



MISSION STATEMENT

As an extension of Saint Ignatius of Loyola parish, a Roman Catholic community, and the Saint Ignatius Athletic Association, the cheerleading program exists to supplement the Christian values being taught to eligible children of the parish. The St. Ignatius cheerleading program assists students of all ability levels in finding confidence, enjoyment, accomplishment, and an overall understanding of the sport of cheerleading. It focuses on being respectful and being a good teammate, as well as persevering in difficult times and appreciating the unique talents of each member of the squad. St. Ignatius Cheerleading emphasizes the principles of teamwork, fostering a sense of family and community, always referencing Catholic values and dedication to God. Through generously giving of our time and talents, we strive to make a quality experience for every cheerleader. We will provide participants with the opportunity to learn sportsmanship, build self-confidence and develop respect for themselves, their teammates, coaches, parents, and other squads. St. Ignatius Cheerleading is focused on developing confidence in our young cheerleaders, while showing spirit for St. Ignatius. We are a recreational team. No previous cheerleading or tumbling experience is required to participate.

PRINCIPLES

RESPECT – For God and mutual respect from parents, teachers, coaches, peers, teammates, opponents, and officials.

INTEGRITY – Strict adherence to the standards and values established by St. Ignatius, the Athletic Association, coaches and teachers is expected.

SPORTSMANSHIP – Coaches, parents and players will abide by the rules of the game and conduct themselves with humility and grace, win or lose.

DISCIPLINE – All practices and games will demand a work ethic, respect for teammates and opponents. We will demand a commitment to observe all rules and a conduct code of good sportsmanship.

CHRISTIANITY – We as volunteers are here for the student athletes. Our goals, decisions and action revolve around teaching good ethics and values.

COMMUNITY – We will instill in our players a sense of community by making them aware of the fact that their deeds and actions directly reflect upon themselves, their family and St. Ignatius.

1. COACHING

1.1 Coach Requirements

- All coaches, instructors, trainers, or volunteers must be SafeParish certified and up to date on trainings.
- Age Requirements:
 - Head coach must be 21 years of age or older
 - Assistant coach must be 19 years of age or older
- Required Standards:
 - *Virtues*: Lives the values of the Catholic faith whether a member of the Catholic Church or not
 - *Capabilities*: Has knowledge about coaching children in the sport of cheerleading
 - *Rapport*: Exhibits positive rapport with children and adults
 - *Maturity*: Exhibits appropriate maturity (composed, patient, self-disciplined, empathetic)
 - *Commitment*: Able to commit to necessary preparation, practices, and games

1.2 Selection of Coaches

Effort will be made annually to solicit and publicize need for coaches. Based upon response and program needs, coaches will be reviewed and selected by the coordinator(s). Coordinators will do their best to find the most qualified and competent coaches to provide the students the best possible experience.

While we appreciate the time commitment of a coach, there is no guarantee that a coach will be selected based on previous years' coaching. The criteria below will determine coach selection from year to year.

1.2.1 Head Coach and Assistant Coach Selection Criteria

The coordinator(s) will make the final decision regarding coaches based upon these criteria:

- Long term commitment to the program
- Preference to coaches who have a child participating at the respective level
- Knowledge of the sport fundamentals and rules
- Previous coaching experience and parental feedback from previous coaching experience
- Ability to communicate with children and parents
- Time availability and dependability
- Fairness to children and the program
- Completion of the required Archdiocesan training
- Adherence to the Athletic Association policies and ability to follow rules

2. SEASON, LEAGUE, AND TOURNAMENT PARTICIPATION

2.1 Season and League

- Cheer Camp: St. Ignatius Cheerleading Season begins with a half-day cheer camp, typically hosted the last Saturday of July. Date will be coordinated annually with the Parish and the football program.
- St. Ignatius Cheerleading will cheer for the football program affiliated with the St. Ignatius Athletic Association and their respective leagues. Season timing will follow the football league timing.

2.2 Tournaments or Competitions

- Competition Squads will participate in (at least) 1 Competition per year.
- Competition Fees will be collected upon annual participation registration for Cheerleading.
- Any additional competitions or appearances must be approved by the coordinator(s)

2.3 Additional Events

- Pep Rally: Typically the 3rd week of August, in coordination with the Parish, Athletic Association and the football program.
- Cheer Expo: Typically the 1st week of October, in coordination with competition dates.

3. DESCRIPTION OF TEAMS AND LEVELS

- All teams in the program will cheer for all Home Games for their respective teams.
- All Game Day halftime routine songs and Competition songs must be approved by the coordinator(s)
- The coaching staff per squad will have the decision-making power to determine cheering at any scrimmages, playoffs, tournament games, and away games.
- St. Ignatius Cheerleading does not conduct tryouts or evaluations. All skill levels are welcome.

3.1 Game Day Cheerleading

- Squads will be formed after registration for the program is closed.
- Squad alignment to football teams may depend on the number of football teams fielded by the football program and the number of cheer squads formed – contingent on registration numbers.
- Every attempt will be made for the squad to cheer for their corresponding grade level. For example:
 - Varsity Squad: will cheer for the 7th/8th Grade Varsity Football Team
 - Reserve Squad: will cheer for the 5th/6th Grade Reserve Football Team
 - 4th Grade: will cheer for the 4th Grade Football Team
 - 3rd Grade: will cheer for the 3rd Grade Football Team
 - Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd Grade: will cheer for the Bandit instructional football teams

3.2 Competition Cheerleading

- Competition is only available for Grades 1-8
- Competition cheerleaders are also required to sign up for Game Day cheerleading.
- Competition squads will be formed based upon:
 - Number of cheerleaders interested upon time of registration
 - Identification and commitment of coaches
- Competition Squad Requirements:
 - Competition level squads are an increased level of commitment.
 - Competition cheerleaders and their parents/guardians will be asked to sign a Competition Letter of Commitment. (page 6 of handbook)
 - Cheerleaders must make every attempt to attend all practices. Unexcused absences may result in removal from the squad.

4. PLAYER REGISTRATION AND SIGN UPS

4.1 Player Qualifications

- Any participant must be a registered member of St. Ignatius Parish enrolled in the school or PSR.
- Proper care and maintenance of all equipment and uniforms provided is required. Athletes that do not promptly return uniforms in good condition at the end of the season are not allowed to participate in future seasons until it is turned in.

4.2 Sign-Ups

- A sign-up deadline will be posted. No sign-ups will be accepted after that date unless approved by the cheerleading coordinator.
- Sign-ups will be posted in the Wildcat Wire, the Church bulletin and social media.
- All fees must be paid upon time of registration.
- Refunds will not be given once the season begins (Cheer Camp: see 2.1).

5. UNIFORMS, APPAREL AND EQUIPMENT

St. Ignatius cheerleading, while comprised of many squads, is one cohesive program. We strive for uniformity and consistency in appearance.

5.1 Uniforms

On Game Day all cheerleaders should wear:

- Shell top & Skirt (provided by program, to be returned end of season)
- Bow (provided by program)
- Shorts or cheer briefs under the skirt
- White socks
- White shoes
- In the event of cold weather, cheerleaders are permitted to wear navy/black leggings and a white long sleeve top or turtleneck.

Competition squads will be required to purchase additional uniform pieces, such as a mock turtleneck, white socks and cheer shoes that match the squad.

Special Occasions: Squads wishing to wear an alternate uniform for a special occasion (i.e. breast cancer pink out) must receive approval from the cheer coordinator(s).

5.2 Equipment

- Each cheerleader will be provided 1 set of pom poms that must be returned at the end of the season.
- Signs will be provided by the program and distributed amongst squads. Any purchase of signs must be through the cheer program and approved by coordinator(s).

5.3 Branded Apparel

- A Spirit Shop will be created by the cheer program and shared with all cheerleaders and the Athletic Association
- Proceeds from apparel sales will benefit the cheer program and funds will be allocated at the discretion of the coordinator(s)
- Additional requests for cheer branded items must be approved by the coordinator(s) and must align with the program mission and cohesion of squads.

6. PRACTICES AND SCHEDULING

- Squads will schedule 2 practices per week at the beginning of the season.
- Coaches may cancel practice or call extra practices at their discretion.
- In compliance with the Archdiocesan Charter on Catholic Youth Athletics, no scheduling of cheer activities, at facilities on or off-site, may take place on Sundays and Holy Days before 1:00 pm.
- For the safety of all cheerleaders:
 - NO chewing gum at practice
 - NO jewelry may be worn at practice
 - Safe and Secure Shoes MUST be worn at practice

7. Budget

7.1 Annual Budget

A budget will be created annually and modified based on the needs of the program as determined by the coordinator(s), and with approval of the Athletic Association. The intent is for the St. Ignatius cheer program to remain affordable for families with a low barrier to enter the program. Expenses will be allocated based on annual needs, and to advance the Mission and Principles of the program.

7.2 Fundraising

The Executive Committee has approved a family fee which will be paid yearly beginning with fall sports. The fee is per family not per athlete. If a member of the cheer program feels fundraising needs to take place he or she must have approval first by the coordinator(s) and then by the Executive Committee. All fundraising will go to the program, not an individual team.

8. CODE OF CONDUCT

Coach or Player misconduct is any behavior or actions contradicting the mission of St. Ignatius

- Inappropriate conduct will not be tolerated. This includes, but is not limited to, inappropriate Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, TikTok, etc. postings, use of discourteous acts or words or derogatory remarks
- Questioning, showing disgust or trying to influence official or coach's decision
- Using insulting language, gestures, baiting acts which engender ill will
- Making any contact with team members which is deemed unnecessary and which incites roughness
- Making any contact with non-team members while in uniform which is deemed unnecessary and inappropriate (kissing significant other, hand holding)
- Showing disrespect to team members and coaches during practices and games

9. COMMUNICATION

9.1 Communication Expectations

- Coaches, parents or volunteers who would like to contact the coordinator(s) should email sainticheer@yahoo.com.
- Coaches will communicate via SportsEngine, or any other site or app approved by the St. Ignatius Athletic Association
- All communication must be recorded and traceable.
- Only the Athletic Association, in partnership with cheer coordinators, will have the ability to add/remove members.
- All communication will follow the acceptable criteria under the Cincinnati Archdiocese.
- Pictures shared are limited to practices, pep rallies, games, cheerleading related functions only.

9.2 Communication You Should Expect From Your Coach

- Expectations the coach has for your child as well as all players on the squad
- Locations and times of all practices or games or additional functions
- Team requirements (special equipment, uniform changes, etc.)
- Procedure should your child be injured
- Discipline that impacts athlete's playing time or position

9.3 Communication Coaches Expect From Parents

- Concerns expressed directly to the coach
- Notification of any schedule conflicts well in advance
- Specific concerns in regard to a coach's philosophy and/or expectations

9.4 Appropriate Concerns to Discuss With Coaches

- The treatment of your child, mentally and physically
- Ways to help your child improve
- Concerns about your child's behavior

St. Ignatius Cheerleading
Competition Squad Letter of Commitment

As a parent/guardian, I, _____ understand that the Competition Squad my child is wishing to be a part of is a competitive team that has practices and performances from August through October.

I realize that my child's choice to participate requires a commitment to the team & coaches by both the cheerleader and parent.

I understand that my child's participation & attendance at each practice and game is in the best interest of the WHOLE TEAM.

I understand that St. Ignatius Cheerleading DOES NOT want to make my child choose one sport/activity over another at this young age, but agree that they will balance Competition Cheer equally with any other sport or activity they choose to participate in, keeping in mind that missing a practice in which they may fall behind in choreography will impact the entire team.

Competition Cheer requires all the cheerleaders to have specific jobs, specifically regarding spacing and stunting. Missing practice, even while excused, may cause them to fall behind or may slow progress for the squad.

I also understand that should my child quit Competition cheer I am responsible for any and all funds that St. Ignatius spent on their behalf up to that point.

I acknowledge that many of the budget expenses are spent at the beginning of the summer/season in order to be prepared for the full season. This includes, but is not limited to, uniforms, poms, shoes, etc. ordered but not yet received and any competition entry fees paid but not yet participated in.

Cheerleader Name

Cheerleader Signature

Parent Signature