



Hollis-Brookline Rebels Pop Warner Cheerleading Handbook

Welcome to Hollis Brookline Rebels Cheerleading! This handbook has been created to outline information about the HB Rebels Cheer program and to ensure everyone understands the program commitment.

We are proud to be a part of Pop Warner, the leading youth football, cheerleading and dance program in the world! Pop Warner was founded in 1929 and continues to grow and serves as the only youth football, cheerleading & dance organization that requires its participants to maintain academic standards to participate. Pop Warner's commitment to academics is what separates the program from other youth sports around the world. Please review the Pop Warner Little Scholars website for more information about the organization at www.popwarner.com.

Commitment

Cheerleading is a team sport, but is unique because the presence and commitment of all team members is necessary to “come together as one” and advance skills. Team members cannot be swapped in and out of positions easily like in other sports, so every athlete is vital and is expected to attend all practices and competitions. Cheerleading routines are complex and, for routines to be as safe and precise as possible, it is imperative that all athletes be present at practice.

We understand that unpredicted events happen in life and that, occasionally, it will be impossible for an athlete to attend a scheduled practice/event. If an athlete cannot attend an event/practice, Parent/Guardian will agree to inform **ALL** coaches that the athlete will not be attending a practice as early as possible. **Notification does not necessarily excuse the absence.**

According to Pop Warner Rules, participation in any other All-Star or Recreational cheer team is not permitted during the Pop Warner Season.

Attendance

As noted above, attendance at all practices and competitions is vital to the safety and success of a cheerleading team.

Arriving on-time to ALL events is also imperative as we need to follow all safety guidelines set forth by Pop Warner to help prevent injuries, including appropriate warm-up, stretching, and allowing for an appropriate number of breaks. Late arrivals disrupt the practice flow and impact our valuable practice time together as a team. Athletes should be **READY TO START** practice with cheer shoes on, hair up/pulled back and all jewelry removed at the designated practice time (i.e. if practice starts at 5:30 PM, the athletes should be on the mat and ready to go at 5:30 pm, not just arriving at that time). Jewelry should be left at home as Rebels staff are not responsible for lost personal items or items left at practices/events.

Please arrange all appointments for the athlete (i.e. medical, dental, etc.) outside of practice/competition times. Excused absences may include illness, injury, bereavement, religious observations. If absence is unavoidable, a parent/guardian must notify the Coaching staff as soon as possible prior to the scheduled event. A team member with three (3) unexcused absences from practice will be subject to removal from the team with no refunds provided. Any athlete arriving more than 10 minutes late will be considered tardy (unless previously discussed with the Coaching staff) and three (3) tardies will equal one unexcused absence.

The Pop Warner Official Cheer Season starts on July 15. The HB Rebels Board understands that vacations are often taken during the summer months, however if your athlete misses practices during August, he/she will be required to make up any missed time. Please note that ALL athletes must complete 10 hours of conditioning/practice each season prior to participating in stunting.

As an organization, we will strive to minimize the time commitment and we will free up weekends as much as possible. We understand that family time is very important.

We ask that parents not keep athletes out of practices/competitions as a punishment as this “punishes” the entire team, not just the individual athlete.

If an athlete misses a practice during the week of a competition, the athlete will not be allowed to participate in that competition. The only exception would be if the athlete has a note from a medical provider.

Team Position

We want to stress that EVERY athlete is equally important on a cheer team, and all are 100% necessary to succeed. We will continuously stress that one position in cheer is not more valuable than another (Base, Back spot, Flyer, Front spot...). For example, without all the positions filled, a pyramid could not be executed properly or safely. Coaches will place athletes in positions that will be the best fit for them and the safety of the entire team. If your athlete was in a certain position on a cheer team in the past, it does NOT mean they will be in the same position this season. The coaches fully understand proper placement of athletes and will always put safety first. Coaches will place athletes where they are needed and where their specific strengths/skills can best be used. We expect that all athletes will remain positive and will put 100% effort into whatever position they are placed into.

The number of teams created and the divisions will be determined by the ages and number of athletes that register for HB Rebels Cheerleading as well as the number of coaches we have on staff. The Coaches and/or Board of Directors determine what divisions we will have and will have the final say regarding placement of the athletes on the appropriate teams based on age **AND** skill level. Please note Pop Warner does not allow any “waiving” of athletes into different age divisions.

Communication

We will try to communicate all information about scheduled practices/competitions and other events in a timely manner. Most of our program information will be found on our organization website: [Hollis Brookline Rebels > Home \(bluesombrero.com\)](http://HollisBrooklineRebels.com) and on our Facebook page @HBRebelscheer.

We will also communicate via email, or text message and/or team communication application. Coaches may choose to have a private Facebook page for team communication or the use of BAND.

We encourage open communication between parents/guardians of athletes and the coaches. **Please** notify coaching staff of any issues that may interfere with your athlete's mental or physical well-being, behavior, or attendance. We also encourage that any parental questions or concerns be discussed openly with the coaching staff.

Conduct

All members of HB Rebels (this includes Coaches, Board members, athletes, parents/guardian, and volunteers) are required to abide by the Pop Warner Code of Conduct. To participate in our program, each athlete and parent/guardian will be required to sign the Pop Warner Code of Conduct form and a form stating that you have read and understood this handbook in its entirety.

Smoking and alcohol are not permitted on the fields or school property at any time. HB Rebels Board members and coaching staff reserve the right to end any heated discussions during practices, competitions, and other events. As adults, we must always display professionalism, good sportsmanship, and respect for others.

Attitude and Behavior

A positive attitude, dedication and respect for others are critical to the success of a cheerleading team. It is expected that athletes will put all differences aside as soon as they arrive to participate in practice/competition. Athletes will be expected to respect all teammates and coaching staff.

Cheerleading requires a lot of strength and hard work. At times, the activities will be challenging, repetitive and may not always feel fun, however the athletes must strive to maintain a positive attitude. Athletes must understand that teammates have different strengths/weaknesses and that they must be patient with each other while they work to master various skills.

Fundraising Requirements

For this non-profit, volunteer-run program to succeed, it is imperative that all families actively participate in fundraising (Popcorn, spirit store, Old Home Days, Applefest etc.). Fundraising is necessary to cover the costs of insurance, Pop Warner dues, uniforms, equipment used for skill building, rental spaces, competition entry fees and to keep registration costs down. There are numerous opportunities to participate in fundraising throughout the season. Our organization expects everyone's full cooperation when it comes to fundraising.

If a team places at the Regional competition, there will be an opportunity to travel to the National Competition in North Carolina. The HB Rebels organization will likely not be able to fund a trip to the National competition in its entirety, so additional fundraising will need to be done to aid in covering that expense.

Volunteering

To support the HB Rebels, the organization requires a volunteer commitment. A volunteer commitment is required for the fall season. The volunteer opportunities vary depending on team size, and fundraising events. Team Parents will be reaching out to the families to assist them in signing up for different positions and/or shifts to meet the **5-hour minimum of volunteering. A refundable check in the amount of \$125.00 per family is required prior to the start of the season. Siblings are additional \$50 per athlete with +2 hours volunteer commitment, with a maximum of 7 hours per family.** This check will be returned to you at the end of the season if you have satisfied your volunteer commitment. If you do not satisfy your volunteer commitment the check will be cashed. Our Fundraising Coordinator will notify members of all opportunities and team parents will track volunteer hours.

Practice

Consistent practice is critical to the success and safety of a cheer program. The PW Cheer Season begins July 15.

Prior to Labor Day, practices can be held up to 10 hours per week, typically between the hours of 5 PM - 8 PM. Practices cannot be longer than 2.5 hours (this does NOT include break times, so practice will likely be scheduled for a 3-hour block to allow for appropriate breaks). Practice prior to Labor Day will be held 3-4 times per week.

After Labor Day, practices are limited to 6 hours per week. Practices can be held for 2 hours (this does not include break times and mat set up/clean up so practice will likely be scheduled for a 2.5-hour block). Practice after Labor Day will be held three times per week. Our indoor practice locations will typically be held at Hollis-Brookline High School and Hollis Brookline Middle School. Practice times and durations will depend on the division and age level of the athletes. Head Coaches, in conjunction with the Cheer Coordinator, will provide specific times and dates for practice. Please note that Tiny-Mite (ages 5-7) and Challenger team practices may be shorter in duration and occur less frequently.

We ask parents/guardians to be patient and flexible with the coaching staff as schedules may change (sometimes last minute) due to changes in availability of practice space at the schools. You will be notified as soon as possible regarding any changes.

No cheer athletes will be released to anyone other than their parent/guardian without verbal or written permission. Please communicate any pick-up changes with the coaches.

Tumbling

Coaches will provide some tumbling training, however due to the number of different skills involved in cheerleading (cheer, dance, jumps, stunts, gymnastics), time will be limited to teach and master gymnastics skills. Cheer athletes are strongly encouraged to participate in some form of tumbling class through a certified gym if they would like to advance their skills.

Uniforms

We require uniforms for competitions and other special events. When wearing the HB Rebels uniform, the athletes are representing the HB Rebels and the National Pop Warner organization. Uniformity of the team will be always maintained. Closed toe athletic shoes are required for all participants. No jewelry will be allowed during any practice or competition, including new ear piercings (piercings may NOT be covered under any type of tape). No hoodies or zippers due to safety concerns. Hair must be pulled back off the face using elastics. No hair accessories that protrude from the athlete's head are permitted, including butterfly clips. Nails should be trimmed to the length of the fingertip or shorter. Only neutral colored nail polish is permitted.

Practice Attire

Athletes are required to wear fitted athletic shorts (preferably dark colored) with form fitting (not baggy) tank top or t-shirt and cheer sneakers (white). No zippers on clothing and no jewelry allowed (no tape over earrings). Hair must be tied back and off face.

Competition Uniforms:

Long-sleeve bodysuit, skort, competition bow, no-show white socks, and cheer shoes.

Competition uniforms (long-sleeve bodysuit and skort) are the property of HB Rebels and are loaned to the athletes for use during the cheer season. Uniforms must be kept in pristine condition. Any uniforms not returned or damaged are the responsibility of the athlete's family. A security deposit of \$175.00 will be collected at the time of uniform distribution. A uniform return time will be scheduled at the end of the season and when the uniform is returned in good condition, deposit checks will be returned to you.

To wash the competition uniform, please wash with COLD water either by hand or ALONE in the washing machine on a delicate cycle. HANG to dry. DO NOT DRY CLEAN.

Uniform items the athlete is expected to purchase: White cheer shoes, no-show white socks and navy blue rebel tank top. HB Rebels jacket will be optional. The athlete will be sized for these items during uniform fittings. Payment for these items will be made by parent/guardian when ordering in the online store.

Additional Costs

There will be some additional expenses to plan for during the cheer season. These include, but aren't limited to:

- Cheer Apparel for practice (coaches may opt for a practice "uniform")
- Spectator tickets for Local, Regional, and National Competitions.
- Travel associated with competitions- this will mostly involve local driving.
- Regional Competition- local travel to New England destinations.
- National Competition- Airline ticket, hotel, rental car, and food.

Medications and Special Medical Assistance

Please notify the Coach prior to the first practice if your athlete has any specific medical conditions or may need to take any type of medication during cheer practice/events. If your athlete has been prescribed an inhaler or an Epi-Pen by a medical provider, then one must be kept in the team's first aid kit at the start of the first practice and kept there for the entire season. Please label the medication clearly with the athlete's name, dosing instructions and ensure it will not expire during the season. If your athlete requires assistance with medications during a practice or competition, do not leave him/her unattended at the school or field. The head coaches are trained in first aid and are CPR certified, but they are not authorized or trained to administer medications.

Injuries/Illness

If your athlete is restricted from practice/participation due to injury/illness, you must provide a letter from the medical provider stating the athlete's restrictions. If the athlete needs to be restricted from participation, they will not be allowed to return until the Head Coach is presented with a dated letter from a medical provider stating that the athlete has been medically cleared to return.

If an athlete misses school due to illness, then they should not attend practice and the head coach should be notified of the absence.

Parents/guardians will be notified by the Head Coach of any injuries or illness during practice that require an athlete to stop practicing. Please notify the Head Coach in advance of the next scheduled practice or game regarding the athlete's condition. Do not rely on coaches to diagnose any medical condition or injury. If an athlete is sick or injured for more than one or two days, we recommend you consult with a medical care provider prior to returning to practice.

Scholastics

Proof of satisfactory progress is required to participate in Pop Warner programs. Every athlete must maintain a 2.0 GPA/ 70% average according to their report card at the end of the previous school year. Failure to achieve this requirement may result in the athlete's ineligibility to continue in the program. During the cheer season, any athlete suspended or expelled from school is immediately eligible for suspension from our program. Ramifications of this offense can lead to removal from the team without registration refund.

The Pop Warner All-American Program (scholarship program):

Following the Pop Warner objective: to instill life-long values of teamwork, dedication, and a superior work ethic in the classroom as well as on the playing field, we will be participating in the Pop Warner All American Program. Pop Warner is the only National Youth Sports organization in America that requires its participants to perform adequately in the classroom before permitting them to play. Pop Warner believes that the set standards give children a sense of responsibility and appreciation for academics and athletics that will help them develop later in life. Each year, the most academically accomplished Pop Warner participants compete for academic All-American status. The process begins with our Rebel

Cheer program, moves on to the New England Regional level and then to the National Level. Rebels enrolled in Grade 5 or above during the current Pop Warner season, achieve a 96.00% GPA from the previous school year and complete all required forms will be eligible for the All-American Program. Further information will be communicated during the season.

Team Guidelines

Our program strives to promote teamwork, good sportsmanship, build self-esteem/confidence, and develop leadership skills in our athletes. We do not have authority over any behavior/actions outside of cheer, however, when it does happen during our practices/games/competitions, there are actions that will be taken.

National Pop Warner Official Cheer Rules and Regulations criteria for dropping an athlete are as follows:

- Any athlete who is found to have signed up because of parental pressure or tells team management he/she doesn't really want to cheer.
- Any athlete who refuses or cannot furnish the four required items: Parental Consent, Medical Examination, Proof of Age, and Scholastic Fitness.
- Any athlete who is a member of any other organized Pop Warner spirit team or non-Pop Warner/All Star cheer team (exception would be a school cheer program).
- Any athlete who attempts to intimidate fellow participants in practice by word and/or physical deed (no refund of fees shall be required).
- Any athlete who has recurring discipline problems (and then, only with the concurrence of the League).

HB Rebels criteria for dropping an athlete are as follows (without refund of fees):

- Bullying in any form.
- Inappropriate use of social network sites to intimidate, degrade the program or athlete, or use derogatory remarks against any member of the HB Rebels organization.
- Unsportsmanlike conduct/behavior toward teammates. opposing team and/or coaching staff.
- Repeated conduct or behavior issues
- Disrespectful and/or uncooperative attitude toward the coaching staff, board members or volunteers.
- Refusal to participate in team practice/activities
 - First offense: Athlete warned and parent/guardian notified.
 - Second offense: Athlete removed from practice/event & parent/guardian notified to pick up athlete
 - Third offense: Discussion with parent/guardian regarding removal from the team. - Serious offenses may require immediate removal from the team and no refund will be provided.

Refund Policy

No refunds will be issued after the first day of scheduled practice.

Organization Policies and Procedures Emergency Plan

When an emergency involving an athlete arises, the coach must assess the situation immediately. All remaining teammates will be removed from the area. The coach is required to stabilize the athlete in distress, evaluate his/her condition, and determine if emergency medical help is needed. At all times, the coach will remain with the athlete while another coach or staff member gets help. At no time will the injured athlete be left alone. The parent/guardian will then be notified about the situation with their athlete. Once the situation has been stabilized, the President and Cheer Coordinator/Director will be notified of the incident and will follow up with the athlete's parent/guardian.

Transportation

Parents/guardians must provide transportation for their athlete to and from all practices and competitions during the season. Carpooling may be an option and this information will be shared by coaches/team parents if this is the case.

Competitions

Hollis-Brookline Rebels is a competitive cheerleading program. Cheer competitions are fun, exciting, and rewarding for the athletes. The Hollis-Brookline Rebels will participate in local competitions throughout the season to include State/League Competition. If qualified, Teams will advance to the Regional Pop Warner Cheer Competition in November. Any team that places first or second in their division must advance to the National Competition in North Carolina in early December. Also following Pop Warner advancement rules at Regional Competition, teams placing third, fourth and fifth with 80 points AND within 5 points of the First Place team will receive a bid from Pop Warner to participate/attend the National Competition. This additional advancement rule only applies to "older" teams (not Tiny Mites)

A cheer team that qualifies to attend the National Championship may be given financial support from the Board to offset a portion of the cost. The board will determine the amount of the cost offset, if available, depending on the number of teams and athletes that qualified to go to Nationals.

Any cheer team that qualifies for Nationals will commit to further fundraise at the time of qualification to specifically offset costs for Nationals. All fees are assessed per participant, not per family. All cheerleaders attending must have a parent, guardian, or chaperone with them. For the National competition, all players are required to travel in accordance with the Pop Warner schedule.

Events

In addition to competitions, several team and league events take place throughout the season, which the athletes & their families are expected to participate or volunteer at. Examples are listed below.

- Old Homes Day
- AppleFest
- Rebels Hosted Competition - Battle of the Bows
- Rebels Community Showcase
- Team Bonding events (typically 2-4 per season)
- End of Season Banquet

Registration

All athletes must register at www.hbrebels.com. If the required paperwork is not complete by the first day of practice, he/she will not be allowed to participate.

Additional required forms:

- Copy of Birth Certificate- only for new athletes
- Final Report card -Hard copy of completed report card for all athletes in grades K through 12.
- HB Rebels Cheer Contract Agreement Form (signed document stating that you have read and agree to all terms in the Cheer Handbook)

We look forward to a fabulous season! Please feel free to reach out with any additional questions

Cheers,

Hollis-Brookline Rebels Cheerleading
PO Box 1021
Hollis, NH 03049
president@hbrebels.com

2025 HB REBELS CHEERLEADING HANDBOOK SIGNATURE PAGE

*I have read and agree to the guidelines provided in the 2025 Cheerleading Handbook.

Cheerleader Name (Print): _____

Cheerleader Name (Signature): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Print): _____

Parent/Guardian Name (Signature): _____

Please list any pre-planned time off for the 2025 cheer season (7/15/25 - 12/15/25). Please note that missing practice may affect athletes' ability to participate in events.
