

# **BY-LAWS**

## **Lincoln High School Cheerleading**

Above all else, Lincoln High School cheerleaders are ambassadors of the school. As a result, they are expected represent Lincoln High school and community, as well as the general public, with pride. Cheerleaders are in a high profile position and exemplary behavior is expected at all times.

Cheerleaders are expected to demonstrate pride in their school, allegiance to the student body, and promote a sense of community throughout the school. As cheerleading is a school-affiliated sport and activity, cheerleaders are subject to rules that govern all other school organizations.

### **Article I- PURPOSE**

The purpose of the Lincoln High School cheerleaders shall be to promote school spirit and encourage good sportsmanship.

- A. Support Lincoln football and basketball (Boys and Girls.)
- B. Participate in School pep rallies
- C. Participate in school activities (i.e. Homecoming week, orientation)
- D. Support any other athletic team when asked to do so by the coach, athletic director, or principal.
- E. Participate in sidelines (i.e. FHSAA State Championship)

### **Article II- SQUAD MEMBERSHIP**

There can be a Varsity, Junior Varsity and Sideline squad. The coach will decide on the number of cheerleaders he/she wants on the squads, and the top cheerleaders to fill that number will be selected. Please note, 12<sup>th</sup> graders will not be eligible for Junior Varsity.

### **Article III- SELECTION- ELIGIBILITY- ORGANIZATION**

#### **A. SELECTION TO MEMBERSHIP**

1. An interest meeting will be held in the spring for 8<sup>th</sup> through 11<sup>th</sup> grade students that will be enrolled at Lincoln High School in the fall. This will be a mandatory meeting for athletes, and at least one parent or guardian must be present in order for the athlete to be eligible to try out.
2. Tryouts will be held following the interest meetings and consist of two parts.
  - a. As previously stated, cheerleaders are in a high profile position and it is expected that they present themselves in a prideful and respectful manner. As a result, the first part of the process will be an application, teacher recommendations, and discipline history.
  - b. Lastly, athletes will be evaluated on their skills. This portion of the try-out will be led and organized by qualified instructors who will rate athletes on tumbling, cheer technique and dance, and stunting.
3. Selection of the teams could be made by a panel of instructors who participated in the tryouts, reviewed applications and observed the tryout process, and Lincoln Coaching Staff.

#### **B. ELIGIBILITY**

To participate in try-outs an athlete must complete/meet the following requirements:

1. Have a GPA (unweighted) of 2.0 (cumulative) for each semester grading period (FHSAA ruling)
2. Attend mandatory interest meeting with a parent/guardian present.
3. All forms completes and turned in prior to try-out date
  - a. Parent Permission/Contract
  - b. Student Contract
  - c. Applicant Form
  - d. Activity Forms (with Physical dated within the last year)
  - e. Recent Photo of Participant
  - f. Financial Agreement

4. Must not have an outstanding balance due from previous years of cheering at Lincoln High School.
5. Must have turned in all uniforms and/or other Lincoln High School owned items.
6. Must be a Lincoln High School student for fall.
7. Must not have been dismissed from a previous cheerleading squad during the previous school year.
8. Must not have received out-of-school suspension lasting more than 3 or more days during the previous school year.

#### C. ORGANIZATION

Lincoln High School Cheerleading is organized as follows.

1. Principal
2. Athletic Director
3. Coach/School Sponsor
4. Captain/Co-Captain (see Article IV)

#### D. CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Communication between cheerleaders, parents, and coaches is a crucial factor in determining the success of the program. If a problem or concern arises, it is important that the appropriate chain of command is followed. Chain of command: 1<sup>st</sup> – Cheerleader to Coach, 2<sup>nd</sup> – Parent to Coach, 3<sup>rd</sup> – Parent to Head Coach, 4<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Head Coach to Athletic Director, 5<sup>th</sup> – Parent/Head Coach to Principal.

#### E. RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Cheering Assignments:
  - a. Varsity squad cheers for, but are not limited to:
    1. Varsity boys' football home and away.
    2. Varsity boys' and girls' basketball home and local away games.
    3. Varsity will attend any extra state playoffs and championship games.
    4. Any fundraiser or organized event that we choose to participate in for the community.
  - b. Junior Varsity squad cheers for, but are not limited to:
    1. Junior Varsity boys' football home and local away
    2. Junior Varsity boys' and girls' basketball home and local away.
2. Cheering Squad Division:

During basketball season all squads may potentially be subject to division into two squads. The purpose of the squads is to allow cheerleaders the opportunity to perform at games home and in the process not compromise their grades. This allows all the basketball teams the advantage of having cheerleaders present at a majority of the games.
3. Sideline Squad:

This squad will compete across the state and perhaps nation within the guidelines for the FHSAA Sideline Cheer. Squad components consist of not only cheering, but stunting, and dance.

### Article IV- OFFICERS/LEADERSHIP

Officers guide the activities and act as leaders for this organization. Officers shall be appointed by the coach and may be removed by the coach should the need arise.

#### A. POSITIONS

1. Captain
2. Co-Captain

#### B. DUTIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

1. Captain
  - a. Lead practices at the discretion of the coach
  - b. Lead cheers at athletic and school events
  - c. Oversee Cheerleading Squad at community events
  - d. Talk with team mates to assist with conflict resolution among the squad

- e. Present a positive outlook at all times when communicating with the squad
  - f. Ensure that cheerleaders use practice time wisely and effectively
  - g. Assist coaching staff with logistics as needed (i.e., passing out uniforms, materials, equipment, etc.)
  - h. Alert coaching staff to issues among the squad as needed
  - i. Work together with the co-captain to complement each other and plan together for the benefit of the squad.
- 2. Co-Captain
    - a. Assist the captain in their duties and assume those duties in their absence
    - b. Work together with the captain to complement each other and plan together for the benefit of the squad.
- C. SELECTION – Coaches will select leadership for the squad based on the following.
- 1. Responses provided on application during try-put process
  - 2. Observations by coaches of their ability to lead, cooperate with others, organize, and create synergy among the group.

## **Article V- UNIFORMS AND EQUIPMENT**

- A. Uniform(s) and equipment are the property of Lincoln High School. Each cheerleader is responsible for the proper care of those items issued to him/her.
- B. Uniform(s) must be cleaned (washed and labeled) prior to return. Replacement, damage, or repair fees will be assessed on items not returned in good condition. The coach shall determine good condition. Failure to return assigned uniform(s) and equipment in good condition will result in administrative action, which may include suspension from school (Leon County School Board Policy 6-Gx37-7.08 (2)(f)).
- C. Cheerleaders will furnish all other accessories (i.e. shoes, bloomers, bags, camp clothes, pom poms, etc.) Camp clothes and other accessories will be determined by the team coaches. These items must be purchased and received by each cheerleader prior to summer camp. Failure to order/purchase these the required items for camp will result in having to sit out at camp. Camp clothes are used for practice as well.
- D. Cheer uniform(s) may NOT be lent out other individuals, nor may they be worn for any non-sanctioned events.
- E. Sideline Cheer Uniforms follow the guidelines above and kept in good condition; however, they are purchased by the parent/guardian and will be the property of the cheerleader following the season.

## **Article VI- Safety (FHSA)**

- A. Jewelry of any kind cannot be worn during cheerleading activities.
- B. Hair must be secured away from the face and off of the shoulders. No hard clips, etc... should be used.
- C. Fingernails must be short with neutral colors only (cannot be over the edge of finger; nail salons will not cut them short enough).
- D. No stunting or tumbling at an event unless under the direct supervision of the coach.
- E. Appropriate clothing and shoes must be worn at all times.
- F. No chewing gum, etc... while engaging in cheer activities.
- G. Never perform stunts and/or tumbling during public appearances that have not been practiced to perfection.
- H. There are inherent risks, mostly due to stunting and tumbling, for cheerleaders. All safety guidelines must be followed to insure the utmost safety of all participants. Therefore, a coach should approve any new stunt and/or tumbling skill before it is attempted.
- I. Cheerleaders must be attentive and focused while engaged in cheerleading activities. This is especially important during basketball games due to the proximity of the cheerleaders to the game.
- J. Cheerleaders must report any physical problems to their coach as soon as the problem arises. Failure to do so could cause further problems and jeopardize the safety of others.
- K. Cheerleaders must obtain a doctor's release before resuming any cheerleading activity after an injury or illness requiring a doctor's visit.

## **Article VII- Game Suspension and Dismissal from Program**

- A. Out of school suspension will result in dismissal from the program.
- B. Unexcused absences for any cheerleading function will result in a one game suspension.
- C. If a cheerleader is benched (suspended) for a game, she must sit alone with the coach and be in uniform with no electronic devices allowed.
- D. Failure to uphold the spirit of this constitution can result in extra conditioning, suspension, and/or dismissal. The degree of punishment will depend on the frequency and magnitude of the infraction(s) and prior discipline history.
- E. Once a cheerleader quits a squad or is removed from the squad, she is no longer part of the LHS cheerleading program and will relinquish all fees paid and lose all banquet privileges. Failure to complete spirit squad or competitive squad obligations will result in dismissal – this includes community service for those who are cheering varsity spirit.
- F. Cheerleaders will be pulled from the line-up if they are acting inappropriately, performing below expectations, and/or they do not know material. Failure to correct will result in dismissal.
- G. Any dismissal from the program will also result in the cheerleader not being eligible to try out for cheerleading the next season.

**\*Constant infractions of any of the above could result in squad suspension or dismissal. The coach reserves the right to analyze each situation and exercise leadership in dealing with problems even if it is a deviation from the stated policy.**

## **RULES AND CONSEQUENCES FOR CHEERLEADERS**

The following rules govern the operation of the cheerleading program.

### **A. ACADEMIC**

- 1. Cheerleaders must maintain an unweighted 2.0 GPA for each semester grading period, and an overall cumulative unweighted GPA of 2.0 per FHSAA.
- 2. Failure to comply will result in probation, and potential dismissal, from the team
- 3. If a cheerleader is dismissed for academic reasons he/she will be allowed to try-out the following year as long as he/she meets all the eligibility requirements.
- 4. Cheerleaders are required to provide coaches copies of their progress reports and report cards within one week of distribution.

### **B. ATTENDANCE**

- 1. Attendance at practices, events, and meetings is MANDATORY. Cheerleading must be the number one priority of all extracurricular activities, after school jobs and other cheerleading squads.
- 2. Failure to attend any given practice will result in ineligibility to perform at the following event; repeated violations will result in a strike.
- 3. Cheerleaders must notify the coach if they are sick or an emergency arises at least 6 hours before the game. A doctor's note is necessary for excuse from a game, practice, or activity.
- 4. Habitual absences from practice, events, and meetings will result in dismissal from the team. If a cheerleader is dismissed for this reason they will NOT be eligible to try out the following year.
- 5. Attendance at school is also mandatory, and skipping classes will not be tolerated.
- 6. Excessive absences from a class and skipping may result in probation, and potential dismissal from the team. For these purposes, excessive is defined as a cheerleader with 4 or more unexcused absences in a class. Cheerleaders caught skipping from a class will be issued a strike.
- 7. If a cheerleader is dismissed for attendance/skipping he/she will be allowed to try-out the following year as long as he/she meets all the eligibility requirements.
- 8. Attendance will be taken at every event, practice, and game.

### C. CONDUCT

1. Cheerleaders shall exhibit good sportsmanship and display behavior in accordance with the rules of conduct as stated for Lincoln High School. Failure to represent the cheerleading program and Lincoln High School in a good manner consistent with the rules of good sportsmanship and in accordance with the rules of conduct addressed by Lincoln High School will result in suspension or dismissal as deemed by the coach, sponsor and school administration. This encompasses practices, events, in the classroom, in the community, and online (i.e. email and social media).
2. Any 2's or 1's in citizenship will result in probation. Any further offenses will be subject to dismissal from the squad.
3. Any cheerleader that quits for any reason or is dismissed due to any other reason rather than academics is NOT eligible to try out the following year.
4. Any cheerleader who is part of the sideline team that quits the sideline team will not be permitted to continue on sideline cheer. Additionally, he/she will NOT be eligible to try out the following year.
5. Any cheerleader that "walks-out" of an event, game, or practice is subject to immediate dismissal from the squad.
6. Negative verbal or non-verbal expressions of anger or sarcasm are not acceptable in reference to the opposition, fellow teammates, or any person of authority (i.e. teachers, officials, coaches, administrators, etc.). This includes written communication through email, text, or social media. Strikes will be given to those that do not comply. Repeated offenses will result in dismissal from the team.
7. Cheerleaders who are found in possession of/ and or using alcohol, tobacco, or any illegal drugs will be subject to dismissal from the team at the discretion of the coach and Lincoln High School Administration.
8. Cheerleaders are expected to display respect for others and self-respect at all times, including in the community not just at practices, events, and meetings. This includes words, actions, and things posted in social media. Strikes will be issued for these offenses. Repeated offenses will result in dismissal from the team.
9. Cheerleaders who receive disciplinary action in school that results in a referral will be subject to probation or potential dismissal from the squad.
  - i. Any cheerleader who receives an in-school suspension is subject to suspension at the next scheduled event. Repeated offenses of in-school suspension will result in dismissal from the team.
  - ii. Any cheerleader who receives an out of school suspension will be subject to dismissal from the team at the discretion of the coach and Lincoln High School Administration.
10. Cheerleaders who are arrested will be immediately dismissed from the squad.

### D. APPEARANCE

1. A cheerleader's appearance must be neat and clean at all times. He/she is expected to have uniforms neat and mended as well as cleaned for each performance.
2. Coaches will inform cheerleaders of the required dress for practices, at school on game days, and for games. Cheerleaders must be in compliance with all uniform and dress guidelines. Those not in compliance will be issued strikes and subject to probation or suspension from games. In other words, cheerleaders must be dressed from bows to toes correctly for all events and occasions.
3. Make-up should be worn in moderation
4. Tattoos are not recommended. If present, it must be concealed by the uniform.
5. No jewelry/body piercings shall be worn at games and practices.
6. Fingernails must be kept neat and trimmed (no longer than ¼ inch from the tip of the finger). Nail polish must be a muted color for events and games.
7. Periodic uniform and dress checks will be performed at practices and games. Strikes will be issued for any of the aforementioned infractions.
8. Cheerleaders who violate the Dress Code for Lincoln High School/Leon County Schools will be subject to disciplinary action.

## **Article VII – DISCIPLINE AND CONSEQUENCES**

The cheerleading coach/sponsor will strive to administer the discipline procedures as outlined in Article VI, in a fair and consistent manner. The coaches and administration of Lincoln High School shall have authority over the program operations. Each cheerleader acknowledges that failure to meet the expectations of Lincoln High School will result in punishment as outlined in Article VI.

- A. PROBATION – Cheerleaders who are on probation due to grades are still required to attend practices, games and events, but will not be allowed to participate. They must submit bi-weekly progress reports to coaches. Coaches will review at the end of the grading period to determine if the probation can be lifted. Those on probation are also not allowed to wear any of the cheer attire.
- B. SUSPENSION – Cheerleaders who receive a suspension are still required to be at the next schedule event, in proper dress code as outlined for that event. They will sit on the sidelines to observe and assist coaches as needed. No phones will be permitted while serving suspensions, there will be assigned tasks.
- C. DISMISSAL – Any cheerleader who is dismissed from the team is required to return their uniform and equipment ASAP. Cheerleaders who are dismissed are still responsible for their financial obligations as outlined in the annual financial contract.

## **Article VIII- COACH BASED DECISIONS**

At times the coach will come across situations that are not covered in the by-laws. It is necessary for the coach to take control of the situation using his/her best judgment. The coach should use discretion in each decision, and be consistent. It is essential that the well-being of the squad is preserved, and kept at the standards of quality associated with Lincoln High School.

Finally, these by-laws have been implemented to strengthen each squad member's sense of responsibility to his/herself and to other members of the squad. They have been designed to build a high caliber cheerleading squad with a respectable and impressive reputation.

## **Article IX- FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS**

We recognize that cheerleading can be a costly endeavor for athletes and parents/guardians. To the extent possible the program will incorporate fundraising to help off-set fee and expenses.

- A. Fee explanations and payment schedule will be provided at the beginning of the season.
- B. Parents/Guardians understand that they are responsible for the financial obligations as set forth in the fee schedule, and will sign a financial contract.
- C. Noncompliance with the fee schedule will result in the suspension of a cheerleader from the next events, practices, and meetings until payments are made.
- D. Any fees not paid in full will be placed on the student's record as a financial obligation. Obligations not satisfied will result in a student not eligible to participate in senior events and activities, nor will they be able to receive their diploma.

## **Article IX- CHEERLEADER PARENT**

The cheerleader parent(s) are encouraged to:

- A. Attend the parent/spirit meetings
- B. Lend support to the cheerleading program by participating on the Trojan Spirit Team. The primary responsibility of the team is to assist coaches with logistics, communication, fundraising, and other details that will ensure the program runs smoothly. The team will be led by a parent appointed by the coaching staff annually.
- C. Cheer parents are a reflection of the Lincoln cheer program and are expected to behave appropriately and display exceptional sportsmanship at all practices, games, sidelines, and other events.