

Pelham Parks & Recreation

We believe our job is to find success in every child.

Because your child's future matters to us.

Pelham Youth Cheer Practice/Attendance Guidelines

Cheer Camp: July

- Cheer Camp is led by the Pelham High School cheerleaders.
- Cheer Camp is all week, typically from 6-8pm at Pelham High School.
- Each Cheer squad will learn a cheer, chant, and the half time dance routine at this camp.
- Participation is **very important**.

Cheer Practice -end of July - late September

(2 per week; one hour to one hour and fifteen minutes)

- Focus on sideline cheers and halftime routines.
- Squads are encouraged to focus primarily on football game cheers and halftime performances.

Competition Practice: Late September - Early November

Beginning with the 2026 Season, PPRD will NOT schedule any competition practices for any rec cheer squads. Participation in competitions is completely optional and up to individual participants. Shall coaches and cheerleaders opt to participate in competitions, they will be completely responsible for scheduling practices with PPRD as space allows, separate from rec cheer practices.

Coaches for competition squads may request practices each week to be strictly devoted to competition practice, if desired, as space allows. This practice MUST be requested with and approved by the rec coordinator or supervisor. Any extra competition-only practice should consist of only those cheerleaders and coaches participating in optional competitions. **PPRD will take any requests for competition squad practices from competition coach and grant them as the schedule allows. However, PPRD is not obligated to schedule any practice outside of weekly rec cheer practices. Please note, rec cheer practices take precedence over competition practices. Therefore, no competition practice request will be granted that impacts previously scheduled rec cheer practices.**

- COMPETITIONS OPTIONAL. Please let your coach know ASAP if your cheerleader does not wish to compete.
- Hours for practice may vary per squad.

***Note: Practice time/length/intensity varies per time of season**

Practices:

PPRD will schedule:

- Two Recreation Cheer practices per week for the duration of the cheer season.
 - One practice will be scheduled on a weeknight time slot at an outside location in Pelham City Park.
 - One practice will be scheduled on Sunday afternoons INSIDE the Pelham Recreation Center.
 - Once football regular season begins, there will be one game per week on Monday, Tuesday, or Thursday evening. Extra games are rare, but possible due to cancellation/rescheduling.
 - Squads will be scheduled for up to two practices per week; Rec cheer squads may add one additional practice per week if coach deems necessary as the schedule allows and at the rec coordinator's discretion. This extra practice must be for and include all rec cheer participants able to attend.

Competition Practices (SEPARATE FROM REC CHEER PRACTICES WITH PPRD)

- Any competition practices are completely up to the coach and their competition squad and must be requested/scheduled with PPRD staff separately from the two scheduled practices per week for the recreation cheer season.
- Squads will focus on game cheers and performances for the duration of the scheduled practice time. All competition practice needs to be separate from rec cheer practice and should involve coach(es) opting to participate in competitions and optional competition squad. Cheerleaders who are not participating in competition will not be required to attend competition practices. We understand routines and cheers may mix at games and competitions, so cheerleaders not opting to participate in competitions may not be penalized at regular-season games.
- All practices, rec and competition, should last no more than two hours. If any practice exceeds two hours, that squad may not practice the following day, per AHSAA/JSYF rules.
- A competition practice may also not exceed two hours on the day before a scheduled JSYF game or a scheduled competition. All other competition practices and their duration are up to the coach and competition squad based on space/time available per PPRD staff/Rec Coordinator.
- Competition squads will have access to field and/or gym space for practices at no charge.

Mat Guidelines

Parents/Coaches:

- Mats are for indoor use only. Beginning mid-late August, mats will be available for Sunday practices. Mats will not be put out Labor Day weekend.
- Squads who choose to stunt and tumble will be allowed to use mats for approximately thirty minutes to one hour per Sunday. Timeslots will rotate among squads weekly.

Coaches:

- Squads will rotate mat/gym space per hour on Sunday afternoons. Times will be scheduled by PPRD and may be changed if agreed upon by squad(s) and PPRD.
- Mats will be moved out of storage closet by PPRD staff but not unrolled. Squads must unroll mats at their desired use.
- Squads must roll and stand mats and place near the Court 2 bleachers/closet, at the conclusion of the cheer practice day.
- Mats will be returned to storage closet by PPRD staff.
- For EXTRA (separate) competition practices, it is the responsibility of the coaches/squad to take out and put up mats completely.

Attendance Guidelines

DISCLAIMER: Exceptions may occur.

PPRD would like to emphasize the importance of attendance with regards to the safety and best practices of our cheerleaders. While we understand situations occur, it is important that your cheerleader attends all practices and games when possible. For the 2026 season, PPRD will implement the following attendance guidelines. These guidelines are in place for practices and games.

Game-Focused Practices/Games – Each cheerleader regardless of grade, will receive a total of TWO (2) “free” absences from scheduled attendance (practices and/or games). An email, text, or call notification to your coach is required with at least 24 hours’ notice for an absence to be counted as free.

Excused Absence – Excused absences are granted with permission from the coach with at least 48 hours’ notice (or ASAP if the absence is for multiple games/practices or planned prior to the season). In addition, excused absences will be counted for sickness, injury, family emergency,

travel plans prior to registration (previous travel plans must be communicated with the coach at the first practice). An absence involving a sickness or injury must be reported as soon as possible with a doctor's note. Parents are asked to report sickness or injury occurring the day of a practice or game to the coach as soon as possible. ALL injuries that occur in practice, game, or competition must be reported to both the coach and PPRD in writing **as soon as possible**.

Any absences not reported to a coach under these guidelines will be considered UNEXCUSED and may result in loss of participation in a game performance. Continued unplanned unexcused absences could result in loss of participation for a pre-determined length of a game. All decisions will be made with communication between squad head coach and rec coordinator. Loss of participation may be determined by each coach following the guidelines below:

- Any potential result of loss of participation in a game shall be discussed between squad head coach and rec coordinator at least 48 hours prior to the squad's next scheduled game.

A parent may request a meeting with the squad coach to discuss any absence. Squad head coach will communicate any absence in question with PPRD. The coordinator will contact the parent if necessary.

Competition Practices/Competition – Cheerleaders who commit to participating in competitions are subject to attendance expectations discussed and produced by their coach and competition squad. PPRD is NOT regulating nor mandating practice guidelines and expectations for competition practices besides those listed above for scheduling of competition practices.

- **Competition participation is optional, and completely between parents, participants, and coach, should they choose to participate in competitions.**

Extra events/activities for Pelham Youth Cheer – yearly activities for Pelham Youth Cheerleaders aside from games, practices, and competitions:

- **Homecoming Parade** – Youth cheer/football teams will be invited to participate in the high school homecoming parade. If your squad chooses to participate, parents may be asked to help create a themed float, and cheerleaders will throw candy while riding the float during the PHS Homecoming Parade.
- **Youth Homecoming Nights** – Each squad will have a grade level Homecoming. This is separate and might be held at a separate time from PHS Homecoming. Each cheerleader is escorted by a family member during the Halftime Homecoming Ceremony and will exchange gifts with the football team after the game.
- **Youth Night with PHS Varsity Cheer/Football** – Pelham High School Varsity Cheer/Football invites our youth cheer and football teams for a pre-game recognition ceremony on the field at one PHS football game during the season. All cheerleaders receive free admission to the game in their uniform while parents may purchase tickets for admission for approximately \$12. Exact date announced closer to season.
- **City Christmas Parade** – Optional event by Pelham Strong; squads must register floats on their own. Pelham Strong would love to have youth cheer as part of this holiday event.
- **University Cheer Invitations** – Universities in our state, (Alabama, Auburn, Samford, etc.) potentially invite local cheer squads to participate in youth sports/cheer opportunities to attend games at discounted prices, special/discounted fan experiences, and/or potential halftime/game break performances. While some of these may be shared by PPRD, coaches/parents may receive such offers on their own. Participation in these opportunities is completely up to each squad/coach and is not mandated or regulated by PPRD.

- **Specialty Items** – Squads may opt to purchase and wear extra uniform items for specific events such as, but not limited to, childhood cancer awareness, breast cancer awareness, homecoming, etc. These items are not required by PPRD or included in uniform items covered by registration fees and may cost extra to participating squads.

REMINDER: These guidelines are recommendations made by PPRD and are not to be interpreted as PPRD policies.

No Squad “policies” may exceed these in any fashion.