.e. kicks, splits, toe touches, leaps, turns, chants, cheers, dances) as identified on the rating sheets. Candidates will be judged on precision and placement, showmanship, memory, and overall appeal.

INJURY & USE OF VIDEO

A candidate may show a video of his/her performance for the judges only if he/she is incapable of required physical activity. Coach(es) must receive a doctor's note the day after the injury stating the reason(s) for the inability to tryout. The medical doctor's note must indicate the specific skill the student is incapable of performing as well as any limitations associated with the injury. The video to be shown must be approved by the coach(es) and should be no more than three to six months old. The final determination of eligibility to tryout using a video will be at the coach(es) discretion. The video will be judged using the same criteria as outlined in this handbook.

FINAL DETERMINATION & NOTIFICATION

Candidates will receive notification of results on the day of tryouts. Election results will be posted on the outside doors of the Luling High School Gym after school. Candidates may request their scores through the head coach. By law, all other student scores are protected and cannot be shared. Rank scores will not be shared. Original judges' score sheets will not be released to parents or students. Judges written comments will be shared with each candidate individually. All records and scores will be shredded prior to the next year's tryouts.

MEDICAL

Members must have a current physical exam on file with the athletic office in compliance with the Luling Independent School District's policy regarding athletes. Members must have a completed medical emergency form on file with the head coach.

ATTENDANCE

- Team members who participate in extracurricular events must not have an unexcused absence from school the day of the event.

- Team members are expected to be in attendance at all scheduled practice sessions and fundraising events.
- Team members who fail to live up to their duties are subject to disciplinary action.
- Team members must be present at least one-half of the school day to participate in an activity.
- Excused absences—Illness or a family emergency will be considered an excused absence provided that the head coach is contacted prior to the absence by the team member or a parent and appropriate documentation is provided.
- Unexcused absence—An unexcused absence is missing a meeting, practice, or game for any reason when the team member or parent has not contacted the head coach prior to the absence.
- If a team member has an unexcused absence from a practice, meeting, or game she will be assigned a consequence as explained in the Extracurricular Code of Conduct.
- Any team member who is not present when practice begins will have a consequence at the discretion of the coach(es).
- Team members may not leave a practice or any other dance/cheer related activity at any time unless approved by the coach(es).
 - Any absence must have the prior approval of the coach(es)
 - Prior notification of conflicts with school activities will be addressed with the coach and, when appropriate, the principal.
 - Work is not considered an excuse for an absence.

TEAM ACTIVITIES

All team members will be expected to attend all practices set up by the coach(es). As a UIL sanctioned activity, team practices and performances must abide by the time limit restrictions as specified by UIL. Special practices may be called by the coach(es) when necessary. However due to UIL procedures, the eight-hour limit will apply to practices held outside of the school day.

Performance Requirements for Team Activities

- Participation in other sports events, community activities, and social occasions will be in cooperation with the coach(es).
- Students must be present at least one-half of the school day to participate in an activity.
- Team members may not leave a practice or any other related activity at any time unless approved by the coach(es).
- Any absence must have the prior approval of the head coach.
- Prior notification of conflicts with school activities will be addressed with the coach(es) and, when appropriate, the principal.
- Work is not considered an excuse for an absence.

Varsity Cheer

Football—All varsity home and away games, including play-off games and Pep-Rallies.

Basketball—All varsity district home games and all play-off games

Junior Varsity Cheer

Football – Freshmen and JV home games and Pep-Rallies

Dance

Football – All varsity home and away games, including play-off games and Pep-Rallies.

Participation in other sports events, community activities, competitions and social occasions will be at the discretion of the coach(es).

CAMP

- Team members are required to attend a summer camp as determined by the coach.
- Members will be accompanied by the coach(es) to camp and all camp-related activities.
- Transportation to and from camp will be provided for campers through arrangements made by the coach and approved by the principal.
- There will be a mandatory bag check of all team member belongings before departing for camp.
- Cheer: The week prior to camp we will hold daily practices to prepare for camp competitions.

CHARACTER

- Members should be leaders within the school and set a good example at all times.
- Members should maintain good personal appearance and habits.
- Members must abide by the Student Code of Conduct adopted by the Luling Independent School District
- and the Luling ISD Athletic Code.
- Members must be courteous and friendly to other squad members as well as members of the student body
- and faculty.
- Members must be courteous and friendly to other teams, visitors, and officials of sporting events.

UNIFORMS & APPEARANCE

All uniform and practice attire is approved by the coach(es). While performing, each member is expected to:

- Wear proper attire as directed. The uniform is worn to official functions only, and a member may perform only if he/she is in the complete required uniform. If the cheerleader/dancer is not in proper uniform (including, but not limited to, secured hairstyle, ribbons, sweatshirts, cold weather attire), he/she will contact a family member to bring the necessary uniform. Appropriate clothing for practice is expected.
- Keep uniforms clean, pressed, and mended at all times. Team members are to treat uniforms with utmost respect so that uniforms bought by the team can be reused in the future. Uniforms and accessories that were purchased by the district must be returned in good condition or a replacement fee will incur.
- Reflect grooming standards as directed by the coach(es), including, but not limited to:
 - Makeup that is wholesome looking
 - Secured hairstyle
 - Approved tights only
 - Dance shoes
 - No visible jewelry, including body piercing
 - No visible tattoos
 - No gum chewing or candy
- The coach has final approval on all team apparel: game and pep rally uniforms, camp wear, and special theme day attire.
- Members will be responsible for maintaining their uniforms in an appropriate manner in order to ensure good grooming.
- Members will be responsible for adhering to the uniform guidelines as set by the coach(es) and team members.
- Members need to be sure the equipment bag contains necessary uniform pieces, bows, and weather gear for the week. Be prepared.
- The mascot is responsible for properly maintaining care and control of the mascot suit. The mascot suit may not be loaned to others for any purpose since replacement costs are so high.

PRACTICE

- Practice is intended to be practice. Members should be dressed out in a manner that allows them to jump, do splits, turns, run, stunt, cheer, and dance. All members should have the appropriate shoes on.
- Members will warm-up and stretch together prior to the start time of practice. Bathroom, food, and drink breaks should be before and after practice. Do not waste the time of others with your breaks.
- Horseplay and talking should be at a minimum.
- All practices will be closed to family and friends.
- Not Participating—Any member not participating fully during practice, unless ill or injured (must have doctor note), will be given a consequence deemed appropriate by the coach(es).
- Persistent problems during practice will result in a consequence deemed appropriate at the discretion of the coach(es).
- Team members are expected to be respectful to LISD staff, coaches, and other team members at all times.
- Restrictions placed on participant by a health care professional for physical conditions, which might endanger the health of the participant, may require activities to be limited by the coach(es). For the restrictions to be lifted, the participant must bring a written release from the health care professional.
- If a cheer coach is not present, cheerleaders are not permitted to stunt.

Appearance at Practice

- Appropriate attire must be worn at practice (no t-shirts with sleeves cut out).
- Practice shoes
- Hair secured
- Spandex shorts
- No cut-off T-Shirts
- No jewelry
- No gum or candy

PEP RALLIES

- Members are expected to be on time set by the coach(es), dressed out in the appropriate attire, and stretched/warmed up.
- If members are not dressed for the theme during the pep rally or school day, or are late to the pep rally, members will receive extra duties/consequence at the discretion of the coach(es).
- If members are not dressed in uniform and on time to set up for the pep rally, members will receive extra duties/consequence at the discretion of the coach(es).

GAMES

- Bathroom breaks before the game, after half time, and after the game, no exceptions. The team is expected to be actively participating at all times during the game.
- Food and drink breaks will be before the game, after half time, and after the game. The team is expected to be actively participating at all times during the game. Team members are allowed to have water on the sidelines for quick sips between cheers and chants. No food is allowed on the field at any time--gum and candies are included.
- Not Participating—Any member not participating fully during performances, unless ill or injured, will be required to sit with the coach(es) during the game and will not be eligible to dress in uniform.
- Team members will be allowed to take a break at the discretion of the coach.
- Before the game members should stand at attention during the school song of our team and the school song of the opposing team. Likewise, the team should remain at attention, hands to themselves, and quiet during the national anthem and moment of silence.
- At all times, team members should handle themselves in a socially appropriate manner. Do not stretch or goof around in a way that can be deemed “tacky” and “unclassy.” This includes ‘dirty’ or ‘suggestive’ dance moves that are not part of an approved routine.

- Hatefulness and bad behavior towards the band, other schoolmates, or the general crowd will not be permitted.
- No cell phone use is permitted while in uniform (texting, phone calls, Facebook, taking pictures, etc.)
- Cell phones will be collected before events by coaches and returned after the event is completed.
- Any team member who fails to comply with the above expectations will be given a consequence deemed appropriate by the coach(es).
- Restrictions placed on participant by a health care professional for physical conditions, which might endanger the health of the participant, may require activities to be limited by the coach(es). For the restrictions to be lifted, the participant must bring a written release from the health care professional.

AT THE END OF THE GAMES

- Each member will verbally check with the coach(es) that they have completed their responsibilities and are allowed to leave the field. Failure to check out with the coach(es) will result in extra duties/consequence at the discretion of the coach(es).
- Coaches will signal team members when it is time to leave the field at the end of each game. At that time, members are expected to load all gear and meet in a timely manner. Anyone who does not help unload and load will be assigned consequences deemed appropriate by the coach(es).

FUNDRAISING

- Each team member shall participate in all fundraising activities.
- Fundraising activities must support the goals of the team.
- Fundraising will be coordinated by the coach(es) and approved by the building principal.
- If team member does not meet the minimum requirement for fundraising, extra financial responsibility is required.
- The LHS Eagle Football Program is a priority fundraiser for the Arabelles. All team members are expected to acquire ads from local businesses, with 30% of each sale applied to the dancer's financial balance.
- The Arabelles sponsor the visitor's side concession game at all Luling home football games. Parents are expected to volunteer at least one game per season. All proceeds from the concession stand are returned to the dance activity account to fund the upkeep of the dance closet and purchase necessary supplies.

TEAM LEADERSHIP POSITIONS

Head Cheerleader

There are head cheerleader(s) for both Varsity and JV squads.

Selection of Head Cheerleader(s)

- All cheerleaders interested in trying out for head cheerleader will submit an application to coaches.
- Team members will then vote on applicants.
- Votes and application will then determine selection of head cheerleader.

Duties and Responsibilities of Head Cheerleader(s)

- Squad leader(s) will take a leadership role in the day-to-day activities of the squad with prior approval of the coach(es).
- Communicates information to squad members regarding upcoming activities, such as uniform requirements and practice schedules.
- Teaches and starts all cheers and routines for camp, pep rallies, and games.

- Consults with the coach(es) in planning all pep rallies.
- Organizes the creation, placement, and removal signs, including locker signs, throughout the school and stadium.
- Carries out all other duties assigned by the coach(es).

Head cheerleaders may be removed from the position for conduct that occurs **on or off campus** that is detrimental to the school or squad as determined by the coach(es).

MASCOT

There will be one mascot, unless otherwise determined by the coach(es). The mascot is a member of the varsity squad and an integral part of the spirit program at the school. His/her main responsibilities are to provide interaction with the crowd at all functions by incorporating them in cheers and skits and to work closely with all organizations to enhance the spirit of the school. The mascot will follow all cheer guidelines. Additional responsibilities include:

- Work closely with the athletic department and cheer coach(es) to foster school spirit
- Be familiar with game rules to make appropriate responses with the crowd at sporting events
- Create skits with appropriate themes to foster spirit, in conjunction with the cheerleaders
- Dress in creative attire, when appropriate, with coach(es) approval

Dance Captain

Captain shall be elected after formation of the team for the dance year.

Selection of Dance Captain

- Team members who have completed at least two consecutive years with the dance team and are currently active on the team will be eligible to apply for captain.
- Captain will be chosen by an application process and subsequent vote of the team.
- Tie votes may result in co-captains.

Duties and Responsibilities of Dance Captain

- Takes a leadership role in the day-to-day activities of the team with prior approval of the director(s).
- Communicates information to team members regarding upcoming activities, such as uniform requirements and practice schedules.
- Helps to teach and start all dance practices with stretches/warmups and routines during pep rallies and games.
- Consults with the director(s) in planning all pep rallies.
- Carries out all other duties assigned by the director(s).

A Captain may be removed from the position for conduct that occurs **on or off campus** that is detrimental to the school or team as determined by the director(s) and principal.

RESIGNATION OF TEAM MEMBERS

- Should a member resign from or be removed from the team before the team attends camp, the resigning member should return all school owned property; there will not be a refund of any financial deposits.
- Should a member resign from or be removed from the team before the team attends camp, they will be replaced by the alternate.
- Should a member resign from or be removed from the team after the team attends camp, the member will not be replaced.
- Should a member resign or be removed from the team, the member will NOT be allowed to tryout for future LISD Spirit Teams.

ELGIBILITY – MAINTENANCE

The respective team program will follow the eligibility requirements as outlined by TEA, UIL, and the Luling ISD Extracurricular Code of Conduct.

Any 8th grade student who is selected for the cheer/dance team and is subsequently not promoted to the next grade level will automatically be removed from the team. Any deposits made up to the time of removal will not be refunded.

LETTERING OF VARSITY TEAM MEMBERS

All members of LHS varsity cheer and dance team members are eligible to receive a letter jacket per the respective activity, if one has not been previously received. All eligible members will receive a packet with ordering details. In order to receive a letter jacket, the team member must have participated in at least 70% of the fall activities, including eligibility for grades. (Additional patches are at the team member's expense.)

INFRACTION SYSTEM

Major Infraction

- All major infractions will be dealt with as stated on the Extracurricular Code of Conduct.
- In addition, all major infractions may result in the dancer/cheerleader being removed from performance privileges for the remainder of the dance/cheer season at the discretion of coaches.
- Upon receiving a third major infraction the dancer/cheerleader will be permanently removed from the team and ineligible to tryout for future teams.

Removal from Performance Privileges

- Three major infraction may result in removal from performance privileges for the remainder of the dance/cheer season, and dancer/cheerleader will return all uniforms provided by school.
- Performances include, but are not limited to: pep rallies, games, cheer clinics/camps, etc.
- Dancers/Cheerleaders are still required to attend and participate in all practices and events.
- Dancers/Cheerleaders will sit on the sideline with coach(es) during squad performances.

Minor Infraction

- Each member will have their own consequence documentation sheet in order to keep a record of consequences assigned by the coach(es).
- Team members will have three written minor consequences before receiving a written Major Infraction. Documentation for each consequence will be kept by the coach(es).
- Minor infractions include but are not limited to violations of school handbooks, code of conducts, and dress code, missing uniform pieces, disrespect, tardiness, and ineligibility due to grades.
- The purpose of the consequence chart is to correct the behavior before it escalates and a major infraction must be given.

**In all cases, if a dancer/cheerleader or mascot is made to sit out during a pep rally or game, the member of the team/squad is expected to sit with the coach(es) fully dressed out and participating/cheering along with his/her counterparts. If a member of the team/squad is on suspension, that member is required to attend ALL assigned events and complete any duties assigned by the coach(es).

INCLEMENT WEATHER

In the event of inclement weather, it will be the responsibility of the coach(es), in collaboration with the campus principal, to make the decision to leave the event. If a student voluntarily leaves the school-sponsored event, the member will be subject to the penalties outlined in the guidelines.

TRANSPORTATION & TRAVEL

- All team members will travel to and from all out of town games and events with the coach in school provided transportation unless there is an extenuating circumstance which has been discussed with and approved by the coach in advance.
- If a team member is going to have to leave after a game with his/her parents, he/she must request a transportation form from the coach prior to the game. A parent will also need to approach the coach at the game site before the team member will be dismissed.
- If the parents cannot attend and wish for their child to leave with another adult, the parent must sign the designated district alternate transportation form that requires administrator signatures. Please view the LISD website or the athletic department for one of the forms.
- Anyone who leaves before being released by the coach will be assigned a consequence deemed appropriate by the coach(es).
- All team members should remain in complete uniform until time to board the bus to come home.
- Team members should not travel, enter a store, restaurant, or restroom if not in complete uniform or not following school dress code. This includes traveling to a game. All team members should be fully dressed when he/she steps onto the bus. Hair and make-up must be finished before stepping off the bus. No grooming will be allowed in the public eye.

FINANCIAL RESPONSIBILITY

See information sheet for financial responsibility for team participation. Final balance must be paid before camp in order to attend.

CIVILITY

Parents are partners with the school and are expected to support the spirit team program and coach(es) through attending performances, meeting financial obligations in a timely manner, and assisting in fundraising, among other supportive measures. Mutual respect is imperative, and lack of civility will not be tolerated. Individuals who speak in a demanding, loud, insulting or demeaning manner, or otherwise disrupt operations, will be directed to leave the school or district property.