

2024-2025 ELKINS HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK

The Cheerleaders of Elkins High School are the athletic spirit leaders of the school. The Cheerleading organization includes Varsity, Junior Varsity, and Competition cheer squads, flag runners, and one mascot. The Cheerleading Handbook has been designed to clearly outline the policies and procedures that will guide the organization during the year. Please note that although the most common kinds of situations have been identified in this handbook, **the list is not comprehensive**. It is the responsibility for every member of the cheerleading program to be familiar with this handbook. A copy will be provided online. In addition to being held responsible for the policies and procedures identified in this handbook, the members of the EHS Cheerleading organization are also responsible for abiding by the Fort Bend Student Code of Conduct and the FBISD Cheerleading Handbook. It is an honor and privilege, not a right, to be an EHS cheerleader; therefore, excellence is expected and required. It is important for each applicant to fully understand that cheerleading is a time-consuming activity and must be a priority. It is a year-long season; therefore, a year-long commitment is necessary.

Why we do what we do:

We believe cheerleading should teach teamwork, discipline, responsibility, setting and reaching goals, hard work, sacrifice, and determination. We believe those who have character, work hard, and have a good attitude are the most successful in whatever they do. We believe learning these qualities in High School prepare you to succeed later in life. These rules are made so we can have fun, be safe, work hard, and develop character qualities that make us successful.

1. We have discipline so everyone will be safe

For example, we require that your hair is pulled back and tightly secured at ALL times. This is not an appearance/vanity issue; it is unsafe to stunt, tumble, or do other cheer activities if your hair is obstructing your vision. It is also important that everyone is quiet and attentive while coaches/captains are talking. Everyone must hear instructions and counts so we're all on the same page and no one is hurt by mistake.

2. We have discipline to maximize the use of team time and create a team atmosphere.

To be on time, you are required to be in your designated stretch lines at time designated by the coach. We want to start practices on time so we can be productive, get the job finished, and go home. We respect YOUR time please respect OURS.

3. We have discipline to foster respect and build character.

Many decisions made by the coaches are in response to desires voiced by cheerleaders, parents, and/or administration. The rest of our decisions are made from our years of experience. Elkins cheerleaders should be a talented, skilled squad; respected by the student body, fans, and community; seen as serious athletes; focused on the team; and focused on building discipline. Rules such as game etiquette, timeliness, cleanliness, and most importantly attitude, have been designed to create a well-respected team. If your needs are not being met, we have created an open-door policy for you to come maturely and respectfully to discuss it with us. The goal is to always make the best decision for the program. I respect and trust you enough to let you have a say in this program; you should respect me enough to follow my leadership even if you don't agree.

SECTION 1: EXPECTATIONS

1A. ATTITUDE & BEHAVIOR

As an EHS Cheerleader, I will abide by these statements for the betterment of my team:

1. I will step into all cheerleading activities with a positive, encouraging attitude and a smile on my face. Even if I've had a horrible day, I will try my hardest to set that aside and step up for my team.
2. I will set a positive example for and be respectful to all peers, students, and parents, as well as competitors and all other affiliates. I will not be rude or disrespectful to any of these entities. I will not use foul language, show poor sportsmanship, participate in "Public Displays of Affection", or be unprofessional at any time in public.
3. I will be dedicated, accept responsibility, and maintain good public relations with every faculty member and staff, the student body, and community to ensure success and respect of the squad.
4. I will respect my squad's captains, the varsity captains, and my coaches. I will not argue with them, gossip about them, or disobey them. I will listen and pay attention when one of them is speaking.
5. I will always be loyal to my team and support them, on and off the field. I will be unselfish and always put my team first.
6. I understand that everyone has a role in the team. Each of us has different strengths and weaknesses. I will respect and appreciate the contribution that each individual makes towards the success of the team.
7. As an Elkins Cheerleader I understand that it is my duty to represent my team to the best of my abilities during all performances, in the classroom and community. *Be sure to stay eligible!!!
8. I will be honest with the coach(es) about issues that really bother me. I will only discuss these matters with them in a calm, respectful, mature, and private way. I will wait **24 hours** to express my concerns to coach(es). **I will not voice disagreements/opinions/concerns before or during practice or another event.** I understand that the coach(es) will listen to me, but if they disagree with my issue, I will respect their decision as the leaders of this program.
9. I will get along with everyone that has any part in the EHS Cheer Program. I will not intentionally exclude, be mean to, or gossip about any cheer team member. I will follow the guidelines in #5 and seek help if needed.
10. I will be on time and ready to all practices and other cheer events. I will hustle everywhere I go (to practice, onto the field, to the formation) and not be lazy.
11. I will put 110% effort in everything. I will be a team player. I will encourage all other team members to do the same. I will not whine or complain about workouts or coach/captain directions.
12. I understand that there is a chain of command. I must function within the chain of command. If the coach, captain or co-captain gives instructions or assigns duties, then follow instructions without complaining. Back-talk will not be tolerated to another cheerleader or coach/teacher/administrator/parent volunteer.
13. I understand that there will be no warnings for: hair in my face or not secured properly, being late to practice or events, not being quiet during practice, and paying attention to the coaches/captains. I understand demerits and/or conditioning will be issued for all these rules.

1B. ATTIRE

Cheerleaders will wear appropriate attire for every event:

1. Practice: workout clothes, running shoes, cheer shoes, no jewelry, short fingernails, and hair completely up.
2. First week of school as specified.
3. Games/Pep-Rallies/Events: assigned cheer uniform, bow, white socks, cheer shoes, spanx, no visible undergarments (including sports bras), no jewelry, short fingernails with no or light natural colored polish, and hair either completely up and/or pinned back. Uniform may include body liners, pullovers, tights, gloves, and other accessories.
4. Freshman & JV football game days: attire as specified.
5. Varsity Football Game Days: attire as specified.
6. Any time we will be cheering or working out, hair must be up, tightly secured, and pinned back AT ALL TIMES.
7. Your attire must be properly fitted and clean. Due to safety issues, no baggy/bulky clothing may be worn to stunt in.
8. All cheerleaders must participate and dress in theme for each day during Homecoming week and any other spirit days.
9. At no time may a cheerleader wear a cheer uniform without direct permission from the coach.

1C. PRACTICES

1. The coaches will determine practice times. Mornings, evenings and/or weekends may be included in possible practice times.
2. During Homecoming week and in competition season, extra practices may be required and are mandatory.
3. **Any cheerleader who must miss a practice is required to have a parent call/text the captain and coach, 48 hours PRIOR to missing (or it's an unexcused absence- no matter what the reason for missing).** This includes any summer, weekend, after school, or during class period practices. Making contact does not dismiss any consequences for missing a mandatory practice/event.
4. If a cheerleader must leave school early due to sickness, therefore missing cheer class, practice and/or an event, the cheerleader/parent must contact a coach immediately.
5. Competition cheer practice or performance will be an excused absence for up to 2 occasions after it become unexcused.
6. No excessive side talking, laughing, or goofing off during practice or performance; we will be stunting and doing potentially dangerous activities. Safety is a priority, so it is imperative that everyone be serious and pay attention, so no one is hurt.
7. Any cheerleader who does not follow instructions given by captains or coaches will be warned once, after that they will be asked to leave practice and will receive 5 demerits for an unexcused absence.
8. Cheerleading shoes, with socks, will be worn at all times.
9. Only team members, managers, and coaches/consultants can be present for practice.
10. If the athlete is too ill to practice, she will sit out at practice.
11. No food, snacks, use of cell phones, or personal belongings are allowed in the gym.
12. **A cheerleader will only be allowed to sit out of practice with a doctor's note in-hand at the appropriate practice. A cheerleader will not be allowed to sit out with a parent's note or with a promised doctor's note. If a cheerleader decides not to participate, with or without a doctor's note,**

his or her participation in the game(s)/performances for that week will be at the discretion of the coach.

1D. GAMES, EVENTS, & PERFORMANCES

1. For football games Varsity is expected to be on the field one hour before game start time listed on the calendar.
2. For football games JV is expected to be on the field 30 minutes before kickoff.
3. During all games and performances, all cheerleaders will be dressed the same. Any cheerleader missing part of a uniform or wearing an incorrect piece of a uniform may not be allowed to cheer and will be given an unexcused absence for the game.
4. Underwear should not be visible. Uniforms will require different upper-body underwear, and visible underwear will not be tolerated at any game. Any cheerleader with visible underwear will not be allowed to cheer and will be given an unexcused absence for the game she is unable to participate in.
5. Hair is required to be pulled into a ponytail or half ponytail at any game where stunting will occur. The bow is a **required part of the uniform** and will be worn at all games and performances, no exceptions.
6. Jewelry and/or body piercings are not allowed during practice, work-out, performances, and games. Covering piercings with a band-aid will not be permitted. Clear plastic spacers may be worn during games and practices. *No consideration will be taken for timing of piercings.
7. At games, cheerleaders must pay attention to the game and spirit constantly. Absolutely NO turning your head or body to talk- if a coach can see you talking, the fans can see you talking. No reviewing of motions, big conversational gestures, or goofing off is allowed.
8. During play, cheerleaders must always stay in their given formation.
9. Cheerleaders must take their cheer bag to all games and events. Cheerleaders will position their cheer bag out of site from the public and only access them during halftime. Cheerleaders are responsible for their personal belongings.
10. No cell phones are allowed out at games or events. Keep them in your bag. All calls need to be directed to the coach during these times.
11. Do not eat, drink, or chew gum during practice, game, or a performance. The only exception is water.
12. Cheerleaders will act professional at games and other public cheer events. Please understand this is not “fun” time- this is team and performance time. This does not mean you cannot have fun, but you understand that it’s not appropriate to goof off, act silly, or be irresponsible during a game/performance. Cheerleaders will follow the game etiquette rules:
 - a. BEFORE THE GAME: NEVER stunt or tumble without a coach present; be in cheer formation when there is 2 minutes left on the clock; be ready to stand respectfully for the National Anthem; always stunt for a kickoff.
 - b. DURING THE GAME: stay in formation with hands behind your back; no talking; constantly spirit, jump, stunt, and tumble; captains will call ALL of the cheers, chants, and other activities- do not argue with them.
 - c. HALFTIME: you may have free time at halftime but remember you are in uniform; go to the restroom, sit/rest, and drink water; half time is your only break during the game, so take care of all business then; be back on the sidelines with 2 minutes left on the clock and in formation with 2 minutes left on the clock.

- d. AFTER THE GAME: Clean up... even if it's not your trash, we leave things cleaner than how we found them: Tell the teams good job, take care of equipment, and leave only after dismissed by a coach.
13. While in uniform, cheerleaders will remain with the squad during performances. Prior to taking breaks it will be the cheerleaders' duty to meet with the coach as a squad for a report of expectations and responsibilities.
14. If knowledge or execution of a routine is severely lacking, the coach reserves the right to remove any member from the routine or event.
15. Mascots must be in full uniform and in character during all events. They may take breaks if needed but must complete all events in costume until dismissed by the coach.

1E. EQUIPMENT & UNIFORMS

1. Cheerleaders will be responsible for securing, storing, and maintaining all equipment before, during and after all performances and practices.
2. When in uniform at school the only jackets, or warmups allowed are those purchased through the EHS cheer program and designated to be worn with uniform. A plain jacket is **not** an exception to this rule.
3. The only uniforms, jackets, outfits, and warm-ups approved at events are those garments required and purchased by or provided to every squad member as an official part of the uniform.
4. Cheerleaders must wear ONLY uniform pieces designated by the coach to events requiring uniforms.
5. Uniforms should be altered to fit cheerleader and not pinned or tied back. If the uniform belongs to the school, it can be altered by folding material and sewing (not cutting). Any uniform that belongs to you can be cut for alterations.
6. No part of any cheerleading uniform may be given to or worn by another student or person who is not a member of the squad AT ANY TIME without the coaches' permission.
7. Uniforms will not be purchased, made, or remodeled in any way without the permission of the coach. The cheerleader is responsible for the upkeep of the uniform and all materials handed out to the cheerleader. The cheerleader will replace the part or whole depending upon the damage or loss.
8. Equipment assigned to cheer program members is their full responsibility. If lost, stolen, or damaged in anyway, the cheerleader must pay the cost of the repair or replacement. This includes, but is not limited to t-shirt, mascot costumes, uniforms, megaphones, poms, etc.
9. Uniforms are only to be worn when approved by the coach.

1F. FINANCES

1. The costs of designated uniforms and accessories are the responsibility of individual cheerleaders. Uniforms include those articles of clothing worn at games, pep rallies, camp, game days, and any other event where the squad is representing the school.
2. Any uniform or part of the uniform paid for by the individual cheerleader will remain the property of the cheerleader. Any item purchased by the school will remain the property of the school. Except for normal wear and tear, damaged or lost property will be fined and reimbursed by the students.
3. Any member of the cheerleading program who does not pay a financial cheerleading obligation on time will be subject to ineligibility for tryouts or sat out of games. The cheerleader might also not be allowed to graduate or get report cards with outstanding fines.
4. If the cheerleader is terminated due to lack of payment, parent is responsible for monies owed.

1G. COMMUNITY SERVICE

All members of the EHS cheer program will be required to attend community service projects chosen by the coaches. The goal of doing community service is to build connections between the Sugar Land and Missouri City community and the Elkins High School community.

1H. SPIRIT ACTIVITIES

1. Cheer program members will participate in making and hanging posters, banners, and signs as scheduled by the coach. The school will provide supplies.
2. Cheer program members will participate in MANDATORY activities such as: Football Scrimmage, Freshman Orientation, parades, photo shoots, PR appearances at media stations, send-offs for playoff teams, and other spirit activities as assigned by the coach.

1I. SCHEDULING

1. Cheer program members will be provided with a calendar to include all mandatory practices, athletic events, academic functions, community events, spirit activities, fundraisers, and other functions. The schedule will be continuously updated throughout the year.
2. Cheerleaders **MUST** participate in all scheduled events.
3. Cheer program members and their parents will be responsible for all website materials including schedule changes, extra practices, and rule changes.
4. Cheer program members will be responsible for all information given in person, through email, phones, and via the website.
5. Every effort will be made to give two weeks notice to any additions to the schedule as determined by the coach.
6. Every effort will be made to not make any changes in the 48 hours leading up to an event/performance.

1J. DUTIES**1. Varsity Cheerleaders**

- a. Will cheer at all Varsity football games, home and away.
- b. Will cheer home Varsity boys basketball games and designated girls Varsity basketball and volleyball games.
- c. Will cheer ALL playoff games.

2. Junior Varsity Cheerleaders

- a. Will cheer home district sub-varsity football games.
- b. Will cheer home district sub-varsity boys basketball games.

3. All Cheerleaders

- a. Will attend any designated track meets, soccer, baseball, or softball games chosen by the coach.
- b. Will cheer all designated playoff games
- c. Will attend other games and events requested by the coach
- d. Are required to attend all summer practices
- e. Are required to attend summer camp
- f. Are required to attend any other clinics
- g. Are required to attend all practices during & outside of the school day, until release time

4. Mascot

- a. Will perform at all Varsity football games, home and away
- b. Will perform at all designated playoff games
- c. Will perform at other games requested by the coach
- d. Will attend other events (spirit, fundraising, community service) requested by the coach

1K: COMPETITION

Competition is not mandatory. The 2024-2025 Competition Squad Cheerleaders will be **selected** by coach and assistant coach. Cheerleaders can participate either as an active member or an alternate. All decisions regarding competition will be made at the discretion of the coach. More details in Section 5.

1L. TRAVEL

Must travel to and from all activities in transportation provided by the school or coach, unless the coach grants permission, or in extreme circumstances with request in writing/email from the parent 48 hours in advance of performance. Parents or approved guardian must pick up their cheerleader at the event, making sure the coach sees the contact.

1M. ATTENDANCE & ENROLLMENT

1. Cheerleaders will be on time to every practice, game, pep-rally, fundraiser, and event. The time posted is the start time. Your coach will specify when to arrive.
2. All practices and events are mandatory and attendance is required.
3. If you are absent from cheer for ANY reason, the coach reserves the right to take you out of a routine.
4. All must participate in any skills classes supported by the program during the year.
5. Absences that result in missing cheerleading class, practice, or any other cheer event require parental & cheerleader contact to the coaches and captain via email/text/phone call **48 hours PRIOR** to the class period, practice, or event. No prior contact automatically deems the absence unexcused.
6. Outside appointments are expected to be scheduled around practice times whenever possible. Notification to the coach 48 hours in advance of appointments and an online form is required when conflicting with practices and/or events.
7. If a cheerleader gets ill overnight, the coach shall be notified by 7:30 am the morning school will be missed.
8. Should a cheerleader leave school early due to an illness, the cheerleader. inform Coach of the illness and absence.
9. EXCUSED ABSENCES include illness confirmed by a parent/doctor, death in immediate family, or another approved EHS event.
10. UNEXCUSED ABSENCES include, but are not limited to work, tutoring, extracurricular/club meetings, social events, vacations, trips, and/or not informing a coach about an absence 48 hours before the start of a(n) practice/event. Tutoring needs to be arranged before school to not interfere with practices.
11. If tutorials are not available before school, Coach Dominy needs to be notified before the required tutorial. The teacher must confirm with Coach Dominy that before-school tutorials are not available. The cheerleader will return to practice after tutorials with a teacher pass. The note will detail time of arrival and dismissal from tutorials with signature of the teacher giving tutorials.
12. If a cheerleader has an excused absence from an EHS event, they may not attend another EHS event without prior approval from the coach.
13. If a cheerleader is participating in any other EHS activity that may interfere with any cheer activity, written notice must be given to the coach after tryouts or ASAP. This includes, but is not limited to band, choir, clubs, & other sports.
14. Any conflicting practices or events from other activities must be communicated to Coach Dominy 48 hours in advance by the sponsor.
15. All cheerleaders must be enrolled in the cheerleading class throughout the school year to participate as a member of the cheerleading program.
16. If a cheerleader un-enrolls in the cheerleading class, therefore becoming inactive, they may not participate in any event where they represent EHS Cheer. This includes, but is not limited to, games, events, and banquets.

1N. CAMP EXPECTATIONS:

1. Camp is mandatory and every cheerleader and the mascot is expected to attend camp. Camp will be July 22-25 at A&M in College Station.
2. Girls will arrive at designated time with all things from the packing list.
3. Throughout the day the girls will not have their cell phones most of the time, as they are expected to focus.
4. They must have all camp clothes and uniforms, or they may not be able to participate in final day showcase.
5. Camp is physically demanding. Drink plenty of water and sleep at night. Dehydration and grumpiness are not beneficial to the team during camp. Make every effort to avoid both.

SECTION 2: GRADES**3A. GRADING:**

1. Grades will be given based on the following but not limited to dressing out for practice, participating in practice, teamwork, games, tests, and being on time to practices and performances.
2. Cheerleaders must keep their grades above failing, not only to keep eligible but also because they are leaders on campus. Teachers should be excited to have cheerleaders in their classes.

SECTION 3: CAPTAIN SELECTION PROCESS**4. CAPTAIN(S):**

Varsity captains will be selected by a committee comprised of an administrator, a campus coordinator, the dance director, and the coaches. It will be determined by point system based on tryout score, skills demonstrated while leading practice, an interview with the committee, teacher references, as well as a cadence and sideline created by applicant. The committee handles all decisions on matters regarding captain(s). Junior Varsity captain (s) will be selected by the coaches. In extenuating circumstances, the coach reserves the right to appoint the captain(s) and/or remove/replace the captain(s) if needed.

1. Varsity Captains must have served on the Varsity EHS cheer team for at least one year.
2. Captains are expected to demonstrate the attitude & behavior they desire all team members to model.
3. Captains are responsible for all duties and assignments as delegated by the director/coach.
4. Squad members are expected to adhere to the decisions of the coaches, captains, and officers in cooperation with the coach.
5. Varsity captains will have weekly meetings with the coach.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT FORM

I have read the 2024-2025 EHS Cheer Handbook via the link provided. As an ELKINS High School Cheerleader I understand and will abide by all stated policies and rules. I pledge to contact my coach directly should there be a misunderstanding.

Printed Cheerleader Name

Squad

Cheerleader Signature

Date

I have read the 2024-2025 EHS Cheer Handbook via the link provided. As an Elkins High School Cheer Parent I understand and will help my cheerleader abide by all stated policies and rules. I pledge to contact my cheerleader's coach directly should there be a misunderstanding.

Printed Parent(s) Name

Squad

Parent(s) Signature

Date