

Shrewsbury American Youth Football and Cheer ~ Cheer Attendance Policy

Cheerleading is a unique sport in which each athlete's **safety and success** is dependent upon teamwork, trust and responsibility of the whole team. Therefore, each Cheerleader's 100% commitment is required. Excessive absences are unfair to the team, but more importantly, UNSAFE. When one Cheerleader is absent, it places a hardship on the entire team and can become a safety issue.

Missed Games: A game missed by one or more cheerleader can result in the inability to perform at half-time due to incomplete stunt groups and gaps in choreography and positioning. This is always a **huge** disappointment to the cheerleaders as well as the families and fans! SAYFCO is a football **AND** cheer organization, and as such, games are considered as mandatory as practices.

Missed Practices: A practice missed by one cheerleader has a significant impact on the whole team, particularly on that cheerleader's stunt group, which is unable to stunt without every member present. It also takes away from others when a coach has to step out during practice to teach what was missed and/or fill in for a missing cheerleader in a stunt or choreography. It is very difficult for the team to get "competition ready" when athletes are absent.

In order to create the safest, most successful and enjoyable experience for every cheerleader and the team, cheerleaders and their parents/guardians must be advised of the importance of adherence to the following attendance policy:

Examples of **EXCUSED** absences include:

- Religious event
- School event
- Injury (Where attendance is prohibitive)
- Illness (If extended absence or repetitive absences due to an ongoing medical issue, a doctor's note may be required)
- Serious illness or death in the family
- Other reasons determined excused after discussion with coach

Examples of **UNEXCUSED** absences include:

- Planned vacations after August, or vacations longer than one week (4 practices) in August
- Conflict with other sport (except "special" events such as a playoff game)
- Playdates and sleepovers
- Birthdays

August: August is a critical month where skill sets are being evaluated, positions are determined, and choreography/routines are forming. Fun Competition comes up very quickly in September, and full team attendance is critical to be "competition ready".

- Attendance at all August practices is considered mandatory.
- If it is unavoidable to take a family vacation in August, please let your cheerleader's coach know the dates of absences as soon as possible. 4 practices (one week) will be considered excused. Any unexcused absences in August beyond the 4 days missed will be considered Unexcused.

September to end of season: Cheerleaders are expected to attend all practices **AND** games.

- 1) If your cheerleader must be absent, please contact your Head Coach prior to the practice or game. Any unreported absence is considered unexcused.
- 2) No more than 3 unexcused absences are allowed during the season. The coach may make determinations and exceptions whether absences are excused or unexcused following discussion with parents.
- 3) 4 or more unexcused absences may result in a change in position within the competition routine.
- 4) Attendance is mandatory the week before any competition. Absences the week prior to a competition may result in ineligibility to perform in the competition.
- 5) In the unlikely event that excessive absences occur, the decision regarding the type and extent of action taken will be at the coach's discretion following careful consideration of individual circumstances and consultation with the SAYFCO Cheer Director and/or President.