



# Edina Junior High

Cheerleading Handbook  
2025-2026

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## Purpose Statement

Our Purpose is to promote school spirit, foster teamwork, and encourage positive relationships within our school community. Our team aims to represent our school with pride, sportsmanship, and dedication. Through hard work, respect, and cooperation, we strive to create a supportive environment that helps each individual develop physically, mentally, and emotionally, both as athletes and as leaders.

## Program Overview

The squad will consist of 6-9th graders. The season runs from August to the end of January. This includes mandatory practice twice a week Tuesday and Thursday from 6-8 pm in the Edina High School Field House.

Mandatory practices begin Tuesday, September 2nd and exclude school holidays and breaks. The cheer coaches are Karina Ertman and Eva Paavola, who are both well-qualified individuals with the passion to lead, coach, and mentor the cheerleaders in this program. Libby Fotland plays an important administrative role for this team.

This handbook becomes effective immediately for the tryout process in the current school year and remains in effect for successful candidates throughout the period until tryouts begin the following calendar year.

## Eligibility and Requirements

Athletes must attend Valley View Middle School, Southview Middle School, Our Lady of Grace, or Edina. Athletes must be rising 6th graders through rising 9th graders to participate.

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Athletes must be capable of performing the essential functions of a cheerleader. Functions as listed:

- Cheerleaders will demonstrate clear diction, vocal strength, rhythm, and coordination.
- Cheerleaders will perform physical moves that may involve jumps, balance, agility, and upper body strength.
- Cheerleaders will exhibit stamina in physical activities that involve physical endurance and fitness, and will be able to perform routines in both indoor and outdoor settings, in heat and cold weather.

Cheerleaders must uphold the skill level demonstrated (i.e. tumbling stunting, jumps, etc.) at tryouts while striving for continuous improvement. Failure to uphold skills may result in consequences to be determined by the coach.

### **Financial Obligations:**

While financials are subject to change, as of right now the total is \$750 per athlete, which includes items such as team apparel, competition fees, etc. This is paid through Community Education.

## **Duties and Responsibilities**

Being a part of the Edina Cheerleading Program is an honor that requires not only commitment, but also hard work and dedication. Members of the cheer program will devote and pledge themselves to components outlined in the handbook.

Cheer members need to be aware that their cheer commitments will come first. Jobs, outside cheer teams/sports, etc., need to be considered before trying out for the cheer squad. Any outside commitment (except school reasons) will not be considered as a reason to miss any cheer events.

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As coaches, our number one priority is the environment that we create! While we are going to push our athletes to their fullest potential, we are also aware that each athlete responds differently to feedback. Athletes should expect to be held accountable at practice for mistakes made and that the feedback given is only to help them improve. We are here to help athletes gain confidence in this sport while pushing them outside of their comfort zone and helping them gain life long skills and friendships along the way! If there are any concerns or issues during the season, please reach out to us coaches. We are here to help all athletes succeed!

Teamwork - A cheer member is one who is willing to set aside her own personal agenda for the whole program's pursuit of excellence. This is done by living the Edina district ethical principles and through hard work, dedication, and self-discipline.

Members will demonstrate good sportsmanship, promote school spirit, and display genuine concern for others.

Cheerleading by nature is a highly relational sport, involving trust and confidence in your teammates with whom you are performing. Cheerleading practices and competitions will be a positive place. The expectation is that you will respect your teammates in and out of these events to ensure this trust is in place and provide the safest space possible. If there are any relational issues please report them to the coaches to defuse the situation and maintain our safe cheerleading environment.

Be ready to work hard and accept constructive criticism from coaches regardless of what level they coach.

Use appropriate language at all times!

Athletes, Coaches and Parents will download a communication app "BAND." This will allow coaches to give out quick information for all to see

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and will also give parents and athletes an opportunity to view an always up to date calendar with all important events for the entire season as well as the ability to share photos, files, etc!

### **Zero Tolerance Bullying Policy:**

We have a ZERO tolerance for bullying. If we hear of any bullying going on at practice or at school towards anyone, that athlete involved will IMMEDIATELY be pulled from the routine. They risk being an alternate for the remainder of the season if the bullying and negativity continues. This will be non negotiable and at the coaches discretion.

## **Safety Guidelines**

### **General:**

- Coaches are in accordance with USA Cheer and MCCA requirements and certifications.
  - All cheerleaders shall receive proper training before attempting any form of cheerleading (i.e., tumbling, partner stunts, pyramids, and jumps.).
  - All partner stunts shall be mastered according to the “partner stunt progressions” before attempting a new level of difficulty.
  - All practice sessions shall be held in a location suitable for the activities of cheerleaders (i.e. use of tumbling mats, etc.).
  - Jewelry, accessories, and apparel that is not conducive to safe performance is prohibited.
  - Warm-up exercises and stretching shall precede all practice sessions, competitions, and other physical activity.
  - Coaches recognize the entire squad’s ability level and limit the squad’s activities accordingly.
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## Stunting and Tumbling Guidelines:

- Never Stunt or tumble without coaches present.
- Never try stunts the coaches have not approved.
- Always be an attentive spotter!
- No horseplay while stunting!
- No talking while stunting, it is distracting and unsafe!
- Trust your coaches– we will make final decisions concerning stunting.

## Practice and Competitions Guidelines:

As an athlete of the Junior High cheerleading team we expect commitment from all athletes. This means giving all effort every single practice for the entire practice time, listening to all coaches no matter what level they coach, not talking over coaches when they speak and holding yourself accountable for your actions inside and outside of the cheerleading gym. We expect all athletes to remain consistent in the skills in which they have tried out with and work towards gaining new skills during the season (jumps, motions, tumbling and stunting skills).

- No gum, jewelry, or glitter
- Hair pulled back (off shoulders and out of eyes)
- Nails must be cut for stunting safety
- No cell phones during water breaks or during the award ceremony
- Bring water/ a water bottle

## Attendance and Participation

It is important that Edina cheer members realize the level of commitment that is necessary to make a team successful. Attendance at all practices and cheer events is not only crucial, but also mandatory. Absences jeopardize the entire squad and hinders success.

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Attending all practices and events are mandatory.

Practices are expected to commence at the start of practice time. This requires mats to be rolled, shoes and full practice apparel to be on, hair pulled back and out of face, and jewelry off.

An absence to a practice/event will only be considered excused in the following circumstances:

- Personal illness/accident (resulting in missing school)
- Funeral or death in the family
- Edina or school-related performance/event

An unexcused absence is defined as the failure to attend any scheduled cheerleading activity as determined by the coaches without prior permission from the coaches.

- Any outside activity, including a job and/or participating on another cheer squad, is an invalid reason for missing a scheduled cheerleading activity.
- After school practices for sports other than cheerleading

If a cheer member is absent for an unexcused reason academically, they may not participate in the cheer activity that day or evening. An absence is considered missing the school day.

## Competition Dates and Expectations

Competition Schedule (subject to change):

- Sunday, December 14th - U of M
- Saturday, January 17th - Edina
- Sunday, January 25th - Maple Grove
- Saturday, January 31st - State

Please consider competition dates before committing to the team as full team attendance is required for a successful competition.

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Athletes to arrive on time as specified by coaches. Athletes to wear approved warm ups to and from competition. Athletes to ensure all required gear is accounted for including uniform, shoes, bow, socks, and water bottle.

Check in/ check-out - Parents will check their child into the coaches at the designated meet spot and they will check-out their child with coaches. Parents need to send a note, text, or email to the coaches prior to athlete call time if another parent is picking their child up from the competition.

BUDDY SYSTEM - Every athlete will always be with a buddy during a competition day. No child should be wandering alone.

Cell phone use to be restricted during competition and will not be permitted during award ceremonies.

## **Be Proud to be an Edina Cheerleader**

- Be cooperative and respectful to coaches and teammates.
- Be courteous and helpful to other cheerleaders, classmates and spectators.
- Remember that someone is always watching and will know that you are an Edina Cheerleader.
- Be proud and act appropriately!
- Always communicate with Coaching Staff if you have a problem or concern- we are here to help you succeed!!

## **Be the Best Athlete You Can Be**

- Give your body proper rest!
  - Know the difference between pain and injury.
  - Have a friendly and positive attitude.
  - Give 100% effort ALWAYS!
  - Drink lots of water to stay hydrated.
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## Tryout Procedures

Tryout Clinics will be held on Tuesday, August 5 and Wednesday, August 6th. Official Tryouts will take place on Thursday, August 7th. All tryout clinics and the informational meeting will be held at Valley View Middle School (South Gym) from 6-8 pm.

An informational meeting will be held Monday, August 4th from 6-7pm at Valley View Middle School (South Gym) in anticipation of tryouts to inform potential athletes and their families about expectations for the season. It is strongly encouraged that prospective athletes and at least one parent/guardian attend the informational meeting before participating in the tryout process.

Athletes must bring all tryout paperwork completed and signed prior to the start of tryouts.

Tryouts will be held in a three-day series.

1. The first day of tryouts will be a clinic introducing tryout material, practicing skills and explaining the evaluation process.
2. The last day of tryouts the evaluations will be held in which athletes will perform in small groups the designated tryout material.

Selections for the team will be released by Monday August 11th. Commitment to the team and payment must be completed by August 18th.

Following team selections, there will be optional skill clinics August 18th and 20th from 6-8 in the field house. Mandatory uniform fittings will be held Tuesday August 26th from 6-8 pm in the EHS Field House. Athletes MUST be accompanied by a parent or guardian for uniform fitting.

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## Disclaimer

*This handbook is subject to updates and modifications as needed throughout the season. Any changes will be communicated to team members and parents promptly.*

I, \_\_\_\_\_, certify that I have read the Edina Junior High Cheerleading Handbook and agree to follow the guidelines throughout the season.

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

Parent/Guardian: \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

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