

SAYFCO Cheerleading FAQs

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Who is eligible to cheer? Girls and boys between the ages of 5 and 14 are eligible to register for cheer. Older students may register as student demonstrators (student coaches).

Where and when can I register? Cheer registration typically opens in March or April and closes in early June. Registration is done on this website. Follow the Registration link. All children registered by the deadline are guaranteed placement on a team. Late registrations will be accommodated whenever possible, but cannot be guaranteed team placement.

What paperwork is required for registering?

Each cheerleader/student demonstrator will be required to provide the following documentation through their parent/guardian:

1. A raised seal birth certificate (first year cheerleaders-returning cheerleaders do not need a birth certificate)
2. End of year report card from the previous school year (must be last report card-both sides)
3. Completed physical exam form dated on or after Jan 1st of the current year <or> AYF medical clearance form ****** dated on or after Jan 1st of the current year
4. All other required AYF Forms are available on our registration website, SportsIllustrated Play (formerly SportSignup)

***AYF Medical Clearance Form is available on SportsIllustrated Play (Formerly SportSignup) on or after April 1st of the current year.*

Are there tryouts? There are no tryouts for cheer. All children registered will be placed on their age/grade level team!

How much does cheer cost? The annual Cheer registration fee is TBD, but typically is around \$300 per child for children ages 8-14. For children 5-7 the cost is discounted (TBD). The registration covers use of cheer uniforms, indoor practice space, and competition fees. Uniforms are returned at the end of the season.

Why does cheer cost more than football? The Shrewsbury Patriots cheerleaders hold all of their practices beginning mid August in a large, indoor facility with professional mats. The rental of the indoor space incurs an additional cost, as do competition fees. A typical cheer season for Division 10 and older includes a hundred or more hours of quality cheer instruction and skill building (mostly indoors!). Considering this, the SAYCO cheer program is actually a great value!

What equipment will I need to purchase? New cheerleaders will need to purchase cheer sneakers, "body basics" (body suit, "boy shorts", and socks), 2 bows, and a practice t-shirt. These are ordered during uniform fitting nights held in May or June.

When does the season begin and end? The cheer season typically begins with practices the first week in August (sometimes last week of July), and will run through October or November, depending on whether football teams move on to playoffs (many usually do!). A typical football/cheer season will consist of about 10 regular season games and usually a few

playoff games. Some games will be at home, and some will be away. Cheer teams will continue to cheer at football games throughout playoffs.

Cheer teams D10 and above, if they qualify, may advance to regional and national cheer competitions, which would extend the cheer season to November or December, respectively (see "How do competitions work?" section below).

How often do the teams practice and where? During August, all cheer teams (except Division 8 team) will practice Mondays through Thursdays, 6:00 PM-8:00 PM. Division 8 will have a modified practice week: most likely 3 nights per week, 6:00 PM-7:30PM.

Once school begins, practice for all teams (except Division 8 team) will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 PM-8:00 PM, and Saturdays 9:00-11:00 AM. Division 8 practices will move to two practices per week (TBD-but usually Tuesdays and Thursdays 6:00 PM-7:30 PM). All teams practice outside at Oak Middle School during the first part of August, and will move indoors sometime in August to the BayState All Stars cheer gym on Cherry Street in Shrewsbury.

How do competitions work? (Please note changes for 2016)

SAYFCO is part of the Central Mass AYF/AYC organization. There are, depending on age, level, and winning record at competitions, **two to five** competitions that the cheer teams may participate in. Teams may, depending on skill and experience, be classified as "White" (beginner), or "Red" (intermediate) levels. This will be declared prior to the first competition.

1. The Fun Competition is held in mid to late September (location varies) and, though awards are given, this competition is just for fun and practice/experience on the mats. **All teams/divisions participate in this competition.**
2. The Central Mass Local Competition is held in mid October in Lowell, MA. **All teams/divisions participate in this competition.** Division 8, 10, 12 and 14 teams that place first, second, and third at Locals advance to "States".
3. **The new! State Championship Competition** will be held in early November (location TBD). Division 10, 12 and 14 teams who place first, second or third at States will then advance to "Regionals". **If Division 8 has progressed to States, they will compete at States, but it will be their last competition of the season -meaning they may not advance to, or qualify for Regionals or Nationals.**
4. The New England Regional Competition is held in mid to late November. Locations vary on a rotating basis, usually between Providence, Hartford, Worcester, and Manchester.
 - a. Division 10, 12 and 14 teams who place first, second or third at Regionals would advance to "Nationals".
5. The AYC National Championship Competition is usually held during the second week of December in Orlando, Florida. Following qualification at Regionals, fundraising will take place by ALL advancing cheerleaders prior to leaving for Florida.

What is the attendance policy? Cheerleading is a unique sport in which each athlete's safety is dependent upon teamwork, trust and responsibility of the whole squad. Excessive absences are unfair to the team, but more importantly, UNSAFE.

As a result, attendance at all practices and games is considered mandatory. Though it is understood that it may not always be possible, we encourage families, when possible, to try to schedule family vacations during June and July. Please see the SAYFCO Cheer Attendance Policy for more information.

http://sayfco.org/images/Cheer_attendence_draft_-_with_Updates_2-1-16.pdf

Volunteers are always needed: The SAYFCO program is run 100% by volunteers.

Parents of cheerleaders are asked to volunteer during the season in the following ways:

- Volunteer at home football games (staff the “snack shack”, monitor the gate, etc) One or two volunteer shifts per season can be a huge help!
- Participate in fundraising activities

Other volunteer opportunities include:

- Volunteering during cheer competitions
- Being a “Team Parent”
- Being a “Fundraiser Coordinator or Co-Coordinator”
- Coaching
- Becoming a SAYFCO Board member

For clarification or additional questions, please contact;

Cheer Director, Lisa Arpino or Assistant Cheer Director, Sandi Samara