



# **Cheer Handbook**

## **2026**

**Cheer Director- Jena Fischer**

**Assistant Directors- Brittany Curry, Melissa Keith**

**Administrative Assistant: Nichole Mason**

**Treasurer: Petra Stockton**

**Chaplin: Nicole Hilburn**

**Varsity Cheer Coaches-Brittany Curry, Kelsey Martin, Melissa Keith**

**JV Cheer Coaches- Jena Fischer, Brooke Rahn, Karly Baker**

**Junior High Coaches- Nicole Hilburn, Payton Fleetwood, Ally Pirlet**

**Sparkler Coaches- Petra Stockton, Nichole Mason, Elizabeth Ward**

**Mascots Coaches- Amber Stuart, Kelsey Martin, Amanda Hall**

**Contact Us: [cheer.admin@lcatchargers.com](mailto:cheer.admin@lcatchargers.com)**

## **Purpose:**

The purpose of the LCC cheerleaders is to bring glory to God in all that we do and to offer student athletes the opportunity to grow in cheer skills and leadership while promoting encouragement and spirit to the athletic team. This is done by helping each individual perform to the best of their ability to contribute to the overall team. The focus at every level is on teaching proper technique, executing clean cheerleading moves, and building team spirit. All coaching is age appropriate and progresses at each level, according to their ability to safely and cleanly perform the skill taught.

## **Christ-like Behavior:**

All Cheerleaders will be taught and expected to honor Christ. All members of the cheer squads should remember that wherever we are, whatever we are doing, we represent Christ. He is first in all that we do. Our cheerleaders will be expected to make the visiting cheer squad feel welcomed and answer questions that they may have. They must also show good sportsmanship on and off the field.

**L- Godly LOVE towards others**

**C- Godly CHARACTER**

**C- CHRIST LIKE ATTITUDE**

## **Teamwork and Attitude:**

Teamwork is a necessity in Cheerleading. Each member should remember that her attitude and conduct affects the entire squad. A Cheerleader's performance and dependability affects every member of the squad. One team member's absence affects the squad's ability to perform stunts, dances, and some cheers. Members should refrain from negative statements about the athletes and other squad members or parents. Our purpose is to promote, support, and encourage our athletes.

## **Eligibility:**

*Player Eligibility: Lighthouse Christian Athletics complies with a combination of eligibility rules from MSHSAA (Missouri State High School Activities Association) and certain specific Homeschool athletic associations relevant to each competing sport. Athletes who are homeschooled are allowed to participate in Charger sports with no restrictions. Must have been homeschooled for at least 365 consecutive days immediately preceding the competitive season. • Must meet the age requirements set by MSHSAA for Junior High and Senior High participants.*

## **General Guidelines:**

1. Be on time and present for all practices and games.
2. Be prepared for all practices with appropriate game wear and equipment. Cheer shoes must be worn at all times. (See Bow to Toe Checklist)
3. Have a servant's heart, positive attitude, and show respect and courtesy to other team members, coaches, fans, refs, and opponents.
4. A high moral standard is expected of all Chargers athletes. A high moral standard is also expected with the use of all social networks that you are affiliated with.
5. Keep up with skills-everyone can improve. Must learn and know cheers, chants, dances and routines for all games and performances.

6. Understand that our primary responsibility is to support and encourage the athletic program.
7. Follow safety guidelines and LCC Code of Conduct.
8. Remove all jewelry for games and practices.
9. Have all paperwork, physicals, and fees turned in on time.
10. No chewing gum during practice or games.
11. See individual squad guidelines.
12. No long or fake nails

*\* If any of these guidelines become a consistent problem, consequences may be applied and a meeting with the coach, cheerleader and her parents, and the Athletic Director will take place before the cheerleader can continue to participate. The following discipline is at the discretion of the coach.*

1<sup>st</sup> time- Warning

2<sup>nd</sup> time- Consequences (running, extra practice time with the captain, or sitting out for a portion of a game)

3<sup>rd</sup> time- A Meeting with the Athletic Director, Coach and parents will be planned to discuss the next plan of action.

**No drugs, alcohol, vaping, nor tobacco products will be allowed. No exceptions. There will be disciplinary action taken immediately, with no warning given.**

### **Responsibility of Parents:**

1. Stay informed of games and practices. **Please make sure you have the Crossbar app!!**
2. Provide transportation to ensure the cheerleader arrives and departs all practices and games on time. The coach is responsible for all the cheerleaders and cannot leave a practice or game until all the cheerleaders have been picked up; unless they drove themselves. Please be respectful of the coach's time and arrive on time to pick up your daughter.
3. Attend parent meetings.
4. Cooperate with the cheer coaches in establishing and maintaining a quality organization. Let them coach and give consequences when necessary. Remember that the coaches are volunteering their time and abilities in an effort to make the season a success. *Please wait 24 hours before contacting coaches with your thoughts about a situation during practice or a game, with the exception of immediate health/safety concerns.* We would like to foster a relationship between the coaches and the girls. We would like the girls, rather than the parents, to be able to come to the coach first with any requests or concerns. The coaches see all the girls at practice so they are more familiar with their abilities, strengths, and areas needing improvement, whereas the parents would only see their own child. The coaches are doing their best to place the girls in the positions that make the squad as successful as possible. **Not everyone is guaranteed a stunting position.** This doesn't mean that the girls can't learn new things, or be placed in different spots. This is where the communication between the coach and girl comes in.
5. Encourage or support at practices or games and not interrupt during them.

### **Conflict Resolution:**

In the event that you feel there is a conflict that needs to be resolved, we ask that you have your daughter contact your coach first, then one of the Assistant Cheer Directors and then the Athletic Director so that the appropriate people have the opportunity to address your concerns. If the coaches see a conflict with one of the cheerleaders, they will first go to the girl and address the concerning

issue. If it is not resolved, then they will talk to the parents to find a resolution. If needed, a meeting with the coach, parents, and sport director will be called to resolve the conflict.

## **Attendance:**

Consistent attendance at practice and games are expected of all student athletes. When you commit to being a part of the cheer team, practices and games should take priority over other extra curricular activities. **The only acceptable reasons for missing practice are because of a(n):**

- **Injury/illness**
- **Family emergency**

If a cheerleader is going to miss a practice, she should make every effort to notify the coach at least one week prior to the day of the practice or a week before the next game. Repeated absences and/or unexcused absences can result in decreased cheering time, suspensions and/or removal from the team.

If a player needs to miss a practice for a reason other than those mentioned above, it must be approved by her coach. If it is not approved, it will be counted as unexcused and the player should be prepared to accept the consequences of their actions.

## **Practice Schedule:**

We will begin practices on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday each week from 5:30-8:00pm starting Monday, August 3rd, thru the end of September. We will typically end practice early after DayLight Saving time begins. ALL times will be posted on the team calendar in the Crossbar app. Practice location: Fellowship Farms. **\*Please arrive by 5:15 pm because practice begins at 5:30 sharp!**

## **Fees and Uniforms:**

Once the season starts, at the first practice, the Chargers fees will become non-refundable. Fees will only be partially refundable before the first practice. The uniforms are non-refundable.

Everything is yours to keep after the season is over. So the following year, it may not cost you as much unless you need replacement items, move up to the next level, or an item is changed.

Uniform payments need to be made in full on the day of fitting for Mascots, Sparklers, JH, JV and V squads. Charger fees need to be paid at registration. Only accepting debit and credit cards.

### **Bow to Toe Checklist:**

- Ponytail holders/bobby pins
- Performance bows
- Navy Sports bra
- Bodyliner
- Shell
- Skirt
- Spanx-if you have extra, bring them as well.
- Socks
- Cheer shoes-if they look dirty, please clean them.
- Warm-up Jacket and Pants

- Poms
- Water
- Clear Raincoat
- Ankle/wrist/knee brace if needed

Extras: Make-up to touch up, body spray, deodorant, t-shirt, shorts or sweats, and shoes to change into after the game. During the game be prepared with all your items from your bow to toe checklist - the consequence for missing items will be to sit out part or all of the game. (See individual squad guidelines)

## **Safety:**

Cheerleaders and parents must realize that there are inherent risks involved in cheerleading. By participating in this sport, as with other sports, the cheerleader and family acknowledge this fact and assume this risk. Remember coaches are volunteers. The Chargers organization is not liable for injuries incurred during practices or games.

Probably the single most distinctive changing aspect of cheerleading is its increased “athleticism.” Today’s cheerleader has to possess the strength of a football player, the stamina of a track runner, the agility of a gymnast, and the grace of a ballerina. Therefore, it is important that cheerleaders commit to stay in shape and exercise safety when at practice and games.

**All athletes must have a sports physical to participate. A new sports physical must be on file, or an updated medical information sheet if the physical is not outdated, with the Chargers by July 24th. (Most physicals are for a two year time frame.) This is a MSHSAA guideline. If these are not turned in by the deadline given, the cheerleader will not be able to participate in practices or games. Please see Jena Fischer, Melissa Keith or Brittany Curry with any questions/concerns.**

## **Safety Guidelines:**

### **PREVENTION AND CARE OF INJURIES**

It is very important that the members of the cheer team understand the importance of incorporating a good warm-up and stretching program prior to all practices, games, competitions, and performances. The team will be much more effective and dynamic if the cheer members are physically fit. The maintenance of a good level of physical fitness and proper warm-ups will not only produce a team that is energetic and pleasing to watch, but will also greatly reduce the risks for injuries and accidents.

- The cheer coach shall assist in the development of a conditioning and warm-up program for the cheer team.
- Proper techniques in stunts should be used at all times.
- When stunts and pyramids are constructed, the team should have spotters as needed for the particular stunt.
- The cheer coach should acquire a very basic knowledge of first aid and be prepared to treat minor injuries, strains, sprains, contusions, cuts, etc. A basic first aid kit should be located at the site of practice and games in case an injury occurs.

## **Safety guidelines for partner stunts and pyramids:**

- Beginning partner stunts and pyramids shall be mastered before progressing to more advanced partner stunts and pyramids.
- All new partner stunts and pyramids shall be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution. Assisted spotting shall be required until new stunts are secure.
- Spotters should be positioned in front, back, and on the sides when practicing new partner stunts and pyramids.
- Partner stunts and pyramids shall be practiced in a properly matted area.
- Components to pyramids should be practiced separately before building the complete pyramid.
- Every participating member of the squad should have a thorough understanding of the components of the stunt or pyramid before attempting to execute.
- Before building, verbal communication should be established to use in case of trouble. The pyramid should be dismantled from top to bottom quickly.
- When building, everyone should remain quiet except the person in charge. Full concentration at all times is imperative.
- Always spot the head and upper torso of the top person to ensure safety in case of a fall. Protect the head and neck areas above all else.

## **Guidelines for tumbling incorporated into cheers:**

- All new tumbling skills shall be reviewed and approved by the coach prior to execution.
- Tumbling stunts should not be executed without the use of a spotter unless they can be performed consistently and without difficulty and approved by the coach.
- Tumbling stunts requiring the use of a spotter shall be preceded by verbal communication of the intended stunt. This should be mastered outside of cheer.
- New tumbling skills shall be mastered on the mat. If a mat is not available assisted spotting should be employed. New tumbling skills should not be learned on hardwood or similar surfaces. This is something that Chargers as an organization will not be teaching nor spotting.

## **CONCUSSION EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT PROTOCOL:**

The Purpose of this policy is to define the concussion protocol for Lighthouse Christian Athletics.

Concussion Diagnosis and Return to Play:

Official diagnosis of concussion will be done by a medical professional.

- If a player and/or parent states that the athlete has a concussion, the Chargers will automatically enter the athlete into the Graduated Return to Play Strategy (see below).

If a family opts to not acquire an official diagnosis and Chargers coaches suspect that a player has sustained a concussion, they will place the athlete into the Graduated Return to Play Strategy.

- If a family obtains an official diagnosis from a medical professional, the Chargers will

follow the medical treatment plan as relayed by the family. The Chargers may or may not require an official clearance from a medical professional to return to play.

The Chargers graduated return to play strategy is based on page 8 of the Sports Concussion Assessment Tool (SCAT) - 5th edition. (Echemendia RJ, et al. Br J Sports Med 2017;51:851–858. doi:10.1136/bjsports-2017-097506SCAT5).

#### Graduated Return to Play Strategy:

In most cases 24 hours is required to pass between each of the following steps. At every step, the athlete will return to the previous step if symptoms return and/or worsen.

1. Symptom-limited activity: The athlete may begin the process of returning to play once they have not had a symptom for 24 to 72 hours, and have been able to return to most, if not all, regular school activity.
2. Light Aerobic Exercise: The athlete will perform the standard daily dynamic aerobic warm up routine.
3. Sport Specific Exercise: In addition to the standard warmup, the athlete will add a small amount of running, or other light activities during team conditioning. The activity will be prescribed by the coach monitoring their return to play.
4. Non-Contact Training Drills: The athlete will be allowed to perform drills with their group (run routes, ball handling, blocking step motions, etc.) where there is no intended impact with another player. The athlete will run team conditioning.
5. Full-Contact Practice: The athlete will be allowed to engage in full-contact practice and team conditioning.
6. Return to Game/Play: The athlete will be considered cleared to resume full normal activity.

## Here is a symptom checklist:

Physical	Thinking	Emotional	Sleep
Headaches	Feeling mentally foggy	Irritability	Drowsiness
Nausea	Problems concentrating	Sadness	Sleeping more than usual
Fatigue	Problems remembering	Feeling more emotional	Sleeping less than usual
Visual problems	Feeling more slowed down	Nervousness	Trouble falling asleep
Balance problems			
Sensitivity to light and noise			
Numbness/Tingling			
Vomiting			
Dizziness			

## Red Flags: Call your doctor or go to emergency department if you suddenly experience any of the following

Headaches that worsen	Very drowsy and can't be awakened	Can't recognize people or places	Unusual behavior change
Seizures	Repeated vomiting	Increasing confusion	Increasing irritability
Neck pain	Slurred speech	Weakness or numbness in arms or legs	Loss of consciousness

1. Get lots of rest and naps. No late nights.
2. Limit any activity that requires a lot of thinking or concentration.
3. Limit any screen time: computers, phones, and t.v.
4. Drink lots of fluids and eat carbohydrates and protein to maintain appropriate blood sugar levels.
5. It is normal to feel frustrated and sad when you cannot be as active as usual.

Thank you so much for taking the time to read through the handbook for the LCC Cheer Program. Please sign below.

We have read and discussed this handbook with our daughter. We understand that these are the guidelines and policies that we need to abide by as a Lighthouse Christian Chargers Cheerleader.

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Cheerleader's signature

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date

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Cheerleader's printed name

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Parent's signature

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date