

≡ CRUSADERS ≡
CHEER & DANCE



2020-2021

Spirit Groups Handbook

**The COK-SM Spirit Program is comprised of 3 teams:
Cheer Team, Junior Pom Squad & Crusaderettes Dance Team.**

Cheer Team: Recreational and semi-competitive cheer team focused on providing spirit at COK-SM sporting events, pep rallies & assemblies. Students in grades 6 – 8 at COK-SM are eligible to participate.

Junior Pom Squad: Semi-competitive dance/cheer team focused on providing spirit and entertainment at COK-SM sporting events. Students in grades 3 – 5 at COK-SM are eligible to participate.

Crusaderettes Dance Team: Competitive Pom Squad focused on providing entertainment at COK-SM sporting events, pep rallies and assemblies. The Crusaderettes compete in Pom, Hip Hop and Game Day divisions at the Regional and National level. Diocese of Charleston parochial school students in grades 5 – 8 are eligible to participate. Students in grades 5 - 8 are also eligible to participate in the Crusaderettes-In-Training (CIT) program.

Academics

- Academics are a high priority for all cheerleaders and dancers.
- Team members must meet the academic requirements listed in the COK-SM student handbook.
- Any cheerleader or dancer whose academic performance does not meet these minimum standards will be on academic probation and may be removed from the team until her grades meet the minimum requirements.
- Cheerleaders and dancers are expected to demonstrate excellent time management skills in order to balance the demands of school and cheer/dance. Practices, games & performances will not be cancelled or excused due to upcoming tests or projects.

Practice

- All practices are MANDATORY.
- Practices will begin on time. Cheerleaders & dancers should arrive at least 10 minutes prior to the start of practice.
- No practices will be excused unless due to sickness, a family emergency, or a school-related activity. Absences must be excused by a coach ahead of time.
- Absences (excused or unexcused), even with prior notice, may result in suspension from upcoming games or performances at the discretion of the coach.
- Excessive absences may result in dismissal from the team.
- All cheerleaders & dancers are expected to come to practice in the specified "practice attire".
- Cell phones are not allowed during practice or games.

Nutrition, Health & Appearance

- Please inform a coach of any health issues, such as asthma, medications currently being taken, allergies, physical restrictions, etc.
- If your child suffers an injury, please send a doctor's note informing the coach of physical restrictions.
- Parental support is encouraged at home to ensure that the cheerleaders & dancers remain healthy athletes.
- Cheerleaders & dancers must uphold a respectable image while in uniform as they are considered

representatives of Christ Our King-Stella Maris School. Any questionable behavior while in uniform or when traveling with the team may result in a cheerleader or dancer being dismissed from the team, at the discretion of the coach. ***This includes social media!**

- Members of the Spirit Groups are expected to follow school rules and show respect for their peers, teachers and school property. Disciplinary actions taken at school (ex. detention) may also affect their status on their Spirit Team, at the discretion of the Coach and school administration.
- Tardiness, misconduct, bullying and other inexcusable actions will not be tolerated.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are an essential component of a successful team.
- Parent chaperones may be designated for games and other team events.
- If a parent has concerns, please address such concerns directly to a Coach.
- Communication between parents and coaches will be primarily via email & GroupMe or Band app. Parents are responsible for keeping notifications turned on and checking for updates regularly to ensure their child is informed of any changes or special instructions from their coaches.
- The Spirit Groups are self-funded.
 - Payments will be processed through the FACTS online management system.
 - Dues more than 1 month past due may result in your child being ineligible to participate in team events.
 - In the event that a cheerleader or dancer leaves the team either voluntarily or involuntarily at any time during the season, she will forfeit all dues that have already been paid to the team.

Website: www.coksmspirit.com

COK-SM CHEER TEAM

This is a semi-competitive middle school cheer team.

The primary responsibility of the Cheer Team is to promote spirit at COK-SM sporting events.

- Football: (Sept-Oct) If there is a COK-SM football team, it will be 1 weeknight game per week & occasional weekend games due to rainouts. Our cheerleaders may also be invited to cheer for BEHS JV games.
- Basketball: (Dec-Feb) 1 weeknight and 1 Sunday per week. We typically cheer 2 games per day.
- Extra games may be scheduled during Catholic Schools Week and tournaments.
- The Cheer Team may also occasionally cheer for other COK-SM sports such as volleyball, baseball, etc.
- Dates for competitions are TBD.
- Game schedules will be posted at the beginning of each sport's season.
- The Cheer Team will also provide entertainment at pep rallies, school assemblies, community events, etc.
- It is important that all cheerleaders attend required games and performances.
- Cheerleaders are permitted to be involved in other sports and extracurricular activities.
 - If another sport or activity conflicts with the cheerleading schedule, please notify a coach as soon as possible.
 - Missing a required practice, game, or performance without 24 hours prior notice, will result in 1 demerit. After 3 demerits, the cheerleader may be suspended from the team.
 - Cheerleaders, at the discretion of the Coach, may not be permitted to perform if any practices are missed.
 - Cheerleaders may not be permitted to cheer if they arrive late or unprepared for games or other performances. (Ex. Forgot poms or missed pre-game warm up)
- Cheer team will practice on average 2 days per week. Additional practices may be added prior to big performances or on game days.
- The following items must be kept in each cheerleader's bag at all times:
 1. Cheer Shoes
 2. Poms
 3. Water bottle, extra ponytail holders, hair clips & band-aids

Cost of Participation

- The base cost includes shoes, poms, 3 practice shirts, sweatshirt, briefs, USC Spirit Day, ACC Championship Spirit Day, uniform rental, music, competition fees, and a 4 day/3 night UCA camp at CofC. Cheer uniforms (skirt & top) must be returned to the school in good condition at the end of the season.
- ○ New Cheerleaders will pay an additional \$80 for other required parts of uniform. (If returning members need new body liners, bag, or bow there will be individual fees you can pay based on what you need.

- New Cheerleader cost: \$980
 - First payment due May 14th: \$410
 - Second payment due June 15: \$570
- Returning Cheerleader cost: \$900
 - First payment due May 14th: \$330
 - Second payment due June 15: \$570
 - If returning girls need new bow, body liner, or bag there will be an additional accessories fee.

Upcoming Dates: CHEER TEAM

- Cheer Tryout Clinic: April 6 & 7, 3:00–4:30
- Cheer Team Evaluations: April 8th 3:00-4:30
- Parent Meeting: April 23th, 6:00pm
- First Practice: May 7th 3:00pm - 5pm
- Uniform Fitting: May 14th, 3:00-5:00pm
- UCA Overnight Camp at College Of Charleston: July 7 - 10
 - Cheerleaders will focus on crowd leading, skills training, leadership and team bonding. An excellent way to start off a year long cheer season!
- Fall practices begin the first week of school in August. The cheer team practices on Tuesdays and Thursdays 3:00 - 5:00.

Cheer Coaches: Katie Gorospe, (803) 524-6481, kgorospe@coksm.org
 Sue Rossi, (917) 476-3885, suzannerossi7@gmail.com

JUNIOR POM SQUAD

The JUNIOR POM SQUAD is a semi-competitive cheer/dance team.

- 3rd-5th grade students attending Christ Our King-Stella Maris School are eligible to participate.
- The main purpose of the Jr Pom Squad is to provide younger students an opportunity to be active in a school-based sport while providing spirit and entertainment at COK-SM sporting events, pep rallies, school assemblies and around the community.
- Jr Pom season runs from August through February.
- Practices will be on Tuesdays, 4:30-6:30 (competition only), and on Thursdays 4:30-6:00.
- Jr Pom will cheer at COK-SM basketball games (Dec-Feb).
 - There will likely be 1 weeknight game and 1-2 Sunday afternoon games per week.
- The Jr Pom Squad may participate in up to 3 Regional competitions.
 - Not all team members are required to be on the competition team.
 - Since the "intermediate" division in which we compete includes 4th-6th grade teams, 3rd graders will be eligible to participate in competitions on an invitation-only basis.
 - Additional practices may be added leading up to competition if necessary.
 - Travel may be required for competitions and is not included in team fees.
- The Junior Pom Squad may collaborate in performances with the COK-SM cheerleaders and Crusaderettes Dance Team. They will also engage in Big Sis/Little Sis mentoring with them.
- Junior Pom members are encouraged to be involved in other extracurricular activities, however, prior notice must be given if any practices, games or performances will be missed.
 - When team members are absent, routines and formations have to be changed, often resulting in extra practice time and workload on the other team members and coach. Therefore, adequate notice of any absences is a MUST!
- Dancers may not be permitted to perform or compete if they miss practice or arrive late or unprepared for a performance at the discretion of the Coach.
- If a team member has a medical condition/injury that prevents them from performing required exercises, a doctor's note will be required.

Be Prepared

- The following items must be kept in each team member's bag at all times:
 - Sneakers/cheer shoes/jazz shoes
 - Poms
 - Water bottle
 - Extra ponytail holders, hair clips & band-aids
 - Girls are encouraged to pack a healthy snack for after-school practices.

Cost of Participation

- NEW MEMBERS \$500
 - Includes: Uniform, Poms, cheer shoes, hair bow, briefs & bodyliner, sweatshirt, Bag, 2 practice outfits, Crusaderettes Pom Clinic, music editing fees, and competition fees.
 - 2 Payments: \$250 due May 15th, \$250 due August 15th

- RETURNING MEMBERS \$250
 - Includes: Poms, 2 practice outfits, Crusaderettes Pom Clinic, music editing fees, and competition fees.
 - One-time payment due May 15th
 - Not included in team fees: jazz shoes, tights, competition travel & teambuilding activities.
 - Returning members needing to replace any of their uniform accessories from the previous year, may purchase those items a la carte. The cost to replace those items is not included in the team dues.

Upcoming Dates

- Prep clinics and evaluations will be held in early May, exact dates TBD
- Uniform fitting will take place in May
- Regular practices will begin the first week of school

CRUSADERETTES DANCE TEAM

The Crusaderettes Dance Team (CDT) is a competitive Pom Squad. CDT is the primary feeder program for the Bishop England Varsity Pom Squad.

- As the only competitive middle school dance team in the diocese, rising 5th – 8th grade students attending any Charleston-area Parochial school are eligible to audition for CDT.
- The Crusaderettes participate in UDA overnight summer camp and several regional competitions as well as the UDA National Dance Team Championship in Orlando, FL.
- Travel is required for these competitions. Competition travel costs are not included in the monthly fees.
- In addition to competing, CDT promotes spirit and provides entertainment at COK-SM sporting events, pep rallies, school assemblies and community events.
- Dance Team members are permitted to be involved in other extracurricular activities, however, dancers **must put CDT first!** Failure to do so may lead to dismissal.
- Dancers may not be permitted to perform/compete if they miss practice or arrive late or unprepared for a performance at the discretion of the Coach.
- **No dancer is ever guaranteed participation in performances or competitions. Each dancer's spot on the performance/competition floor must be earned! Dancers may be added in or taken out of routines at any time throughout the season at the discretion of the coach.**
 - In the event that your child is not chosen to participate in a particular routine, please respect the coach's decisions, and encourage your child to continue improving.

Conditioning

- Endurance and strength training is an integral part of each practice.
- Conditioning is necessary for building strength for technical dance skills and maintaining energy during fast-paced, high-energy dance routines.
- Conditioning sessions typically consist of running, strength training, plyometric drills and often require the use of wrist weights and K-Bands for resistance.
- If a dancer has a medical condition/injury that prevents them from performing required exercises/drills, a doctor's note will be required.

*Please note that the conditioning sessions are essential in preparing the dancers to perform their routines and required skills with minimum risk of injury. Therefore, those who do not fully participate in conditioning due to illness or physical limitations may not be eligible to compete at the discretion of the Coach.

Be Prepared: The following items must be kept in each dancer's bag at all times:

Running shoes	Practice poms
Water bottle	Kneepads
Extra hair ties	Small notepad & pen
Wrist weights, 1.5-3 lbs. each	Half-sole shoes (Brand: Turning Pointe by Sophia Lucia)
Kinetic Bands: Leg Resistance Bands (Approved brands are "KBand" and "Myosource")	

Dance Instruction

- The Crusaderettes will attend a week-long dance intensive in the summer as well as weekly ballet/jazz technique classes throughout the season. The cost of these classes is included in your monthly CDT dues. These classes are mandatory and considered part of the Crusaderettes' regular practice schedule.
- There may be optional acro/technique classes offered during the summer for an additional fee.
- It is highly recommended that dancers supplement their dance training outside of practice whenever possible.
- Dancers will be evaluated throughout the season and given feedback on areas needing improvement.
- Dancers' skills will be tracked. They will receive ribbons of recognition when new skills are achieved.

Crusaderettes-in-Training (CIT)

- The CIT program is designed to enhance the skills of future CDT members who are identified as having strong potential, but not yet ready to perform fully as members of CDT.
- There are two tiers of CIT: Blue & White
- White CIT's will attend weekly technique classes with the Crusaderettes and are encouraged to participate on the Junior Pom Squad simultaneously.
- Blue CIT's will attend all spring practices, technique classes, choreography sessions and UDA Summer Camp with the Crusaderettes. Blue CIT's will have the opportunity to perform at school & community events with the Crusaderettes. Blue CIT's who demonstrate improvement on technique/tricks and show good discipline and work ethic may be "called-up" compete with the Crusaderettes at the discretion of the coach.
- Blue CIT's are encouraged to travel and dress out with the Crusaderettes at all performances and competitions regardless of whether or not they are dancing.
 - Experiencing the excitement and pressure of competitions as well as team-bonding opportunities is very important to the development of new dancers.
- If your child is interested in joining the Crusaderettes but is unable to fully to commit to the practice schedule due to other activities/commitments, the CIT program may be the best fit for them.

Parental Involvement

- Parents are an essential component of a successful team.
- It is essential that parents make every effort to encourage their child throughout the season and to make sure their child comes prepared and on time to practices, games, performances & competitions.
- Dance Team Parent Meetings will be held throughout the season to ensure that all parents are well informed of their roles and upcoming team events.
- Parents are responsible for coordinating monthly teambuilding activities and fundraising efforts to help offset the cost of participation.

Cost of Participation

- The base cost includes: UDA overnight camp & bus transportation, 3 practice outfits, stunt clinic, Gamecocks Spirit Day, Poms, Gameday uniform, Pom Dress, hip hop costume, competition fees, ballet/technique instruction, music editing and licensing fees, coach's travel, competition gift bags, and choreography.
- Startup fees for new members will also include: team jacket, backpack, garment bag, 2 additional gameday uniforms, hip hop jersey, bow & earrings.
- Not included in monthly dues: team sneakers, wrist/ankle weights, k-bands, half-sole jazz shoes, tights, makeup, teambuilding activities, Regionals travel, optional acro/technique classes.
- Nationals travel fees will be earned through fundraising OR paid out of pocket by January 1st
 - Additional cost for Nationals is approximately \$600 per dancer.
 - CDT members & parents will participate in several fundraising activities throughout the season to help offset the additional cost of Nationals.
- Crusaderettes Payment Schedule:
 - Returning CDT Member Cost: \$2,605
 - \$405 due April 1st
 - \$275/month due on the 1st of the month May-December
 - New CDT Members & CIT-Blue Cost: \$3,220
 - \$740 due April 1st
 - \$310/month due on the 1st of the month May-December
 - CIT-White Cost: \$300 (Due April 1st)

Upcoming Dates *Full Schedule will be shared via Google Calendar

- Optional Tryout Prep Clinics: March 4th & 11th, 3:00 – 4:30pm
 - Cost is \$10 for each or \$15 for both
- Crusaderettes Tryouts: March 16 - 18, 3:00 - 5:00 pm
- Practices will begin March 25th. Spring Practices will be every Wed, Thur & Fri 3:00 – 5:30pm
- Hip Hop Choreography:
 - March 27, 1:00 - 6:00pm
 - March 28, 8:00am – 12:00noon
 - March 29, 5:00pm – 8:00pm
- Uniform fitting: April 2nd, 3:00-4:00
 - Returning dancers must submit additional accessories order form at the fitting.
- Dodgeball Fundraiser: April 3rd, 5:00 - 9:00pm
 - This is a new fundraiser for CDT! All parents and dancers are expected to participate in making this event a success.
- Cooper River Bridge Run – April 4th, 8:00 am
 - CDT will be cheering on the runners at the corner of Coleman and McGrath Darby Blvd.
- Stunt Clinic: May 16th, 12:00 - 5:00pm @ Phillip Simmons High School
- Summer technique Intensive: Dates TBD
- UDA Overnight Camp: June 11-14 at Auburn University

Spirit Program Director/CDT Head Coach: Brittney Carimi, (901) 605-8747, bcarimi@coksm.org