

**EDEN PRAIRIE HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING  
TEAM HANDBOOK 2025–2026**

*Please contact Coach Elle Wiley with any questions:*

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## WELCOME LETTER FROM COACH WILEY

Dear Cheerleaders and Parents,

Welcome to the 2025–2026 season! This year, we're introducing an exciting new focus on earning your Varsity letter—a prestigious symbol of your commitment, hard work, and pride in representing Eden Prairie.

The Varsity letter is more than just an accolade; it stands for the excellence you achieve through dedication at practices, games, and every event you attend. Whether you're supporting football, soccer, volleyball, or other school activities, every minute you invest counts toward reaching this important milestone.

In the past, unexcused absences or tardiness often resulted in penalties, such as sitting out games. This season, however, we are shifting our approach. Our goal is to encourage consistent attendance through a positive framework, emphasizing progress and the personal satisfaction of earning your letter. To help you succeed, an 85% attendance benchmark for all scheduled practices, games, and events has been set.

Please review the updated handbook for complete details on our program's goals, expectations, and financial commitments. I'm looking forward to a season of outstanding achievements as you work toward earning your well-deserved Varsity letter.

Cheers!

— Coach Elle Wiley  
Head Cheerleading Coach

## **PROGRAM OVERVIEW**

### **- Team Role:**

Our Varsity team leads the sidelines at varsity football games and supports additional sports (girls' and boys' soccer, volleyball, and other events). We are a team-first program where every athlete's contribution counts.

### **- Lettering Requirement & Attendance Accountability:**

Earning a Varsity letter is a prestigious honor and a reflection of your consistent commitment to the team. To receive your letter, you must attend at least **85% of all required scheduled practices, games, and events**. Partial attendance (for example, attending 1.5 hours of a 2-hour practice equals 75% credit) will be factored into your overall percentage. This will begin starting on August 11th, the official start of the Fall athletics season.

We do **not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences**—all absences count equally. This approach gives you the freedom to manage your own schedule and make thoughtful decisions while still being responsible for meeting the lettering requirement. The 15% cushion is designed to account for life's inevitable conflicts. If you find yourself exceeding that, it's a sign that time management or commitment may need to be re-evaluated.

Throughout the season, **coaches will monitor attendance**. If an athlete drops below 85%, we will check in to offer support, talk through what's going on, and help the athlete reflect on their habits and choices. If attendance continues to decline—or in cases of repeated behavior concerns—a parent or guardian will be contacted. In some cases, a form may also be sent home for signature to ensure expectations are clearly understood.

We want every cheerleader to succeed. Excuses will be accepted without judgment, but if they become frequent, you will naturally fall below 85% and become ineligible to letter. This is not a punishment—it's a natural outcome of your choices, and a valuable opportunity to grow in responsibility and accountability.

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## SEASON SCHEDULE & COMMITMENTS

### TRYOUTS & PRE-SEASON

- **Pre-Tryout Meeting:** June 12 | 6:00 – 8:00 PM | Auditorium
- **Tryouts:** June 16–17 | 4:00 – 6:00 PM | Small Gym
- **Team Announcement:** Posted by the morning of June 18 on the @epcheerteam Instagram account
- **Uniform Fitting & Payments Due:** June 18 | Room 234 EPHS
  - New Cheerleaders: 9:30 – 10:30
  - Returning Cheerleaders: 10:00 – 11:00

*(Athletes must attend with one parent/guardian. You can view a list of prices down below to calculate your costs if you already own some items)*
- **Camp Payment Due:** On or before July 2nd

### SUMMER & FALL COMMITMENTS

- **High School Camp Meeting:** July 22 (only if you are attending camp) | 6:00 – 7:00 PM | East Commons
- **Optional High School Practices:** July 28–31 | 9:00 – 11:00 AM | Small Gym
- **Optional High School UCA Camp:** August 4 – 5 at Farmington High School
- **Cheer Photos:** August 11 | 12:00 Noon
- **Fall Sports Kickoff Meeting:** August 11 (Afternoon/Evening, for Athletes & Parents)
- **First Official Cheer Practice:** August 12- (Times vary, always in the Small Gym)
- **Various Community Events**

*Note: The official team calendar link will be available immediately after tryouts and will be distributed via GroupMe and email.*

### REGULAR SEASON WEEKLY SCHEDULE (STARTING IN SEPTEMBER)

- **Monday:** Team practice from **3:45 – 5:30 PM** (once per week, generally)
  - **Tuesday:** Cheer at a home soccer or volleyball game (as scheduled)
  - **Wednesday:** Weight training after school until **4:45 PM**
  - **Thursday:** Cheer at a home soccer or volleyball game (as scheduled)
  - **Friday:** Cheer at a home or away football game (team bus provided for away games)
  - **Saturday:** Occasional events (e.g., cross-country meets, soccer games, school spirit appearances)  
– attendance expected
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## FINANCIAL COMMITMENT

### NEW CHEERLEADERS APPAREL: \$427

Includes required apparel and uniform top rental.

### RETURNING CHEERLEADERS APPAREL: MINIMUM \$82

Covers white tee, red tee, socks, and uniform top rental; if items are worn out, the total may increase up to \$427. There is no pressure to replace worn items if you prefer not to.

### UCA CAMP (OPTIONAL) FEE: \$210

Full payment required by **July 2nd** —no partial payments allowed. You may pay at the time of the fitting or Via MyPayment Plus.

### ATHLETIC REGISTRATION FEE: \$175

Due mid August; separate from apparel costs.



#### Apparel Prices:

- White Unisex Tee\*- \$15
- Red Fitted Tee\*- \$15
- Nike Polo- \$45
- Uniform Jacket- \$145
- Uniform Top\*- \$50 (rented)
- Uniform Skirt- \$100
- Gloves- \$7
- Hat- \$7
- Socks (2 pairs)\*- \$2
- Pom Set- \$35
- Optional Nike Backpack- \$45



\*Denotes a new item that returners need this year

Note: No uniform orders will be placed without full payment on June 18. Outstanding balances must be cleared before new orders.

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## TEAM STANDARDS & DRESS CODE

### PRACTICE ATTIRE:

At practice, athletes must wear a proper athletic top that covers the *majority* of their midriff. Wearing a “bra only” is not permitted.

### Practice Color Guidelines:

- **Mondays:** Wear a combination of red and black.
- **Wednesdays:** Wear all black attire.

### SCHOOL OUTFIT EXPECTATIONS:

- To promote a unified team appearance, cheerleaders will dress in coordinated cheer gear at school. Your hair may be styled how you choose, individually, as long as it is neat. Leaders, in combination with the coach, will choose the specific style to ensure everyone is coordinated. This rule is in place to ensure our team always looks unified, professional, and proud to represent Eden Prairie as both athletes and ambassadors on game days. By following this rule, you demonstrate your commitment to the team and help us always put our best foot forward. If you're on the team, this expectation is non-negotiable.



• **Volleyball and Soccer Game Days:** Red or White team tee (dyed pink in October) paired with leggings, denim, etc. You may choose to wear your cheer jacket if you are cold.

• **Football Game Days:** Cheerleaders will wear the full uniform to school. You may add the cheer jacket if you are cold. Your hair may be styled how you choose, individually, as long as it is neat, and so the bow is optional and can be placed how you'd like. Lipstick is also optional.



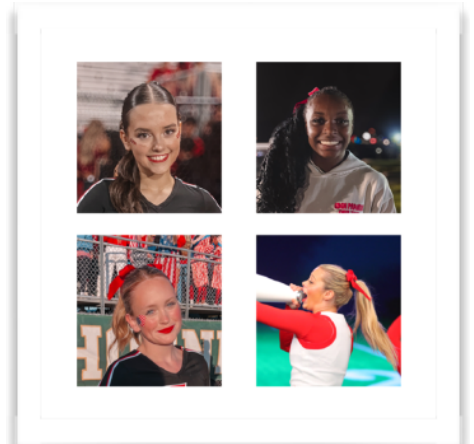
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## PERSONAL APPEARANCE STANDARDS

*As representatives of Eden Prairie Cheer, every detail of your appearance matters. The way you present yourself from head to toe is a vital part of our identity. Please adhere to the following rules:*

### HAIR COLOR & STYLE:

- **Hair Color:** Only natural hair colors are allowed. Unnatural colors such as pink, green, blue, or any similar hues are not permitted. You may feel free to color your hair with natural colors in any other way.
- **Hairstyle:** Your hair must be pulled back into a mid-height ponytail. The ponytail should be neatly styled, with a part down the middle or slightly to the side. Use gel and/or wax to slick your hair back so it appears shiny and polished during games and events. The hair coming out of the pony tail past the bow can be either straight or curly according to your personal preference, but it should look purposeful and neat.
- **Exceptions:** We understand that hair textures vary. If you cannot achieve the exact style due to your hair texture, you must maintain a similar neat appearance with a similarly placed part if possible and proper bow placement and with the bow facing the back.
- **Cold Weather Hair:** When the weather changes and we wear our winter hats during games, the hairstyle will switch to 2 low braid pigtails. Everyone is required to braid the hair pieces coming out of the pony tail. This is to keep a neat appearance under the hat and along the hood of your jackets.



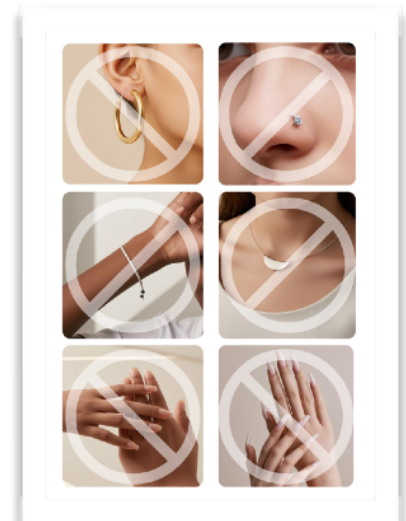
### NAILS:

- Nails must be kept short and natural. They should not extend past your fingertips.
- No fake nails are allowed, and if polished, nail colors should be neutral or a sheer pale pink.

### JEWELRY:

- No jewelry is allowed during practices or at events/games. You cannot put tape or a bandage over it.

*Remember, these standards are not only about looking good—they're about embodying the professionalism and team spirit that make Eden Prairie Cheer a respected program. Your commitment to these guidelines is essential in showcasing our identity as both athletes and ambassadors.*



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## CELL PHONE POLICY

*To maintain focus and ensure everyone remains fully present during practices, games, and events, phone use is strictly prohibited.*

### **NO PHONES DURING ACTIVITIES:**

Phones must be turned off and collected at the start of every practice, game, or event. They will be stored in the "phone box," which is kept by the coach and remains visible at all times.

### **LIMITED USE FOR PHOTO TAKING:**

Phones may be used briefly only to take photos immediately before a game begins on the sidelines. Any use for social media, texting, or browsing during the event is not allowed.

### **CONSEQUENCES FOR MISUSE:**

If an athlete is found using their phone for unauthorized purposes (social media, messaging, scrolling, etc.), they will lose their privilege to take photos in future events. This privilege is earned and must be maintained through proper conduct.

### **LEAVING EARLY:**

If an athlete needs to leave early, she must notify the coach before practice begins. Once approved, she may set an alarm on her phone before it is collected and retrieve her phone at the time of departure.

*This policy is designed to minimize distractions and support mental focus, ensuring that every athlete can fully engage and perform at their best.*

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## PROFESSIONALISM AND CONDUCT

*As representatives of Eden Prairie Cheer, athletes are expected to uphold a high standard of professionalism both on and off the field. Your behavior, body language, and presentation reflect not only on you as an individual but also on the team and school as a whole.*

### **PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF AFFECTION (PDA)**

Cheerleaders should maintain a professional and respectful presence at all team events, games, and practices. Public displays of affection (PDA), including excessive hugging, kissing, or other intimate behaviors, are not appropriate while in uniform or representing the team. Our focus is on teamwork, school spirit, and maintaining a positive image as ambassadors of Eden Prairie High School.

### **LANGUAGE & COMMUNICATION**

Cheerleaders are expected to use respectful and appropriate language at all times. Profanity, offensive remarks, or derogatory comments—whether in person, online, or in team-related communications—will not be tolerated. This includes language directed at teammates, opponents, coaches, referees, or spectators. We aim to foster a positive and supportive environment where every team member feels valued and respected.

### **BODY LANGUAGE & PRESENCE**

Your body language speaks just as loudly as your words. Cheerleaders should always carry themselves with confidence, enthusiasm, and poise. Slouching, eye-rolling, disengagement, or negative facial expressions do not reflect the energy and professionalism expected from our team. Whether on the sidelines, at school, or during events, your posture and demeanor should reflect pride in being part of the program.

### **POSING FOR PHOTOS IN UNIFORM & CHEER ATTIRE**

When wearing Eden Prairie Cheer uniforms or team apparel, athletes must be mindful of how they present themselves in photos and videos. Any photos or videos taken in uniform or team gear should reflect the professionalism and values of our program. This includes:

- Avoiding inappropriate poses, gestures, or dances.
- Standing or sitting with good posture, representing the team with confidence and pride.
- Ensuring all team-related social media content aligns with the positive image of our program.

*By following these guidelines, we ensure that our program reflects the integrity, sportsmanship, and leadership that define Eden Prairie Cheer.*

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## COMMUNICATION & SCHEDULING

### **GROUPCAL:**

The official team calendar is now managed through GroupCal. All cheerleaders and parents must download GroupCal and check it regularly for updates on practices, games, and events. The calendar link will be available immediately after tryouts and distributed via GroupMe and email.

### **GROUPME:**

GroupMe will be used for frequent reminders (e.g., game-day prep, uniform updates, schedule changes). All cheerleaders and parents will be added to separate GroupMe chats; if you don't already have the app, please download it. Cheerleaders need to keep notifications on.

### **EMAIL:**

Most official communications, including payment reminders and important updates, will be sent via email. Parents are responsible for checking their email regularly.

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## FUNDRAISING

*Our team is committed to a series of fundraising initiatives designed to boost our program's resources while fostering unity and leadership. Every member is expected to take an active role in these efforts as part of our team commitment:*

### **GOLD CARDS:**

Our entire team is responsible for promoting and selling Gold Cards within the community. This collective effort not only raises essential funds but also builds strong team bonds and builds self confidence.

### **CHICK-FIL-A WINDOW DECORATING:**

The team works together to decorate the Chick-fil-A window, showcasing our creativity and unity. This event attracts community support while reinforcing our shared team pride. They then feed us twice throughout the year, which is a great tool when we are heading to a snowy away game!

### **LITTLE EAGLES FALL CHEER CLINIC:**

As a full team, we volunteer at the Little Eagles Fall Cheer Clinic. By working together, we share our skills with younger athletes and serve as role models, reinforcing our commitment to community growth. They are our future!

### **VERTICAL RAISE FUNDRAISER:**

We've introduced a streamlined fundraising option with Vertical Raise, which requires team-wide participation. This will be an easy fundraiser for everyone, and teams at EPHS have had major success with it recently! We won't start this until things have settled down in October.

*Each fundraiser is a team initiative—your active engagement and mutual support are key to our collective success.*

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## CHARITY AND COMMUNITY OUTREACH

*In addition to fundraising, our program proudly gives back to the community through structured outreach events that involve the entire team.*

### SENIOR LIVING FACILITY VISIT:

The entire team, along with the Varsity football team, will visit a local senior living facility. This event is designed to build intergenerational connections and spread cheer, highlighting our shared commitment to community service.

### UCA CAMP LETTER WRITING CAMPAIGN FOR ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL:

At UCA Camp, every team member participates in our letter writing campaign for St. Jude Children's Hospital. Last year, our collective effort earned us the Spirit Stick award for writing the most letters, underscoring the strength of our united spirit. This campaign is an opportunity for every athlete to contribute to a cause that makes a significant impact.

### TACKLE CANCER

As part of our commitment to giving back, Eden Prairie Cheer proudly participates in the **Tackle Cancer** initiative each fall. During a designated home football game, we help raise money for cancer research by selling treats, holding signs, and supporting the overall event atmosphere. Last year, our team **set a new school fundraising record**, and we couldn't be prouder of the work that went into it thanks to our amazing parents!

*Note: This year, Tackle Cancer will not be scheduled on the same day as the youth cheer clinic... There will be more September home games.*

*These outreach events demonstrate our unwavering commitment to community service and teamwork. The entire team is expected to participate with enthusiasm and professionalism, ensuring that our efforts truly reflect our core values.*

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## OTHER IMPORTANT POLICIES & GUIDELINES

### GAME-DAY EXPECTATIONS:

Athletes must arrive fully dressed and ready at the designated call time before each game. Specific arrival times for football games will be communicated via GroupMe.

### INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Any cancellations or rescheduling due to weather will be updated on GroupCal and GroupMe.

### TRANSPORTATION:

A bus is provided by EPHS for all away football games for the cheerleaders. They are required to ride it to and from each game.

### SOCIAL MEDIA & MEDIA USE:

Photos and videos may be posted on social media. If an athlete should not be included, parents must notify the coaches in advance.

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## BANQUETS

We attend two major banquets at the end of the season: the **Cheer Banquet** and the **Football Banquet**. Both are meaningful events that celebrate your hard work, dedication, and growth as a team.

### CHEER BANQUET

A special banquet will be held at EPHS to celebrate our accomplishments as a team. The **youth cheer program will be invited as guests** so they can look up to you, celebrate with us, and feel inspired to one day be in your shoes. Cheerleaders will be invited and the **cost is covered by the program**. Tickets will be available for family and other guests to purchase.

Dress Code for the Cheer Banquet:

- Seniors are encouraged to wear red
- Juniors and below should wear black
- **Attire must be semi-formal** and appropriate for the season and occasion

### FOOTBALL BANQUET

Cheerleaders are also invited to the football team's end-of-season banquet.

- You may wear **any color** to this event
- Attire should still be **semi-formal and polished**

### STYLE GUIDELINES (FOR BOTH BANQUETS)

To keep it simple: Your outfit can be form-fitting, short, or sleeveless—but not all three. Pick one and balance the rest.

- If your dress is **form-fitting**, consider a **longer length**
- If your dress is **short**, choose a **looser fit**
- If your dress is **both short and fitted**, wear a **cardigan or add sleeves** for a more polished look
- Avoid plunging necklines, sheer cutouts, or anything overly revealing
- **Dress for the season**—think polished and appropriate, not casual or summery

*These events are a celebration of your season, your growth, and your role as leaders and representatives of Eden Prairie Cheer. Show up looking proud, respectful, and ready to shine. A few examples are below, however, there are lots of possibilities!*

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## CAPTAIN SELECTION & LEADERSHIP

### *Captain Selection Process:*

- *Captains are chosen based on merit, leadership potential, and dedication to our team's values.*
- *Captains can be chosen from any of the grade levels and all grade levels are encouraged to apply.*
- *Interested athletes must complete a captain's application, which includes a personal statement, details of athletic and academic achievements, and referrals from teachers.*
- *The coaching staff reviews all applications, taking into account team spirit and overall commitment.*
- *The final decision on captain selection rests with the coaches, ensuring that the chosen leaders embody the spirit and professionalism of Eden Prairie Cheer. A team vote is also taken into consideration.*

### *Captain Responsibilities:*

- **Lead by Example:** Set a high standard through your actions on and off the field, inspiring teammates to perform their best.
- **Clarify Team Expectations:** Ensure every team member understands their role, and help communicate schedule details and expectations.
- **Coordinate Practice & Events:** Assist in setting up practice areas, ensuring equipment and uniforms are ready, and help with clean-up afterward.
- **Facilitate Communication:** Serve as a liaison between the coaching staff and teammates, ensuring important information is shared promptly.
- **Support & Encourage:** Provide motivation and constructive feedback to help build confidence and camaraderie among team members.
- **Represent the Team:** Uphold the team's values in all interactions and be a role model both on and off the field.

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## TEAM AGREEMENT

By signing below, both the athlete and parent/guardian acknowledge that they have read, understood, and agree to the requirements to be a member of the EPHS Cheerleading Program for the 2025–2026 season.

**Athlete Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Signature:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## CONTACT INFORMATION

For any questions, please contact:

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