

ANTIOCH VIKING CHEER



2026

Parent/Participant Handbook

Antioch Viking Parent/Participant:

Welcome to Antioch Viking Cheer! Viking cheerleading is a recreational league designed for anyone in grades K-8th. The goal of this program is to provide a positive healthy, safe, and fun youth sports experience. Antioch Viking Cheer is a member of the Illinois Cheer Association (ICA); and our program follows the rules and regulations set forth by the ICA and TCYFL. An official ICA rulebook is provided to each team at the start of each season.

The information in this handbook will help explain the guidelines/expectations, as well as important details about our program. I encourage you to read through the entire handbook for a detailed overview of our fall cheer program.

Please continue to visit our website, www.vikingyouthfootball.org, Facebook and your email for updates and important information for various events added throughout the season.

Thank you for joining Antioch Viking Cheer!

Sincerely,

Christina Barrera
Antioch Viking Football & Cheerleading
Vice President – Cheer

Eligibility:

Antioch Viking Cheer (AVC) is open to children in kindergarten – 8th grade throughout the area including Antioch, Lindenhurst, Lake Villa, and Southeastern Wisconsin. Participation is subject to AVC account status, number of coaches, individual program requirements and other basic factors necessary to the program's operation.

Registration:

Registration information for the 2026 season is outlined below.

Date and Times:

Priority online registration for Cheer begins: February 23, 2026 - March 1, 2026

For returning cheerleaders who participated through the end of the 2025 cheer season

Online registration for Cheer opens on: March 2, 2026

Registration for Cheer will close on: April 6, 2026

Payment plans are available – a minimum of \$125 will be due at time of registration, then 4 monthly payment installments due in March, April, May, and June.

Registration Fees (NON-REFUNDABLE):

- Cheer registration fees:
 - Kindergarten – 1st grade: \$440/per athlete
 - 2nd – 5th grade: \$550/per athlete
 - 6th – 8th grade: \$580/per athlete
- A sibling discount program of 20% off is available when registering 3 or more athletes into the Antioch Viking Program.
- Cheer registration fees include but are not limited to indoor practice facilities, competition uniform rental (bodysuit and skirt), game uniform rental (tank and skirt), game bow, competition music, and registration fees to the ICA competition events.
- The Antioch Vikings reserves the right to refuse registration from any participant and/or families that currently do not have an updated account status or who have violated any of the parent expectations that can be found outlined in the Viking Code of Ethics.
- **All registration fees are NON-REFUNDABLE.**

Additional estimated fees/expenses (NON-REFUNDABLE):

- ICA Summer Camp: \$375/per athlete, plus cost for bus transportation to and from Carthage College (5th–8th grade only)
- Cheer Sweatshirt (required): \$45
- Uniform Warm-up Jogger: \$48 (required for new athletes or replacement)
- Uniform Warm-up Jacket (optional): \$100 + \$12 w/name
- Competition Bow (required): \$18
- Competition Shoes (required): \$62 (K-3rd), \$92/\$135 (4th-8th)
- White Cheer Game Shoes: \$TBD
- Varsity Backpack (optional): \$105 + \$7 w/name
- Varsity Belt Bag (optional): \$45
- Skills Camp: \$TBD/per athlete (includes July 4th/Skills Camp t-shirt)
- Choreographer: \$TBD/per athlete – NEW this year
- Competition gifts: \$35-\$50/per athlete (amount may vary per squad)
- VikingFest: Cheer basket donation by cheer squad
- Practice wear & Team Bonding events: amount will vary per squad
- State competition registration fee: \$170/per athlete (qualifying 3rd- 8th grade only)
- State competition gifts: \$TBD/per athlete (qualifying 3rd- 8th grade only - cost will be communicated during the season by your head coach)
- End of Season Banquet: \$TBD (cost will be communicated during the season by your head coach)
- All fees/expenses are **NON-REFUNDABLE**

2026 Important Cheer Dates:

- April 19 – Uniform fitting (mandatory)
- May 18 – All Viking Cheer Parent meeting – Cheer at Tim Osmond Sports Complex @ 6:00pm
- Week of May 18 – Cheer Practice starts at Tim Osmond Sports Complex– 5th–8th grade only
- Week of June 1 - Cheer Practice starts at Tim Osmond Sports Complex – K-4th grade
- June 4-6 – ICA Summer Camp at Carthage College (5th-8th grade only)
- June TBD – ACHS/Vikings Skills Camp or Sat/Sun Choreography (mandatory)
- July 4 – Parade (optional)
- July 6-19 – Non-Contact Cheer period
- Week of August 3 – Cheer Uniform Handout (mandatory)
- August 8 – Adult VikingFest @ VFW
- August 15 – VikingFest @ Tim Osmond
- August 15– Cheer Performance @ VikingFest (mandatory)
- August 15 – Kick-off Classic (preseason football games)
- September TBD – Cheer Pictures
- TBD– Competition Pep Rally Performances (mandatory)

ICA Competitions dates:

- September 12-13: Cheercago @ Hampshire High School, Hampshire, IL
- September 19-20: The Red Carpet @ BMO Center, Rockford, IL
- October 3-4: Cheer Pink @ TBD
- October 10-11: Cheer Rodeo @ TBD
- October 24-25: Spirt Spooktacular @ NIU Convocation Ctr., DeKalb, IL
- **November 13–15 & 20-22 State Championship – @ NIU Convocation Ctr. DeKalb, IL
****For qualifying 3rd-8th grade teams that receive a State Bid**

Parent Meeting:

Cheer Parent meeting - May 19 at 6:00 pm at Tim Osmond Sports Complex

A Squad Parent meeting with your Head Coach will also be held during the first week of practice.

Fall Season:

The Fall Cheer Season will run from Mid-May until the State Finals weekend in November.

Practices:

- Practices will begin outdoors at Tim Osmond Sports Complex in June for K-4th graders from 6:00-8:00 pm. Mascot (K-1st grade) and Bantam (2nd grade) may start & end earlier. (Times and dates are subject to change due to availability). Grades 5th-8th will begin indoors in May with practice times between 6:00-9:30PM; which will also include outdoor practices.
- Practices will be 3 days per week and may be held Monday – Sunday for all grade levels. Mascot (K-1st grade) and Bantam (2nd grade) will practice 2 days per week once school starts in the fall for District 34. Note, practice may be scheduled for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday due to indoor space availability. (**Time, day and location of practice are subject to availability**).
- No practice/events will be held during our non-contact cheer period, July 6th – 19th
- Additional practices may be added to the schedule leading into competitions dates.
- Once practice moves indoors, parents will not be allowed to stay at practice. We will allow some time at the end of practice to show parents what we have been working on.
- Parents are not to leave their athlete at practice until an adult coach is present.
- Please ensure your athlete arrives 10 minutes prior to practice start time so that practice may begin on time with the entire team.
- Assume practice is every night as scheduled.
- A light rain may not cancel an outdoor practice.
- If the weather conditions are severe at 5:30 pm, please check your email, Facebook page, Viking website, Squad specific Band to find out about practice cancellations.

Practice Attire:

- Athletes should be fully dressed in the correct practice T-shirt/athletic shorts and ready for practice by the start time as communicated to the athlete/parents by the head coach. Hooded sweatshirts and pants of any sort are not allowed during practice.
- For safety reasons hair must be pulled back and away from the face.
- Absolutely no jewelry (including earrings).
- No gum
- White game shoes should be worn during outdoor practice.
- Indoor competition shoes should only be worn when practicing indoors. Please change into these shoes once inside the practice facility.

Attendance:

Athletes/parents are asked to understand and adhere to the following rules, failure to do so could result in an athlete not being able to participate during a game, half-time performance, competition, or cheer event.

- Attendance at practices is vital to the safety and success of the team. Cheerleading is a team sport, with each athlete having a required place in routines. When one athlete is absent it can keep a whole team from achieving their goals for that practice, jeopardize the safety of all those involved in mount/stunt groups, and prevent other athletes from practicing portions of a routine.
- As with any sport it is necessary to limit the number of absences to provide a more beneficial and consistent experience for our athletes.
- No unexcused absences are accepted.
- All absences must be reported to the head coach prior to the start of season/practice in May. Any absence for anything other than illness must be cleared with the head coach prior to making it an excused absence.
- Contagious illnesses must be called in to the head coach at least 4 hours prior to practice.
- Being on time is ESSENTIAL. If an athlete is going to be late for practice, the head coach must be notified. Any unreported tardiness that exceeds 30 minutes or tardiness exceeding three occurrences will be considered as a missed practice and can be counted as an unexcused absence.
- Beginning July 20th, any athlete who misses 3 or more practices may not be allowed to participate in competition. It will be up to the head coach to determine if athlete will be allowed to participate and what position she will hold. If the athlete is not allowed to participate, such athlete is still required to attend the competition event, in full uniform, to support their team.
- During competition season, AVC can schedule extra practices as deemed necessary by your head coach.
- If an athlete misses any practices the week prior to a competition (excused or unexcused), the head coach reserves the right to decide whether the athlete will participate in the

competition. If the athlete is not allowed to participate, such athlete is still required to attend the competition event, in full uniform, to support their team.

- An absence will only be considered excused for:
 - Contagious illness
 - Family events such as a wedding, funeral (not birthday party)
 - Mandatory School-related function (i.e., music program)
- Any injury will require a doctor's clearance prior to returning to practice and/or cheer event.

Conflicts with other sports, including school-sponsored sports, must be dealt with ahead of time with your head coach. Excessive absences due to participation in other sports may be considered unexcused absences

Games:

- Home games will take place at Tim Osmond Sports Complex, 38 Depot St. Antioch, IL
- Cheer teams will be assigned to a football team that they will cheer for throughout the season.
- Games are typically 60-90 minutes long.
- Football games are every weekend starting at the end of August and will continue throughout the playoffs, which begin in October. K-2nd grade Cheer teams will be required to cheer at the playoffs and Superbowl game in November for any AVC football team.
- Games can take place on Saturday's or Sunday's and are mandatory attendance
- Cheer teams will only travel to the playoffs and the Superbowl game
- All football schedules are made by the TCYFL and are usually posted 1-2 weeks prior to the game. However, schedules are subject to change until Friday prior to the game.

Game Etiquette:

- Head coaches will set an arrival time for all games. Cheerleaders are expected to arrive at a minimum of 30 minutes before the scheduled game time to warm up and practice.
- Cheerleaders are expected to stay for the entire game.
- There is no eating while cheering for a game.
- Cheerleaders should be in full game uniform unless otherwise directed by their head coach.
- Cheerleaders, parents, and spectators should conduct themselves with team spirit and good sportsmanship.
- Any game cancellations due to weather conditions will be communicated prior to the game start time and may result in a practice day in lieu of cheering at the game. These updates will be communicated to the team by their head coach.

Competitions:

Our competition season runs from September through November. We attend ICA competition events and the ICA State competition in November 2026. Each athlete is obligated to attend every team competition. It is the team member's responsibility to adhere to the competition schedule. A list of the competitions that AVC will participate in will be communicated by the head coach and available on the Antioch Viking website, www.vikingyouthfootball.org by mid-May. The details of each competition will be communicated by the squad's head coach and/or team mom. It is imperative that all directives are followed and respected. Transportation to and from the competitions is the responsibility of the parents.

- Kindergarten-1st grade will compete in 2 ICA competitions.
- 2nd-5th grade will compete in 3 ICA competitions.
- 6th-8th grade will compete in 4 ICA competitions.
- Cheer teams (3rd-8th grade) that receive their Bid to State will also have a Two-Day competition over 2 weekends in Dekalb, IL. An additional fee of \$170 per athlete will be required once teams qualify to compete in the State Competition.
 - All teams that qualify for State will compete on both Day 1 **and** Day 2:
 - Day 1 - November 13 - 8th grade, November 14 or 15 - 3rd-7th grade
 - Day 2 - November 20 - 8th grade, November 21 or 22 - 3rd-7th grade
 - Day 1 score will be worth 25% of total score and Day 2 will be worth 75% of total score.
 - Only the top 3 placements will be announced on Day 1 and Day 2 events.

To help competition days run efficiently, below is a list of rules to abide by during competitions:

- Each athlete is required to wear the full uniform at each competition and must remain in uniform, including cheer shoes, through the awards ceremony.
- Absolutely no eating in uniform unless it is covered up by a shirt or warm up attire.
- Athletes must arrive on time, as decided by the team's head coach.
- Upon arriving at the competition location, the athlete must be competition ready unless otherwise instructed by the head coach.
- Team members' hair should be worn as decided upon by the head coach.
- No makeup is allowed.
- No jewelry.
- Gum, food, and drinks are not allowed in the warm-up area or on the competition floor.
- Antioch Viking cheerleaders and parents reflect on our program and should conduct themselves in a manner that is in line with our beliefs and values.
- Insubordination will not be tolerated.
- Inappropriate behavior, profanity, or lewd conduct is unacceptable.
- Tobacco, alcohol, and illegal substance consumption is not tolerated.
- **Unsportsmanlike behavior or disrespect to another team or to ICA staff officials is unacceptable and can result in the elimination of the entire Antioch Viking Cheer Organization from participating in any/all ICA competition event.**

- Respect for the coaching staff and team moms is expected. Coaches and Team Moms are volunteers and should be appreciated for their dedication to our athletes. Please treat them with courtesy and respect for their efforts.
- Parents should not have ANY contact with an ICA staff official for any reason. If you have questions/concerns, please speak to your team's head coach.
- Recording and picture taking at our competitions are permitted. However, any photos or videos of an ICA performance are NOT allowed on ANY social media platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube, Snapchat, etc.).
- All athletes must remain with their team until the award ceremony is over.

Athlete/Parent Conduct:

- Athletes/Parents are required to maintain and uphold the reputation of the Viking Cheerleaders through their own conduct and squad spirit.
- All cheers and chants shall be a positive and sportsmanlike manner
- Athletes/Parents will conduct themselves in an appropriate manner when it comes to any communication, such as, but not limited to Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, email, etc.
- It shall be squad policy that disciplinary action will only be invoked as a last resort, and that every reasonable attempt will be made to avoid situations likely to lead to such action through squad discussion and positive encouragement, by example, and by finding ways and means to correct negative trends.
- A cheerleader may be suspended from games/events for the following reasons: Unexcused absence, excessive absence or tardiness, failure to cooperate or show respect to teammates, Team Moms and/or Coaches, or failure to abide by squad rules and regulations.
- A cheerleader may be dismissed from the squad for the following reasons: Excessive and irreconcilable disruptive influence on the squad, conduct like to bring the squad or team reputation into a dispute and as otherwise deemed necessary by the Cheer Board.

Fundraising:

- All AVC athletes will be required to participate in our program wide fundraising events.

Volunteer Commitment:

Volunteer Deposit Program -

Families will provide a \$150.00 deposit for each tackle/cheer athlete postdated to November 30, 2026.

Your check will be returned to you at the end of the season so long as all your volunteer hours are fulfilled.

Non-Refundable Volunteer Buyout Option: \$150 for each cheer player (will be considered a tax refundable 501c3 donation and receipt will be provided).

Volunteer Deposit/Buyout Checks to be collected at Cheer Uniform Fitting for Cheer on April 19, 2026.

Volunteer Requirements:

Cheer- The volunteer requirement is 3 hours per cheerleader.

Eligible Volunteer Slots:

All volunteer slots will be listed in the Dibs section of our website. Any other volunteer time served that is not listed on Dibs, or included in the below, requires pre-approval from the Team Mom Coordinator and any hours done not on Dibs without prior approval will not be honored.

Please sign in at the concession stand when you report for your volunteer slot. This will ensure that you receive credit for your hours. Please note that younger children are not allowed in the concession stand or on the football field sidelines.

Coach/Team Parent:

Head Coaches and Assistant Coaches will receive 3 hours of volunteer credit to fulfill their requirements.

Team Parent will receive 3 hours of volunteer credit. This is limited to one parent per team and that person must complete the season to receive credit. Should more than one parent express interest in this role, the head coach for each respective team will make the final decision as to who will receive the credit.

Teen Cheer Coaches will receive 3 hours of volunteer credit if a sibling is in the program. Teen Coach must complete the season to receive credit.

Volunteer Opportunities

- Concessions (2 Hour Shifts) = 2 hours
- Grill (2 Hour Shifts) = 2 hours
- Down Marker: 1 per home game (1 Hour Shift) = 1 hour
- Chains: 2 per home game- (1 Hour Shift) = 1 hour
- Scoreboard: 1 per game (1 Hour Shift) = 2 hours
- Film Game: 1 per game (1 hour Shift) = 1 hour
- Various opportunities during VikingFest
- Various opportunities throughout season for football/cheer

2026 Antioch Viking Cheerleading Commitment and Competition Agreement

Our cheer squads will be competing in ICA sponsored Cheer Competitions for the 2026 season, along with the possibility of going to State if the squad earns a bid!

This agreement is for all our athletes and families to understand and agree to the same commitment it takes to be part of our squads for competition purposes.

Our competition routines only work when every athlete is present to do their part. Every athlete has an important role in their routine. To be fair to the other athletes, we will require that each girl be at EVERY practice, the ENTIRE length of the practice, and ON TIME to successfully prepare for competition. We expect to begin practice promptly at the start time; please try to arrive prior to the start time to warm up.

Once the routine has been taught, we may ask that the girls practice at home and additional practices may be added. Some of our squads will provide dates when they will be teaching the routine during the summer months. Please make every effort to make these practices.

We understand that illnesses and unforeseen circumstances do occur. Please speak directly to your head coach should an absence need to occur.

Cheerleader Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Please do not hesitate to reach out to us may you have any questions or concerns.

2026 Antioch Viking Parent Code of Ethics

- I hereby pledge to provide positive support, care and encouragement for my children participating in youth football/cheerleading by following this Parents Code of Ethics.
 - I will encourage good sportsmanship by demonstrating positive support for all players, coaches and officials at every game, practice, or other youth sports activity.
 - I will place the emotional and physical well-being of my children ahead of my own personal desire to win.
 - I will insist that my children play in a safe and healthy environment.
 - I will require that my child's coach be trained and certified in the responsibilities of being a youth coach and that he/she upholds the Coaches Code of Ethics.
 - I will support coaches and officials working with my children to encourage a positive and enjoyable experience for all.
 - I will demand an environment for my children that is free from drugs, tobacco, and alcohol, and will refrain from their use at all Viking sports events.
 - I will remember the game is for youth...not adults.
 - I will do my very best to make youth sports fun for my children.
 - I will ask my children to treat other players, cheerleaders, coaches, fans, and officials with respect regardless of race, sex, creed, or ability.
 - I will help my children enjoy the youth football/cheerleading experience by doing whatever I can, such as being a respectful fan, assisting with coaching, volunteering for game day assignments, or providing transportation.
 - I will conduct myself at games/events with respect to speech and actions and to be a good role model for the type of behavior we would like to see our children emulate.
 - I will bring any grievance to the head coach or a board member while not in the presence of my athlete.
 - I will not discuss any grievances with assistants, teen coaches or parents.
 - I will maintain control of any other children I bring to all Viking functions, i.e., practices, games, banquets, etc.
 - I will not leave my children at practices/games until a coach is present.
 - All team selections are the sole responsibility of the team Head Coach. Any player who refuses to play on the team for which he/she is selected/assigned will be dropped by the Vikings program with no refund.
 - I understand that the terms and conditions of the refund policy are non-refundable.
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Parent/Guardian Signature

Parent/Guardian Signature