

**2017-2018**  
**SPIRIT**  
**OF**  
**JUPITER**  
**COLOR GUARD**  
**MEMBER**  
**HANDBOOK**



## **WELCOME TO THE SPIRIT of JUPITER!**

For those who are new to our team – we are very excited to have you with us!

For our returning members – it’s great to have you back and we hope you are excited about what lies in store for a great year!

This year, the staff has set new standards and goals for the ensemble that will provide ALL members with the opportunity to grow both as a performer and as a young adult. With that comes a new set of higher expectations necessary in order to uphold and further these standards. It is important for EVERYONE to understand and be dedicated to the expectations and goals of the team. We will all have to make some sacrifices to take this program to where it needs to go, but we can assure you that we will all benefit from our experiences together!

SOJCG will work through three simple principles: RESPECT, QUALITY, and RESPONSIBILITY. These principles will serve as the foundation to what we are building as a team. Remember; you can’t build a house without a strong foundation, and you can’t build a team without understanding the basic foundation on which you are standing.

### **RESPECT**

a.) Respect yourself

- What do you need?
- What do you want?
- How do you choose to present yourself?

b.) Respect others

- Your teammates (ALL SOJ members)
- The Staff
- SOJ Leadership (Captains, Drum Majors, etc.)
- Parents
- Other teams
- People in general

c.) Respect your craft; strive to be GREAT at what you do.

- Be on time
- Don’t miss rehearsal
- Always have what you need when you need it (rehearsal backpack, water, dot book, etc.)

Expect respect in return - the best way to earn it is to **give** it. We are ONE TRIBE.

### **QUALITY**

Whatever we do, we MUST constantly strive to achieve the highest quality of:

- performance (both team and individual)
- rehearsal etiquette (being mentally engaged, not talking, asking questions, using individual time wisely, etc.)
- AUTHENTIC communication (no gossip, rumors, unkind words to others, etc.)
- Behavior (how we conduct ourselves in uniform, in public, etc.)

It’s very simple - ALWAYS give it your best shot! Anything worth doing is worth doing well!

## **RESPONSIBILITY**

It is absolutely critical that EVERYONE take ownership of each production and care for it. Keep track of your things. Keep track of your progress. Keep track of the TEAM.

- YOU are responsible.
- Don't expect others to get it done.
- Don't assume others will pick up your slack.
- Don't wait for someone to do it for you.
- Don't rely on others to carry your responsibilities.

**You will only get what you give;  
the more you invest,  
the more you will receive in return!!**

Detailed roles and job descriptions will be posted/assigned as needed. Anything NOT covered by those descriptions will be the responsibility of **anyone and everyone**.

**Take the initiative to make positive things happen for yourself and the team!!**

If we allow respect, quality, and responsibility to guide us in our decisions, we should find it easy to achieve both our individual and TEAM goals. In order to maintain a professional and unified path to success, we MUST maintain strong roots and an even stronger foundation. We must continually remind ourselves of the importance of respect, quality, and responsibility and how they apply to our daily activities – both in and out of rehearsal.

In addition to your SOJ responsibilities, it is important that your academic progress, family, and personal life also remain a priority. You will spend an amazing amount of time with your SOJ family and less time doing other things; however, proper time management will ensure that the amount of care you give to those other areas of your life remains at a high level.

As you would expect, being an SOJ member is not easy. You will be pushed to, and beyond your limits both physically and mentally. There will be days that are hard; however, you will find that, in the end, the hard days are worth the journey. We will laugh together, cry together, be frustrated together, fall together, and most definitely succeed together.

With everyone's contributions,

**WE WILL BE A GREAT TEAM!**

## SOJCG Policies and Procedures

### **CLASS:**

All SOJCG members **MUST** be enrolled in the first-period guard class for the school year. Any exceptions **MUST** be discussed with, and approved by Mr. Gekoskie **PRIOR** to the beginning of the school year. The class **IS** graded and will follow a specific curriculum with a separate syllabus and expectations. These will be given out during the first week of school.

### **ATTENDANCE/SCHEDULING:**

Our ensemble runs very much like a drum corps, which means **WE RUN ON TIME!!!** In order to achieve our goals as a team, every rehearsal, block, warm up, departure, etc... **must start on time.**

PLEASE be respectful and aware of this.

Your goal should be to never miss a rehearsal.

If you have an emergency situation that could potentially interfere with rehearsal, handle it. Then, contact Mr. Gekoskie, Sharon, or another guard staff member.

If you have a medical emergency, seek the help of the nearest staff member.

Any conflicts need to be brought to the attention of both Mr. Gekoskie AND Sharon, and the proper absence form must be completed prior to the day in question. **DO NOT**, under any circumstance, send word about absences or conflicts via other members.

Except in cases of extreme emergency, death in the family, religious holidays or illness, members will not be excused from rehearsals or performances. A written excuse from the parent or guardian is due within two days of the absence. (This also includes doctor's notes for illness.)

**Appointments, meetings, lack of rides, work, vacations, etc.**

**will not be valid excuses for missing a rehearsal or performance.**

The success of BOTH the fall and winter programs is dependent on the ability of each member to perform their individual choreography.

- If you are absent from a practice, no matter what the reason, it is **your responsibility** to learn all choreography and checkpoints that you missed.
- You must do this **BEFORE** practice, not **DURING** practice!
- Failure to abide by this simple rule may result in the revocation of your performance privileges (and your grade will be altered accordingly.)

The bottom line: **BE RESPONSIBLE AND HANDLE YOUR BUSINESS!**

## PRACTICE ATTIRE

For normal outdoor rehearsals:

- White SOJ/ONE TRIBE shirt or SOLID white t-shirt/tank top
- Black shorts or capri leggings (your lower body must be seen at all times)
- Black and white tennis shoes with socks (required)
- Some form of head cover (baseball cap, bandana, etc.)
- Gloves (weapons)
- Fanny pack
- Flip flops (this makes for easy transitions from space to space when we rehearse barefoot)
- Hair should be worn back and kept out of face at all times.

\*Winter guard rehearsals will require solid black dance attire (tank tops, shorts, capri leggings, etc.)

## EXTRA REHEARSAL ITEMS

- Water jug (GALLON-SIZED and blue, if possible)
- Sunscreen (bronzer does NOT count!!)
- Lip balm with at least SPF 30
- Dot book and coordinate sheets
- Pencil, pen, and highlighter
- Knee pads
- Personal equipment bag (These can be ordered individually if desired)
- Hand sanitizer/wipes
- Backpack
- Carabineer clips (to free up hands when moving between rehearsal spaces)
- Travel-sized sewing kit (for flag repairs)
- White and black electrical tape

## EQUIPMENT

You are **responsible** for maintaining and caring for your OWN equipment.

- Take your own to rehearsal.
- Spin your own at rehearsal.
- Put your own away after rehearsal.
  - Know where your equipment is at ALL times.

### **Flags:**

- Keep practice/show flags in your personal flag bag.
- Practice/show flags MUST have your name in Sharpie on the TOP crutch tip. Your name must also be covered in clear tape (provided by the staff) in order to keep it from rubbing off. This will end problems with people getting equipment with something wrong at the last moment.
- If your flag comes untaped, TAPE IT! Keep a roll of black and white tape in your backpack at ALL times!

## **Weapons:**

- Your weapons ALWAYS stay with you or in your personal flag bag.
- Always spin your OWN equipment (unless there are exchanges written into choreography)
- Rifles must have YOUR NAME in black Sharpie written on the butt pad and covered in clear tape.
- Sabres are engraved and assigned to members as necessary. Members must write their name in black Sharpie on the bottom of the blade nearest the hilt and cover it with clear tape.
- DO NOT allow any other people to “play around” with your weapons. The sabres are \$225 EACH and members will be held responsible for damages – even if incurred by other individuals.

ALL equipment is property of the SOJ program and members will be required to sign an equipment contract indicating as such. (Some members own their own rifles and sabres. These pieces of equipment are the responsibility of the individual and not SOJ. However, they must still be labeled in the same manner described above.)

## **MAINTENANCE AND REPAIRS**

Equipment maintenance is a priority. Take PRIDE in the quality in which you present yourself!

SOJ members ALWAYS look professional!

Your equipment and the **quality** in which it is kept is YOUR **responsibility!!**

Equipment should always be:

- Kept looking nice and in working order as deemed by staff and section leaders.
- Labeled clearly with your name as previously described.
- Placed in your personal flag bag when not in use.
- NEVER left in the sun or rain.

Equipment should NEVER, EVER be used for purposes other than spinning! Sitting on flags, using weapons or poles as door stoppers, using flags to wipe off sweat, blood, etc. is STRICTLY prohibited. Equipment is NOT cheap and improper use will result in consequences such as financial responsibility for damages, loss of use (which means loss of spot), or any other consequence deemed appropriate by the staff.

If your flag rips, you are responsible for getting it mended. You should keep a small sewing kit (such as a travel-sized kit) in your backpack at all times to handle repairs. ALL rips and tears should be brought to the attention of the staff so they can properly advise how to make the appropriate repair.

Make repairs as promptly as possible. Never wait until it's time for rehearsal to begin to repair your flag!!

Broken equipment should be turned in to the staff or section leaders as soon as possible. They will assist you in salvaging any usable parts and provide you with new.

If your equipment is lost or stolen as a result of irresponsible actions, you will be held responsible for the replacement cost of the equipment. (This is part of the equipment contract.)

**LOVE YOUR EQUIPMENT!** Yes; this may sound a bit dramatic, but in this activity, your equipment is your vehicle for expression. If you treat your craft with **respect**, you will get the most out of your experience!

## **JOB RESPONSIBILITIES**

Jobs will be assigned throughout the season to help make the ensemble function more efficiently. These responsibilities will be divided among and assigned to small groups or individuals. Completion of assigned jobs is **REQUIRED** and failure to do so will result in consequences from the staff.

Jobs may include but are not limited to:

- Long Ranger
- Guard Supplies Box
- Sound System
- Attendance
- Practice Field or Facility Clean-up
- Performance Equipment
- Equipment Truck and Bus Loading/Unloading
- Bathroom Cleaning
- Emptying Trash

**\*\*Maintaining CLEAN storage areas is a MUST!** The staff will assign cleaning teams to be responsible for cleaning storage areas weekly. Teams will be set for the entire year and rotate weekly. The staff will post duties for team members to complete. **\*\***

## **REHEARSAL EXPECTATIONS:**

Concepts for quality rehearsals:

- Work hard – even when you are tired
- Pay attention – no spinning or talking when staff is speaking
- Be mentally and actively engaged in the process – don't "zone out"
- Respond to staff – this is part of being actively engaged
- Participate with group
- Show respect to EVERYONE
- Be prepared – know what you need, when you need it, and where you need to be
- Watch and listen for DETAILS – details are the difference between "good" and "GREAT"
- Avoid frustration - BE PATIENT- frustration makes things more difficult
- Keep busy – work on your own – never miss an opportunity to get better
- Know your job and responsibilities
- Keep an open mind – don't be afraid to try new skills
- Leave the critiquing and comments to the STAFF – it is not your job to tell others how to improve
- Focus on YOUR JOB
- NEVER leave the field or rehearsal space without permission
- NO GUM
- Cell phones on SILENT
- No rings, dangling earrings/necklaces, or other obstructive jewelry
- Only work on CURRENT choreography and technique exercises
- Act responsibly and PROFESSIONALLY – set the example for the rest of the ensemble!



## **General Rules for Rehearsal:**

NO SITTING - unless you are told to do so.

Equipment bags, backpacks, and water jugs, etc. WILL be organized in “military bearing” at EVERY block.

We travel as a TEAM in TWOS. ALWAYS. Period. The end. (No man left behind – EVER.)

NO TALKING ON THE FIELD. That is reserved solely for section leaders, and **only** when deemed necessary by the staff. If the ensemble is not taking a rep, you should be at stand-by, listening to the box/field/drum majors for instructions, or spinning on your own.

Repeat the instructions for the upcoming rep EVERY TIME. This ensures that the ensemble knows the assignment and is remaining mentally engaged in the rehearsal.

Always be prepared! There are a lot of things that you will need to accomplish on your own time to be prepared for rehearsal. Get these things done **before** their deadlines, and you’ll feel ready and excited for rehearsal!

Please take time to warm up your muscles a bit before the scheduled start time. There is not always lengthy stretch time involved at the start of a class or rehearsal block. Take care of your body!!

WORK SMART!

- Don’t rely on others to think for you.
- Make things happen on your own; take the initiative and complete the task at hand.
- You don’t always need help; wait for the staff to explain and think through the process on your own.

REMEMBER - Rehearsals are not intended to be boring, painful, or miserable in any way. Rehearsing hard strengthens team relationships and prepares us for performance. You will never be great performers without great rehearsals. The staff is here to help the ensemble achieve at the highest level. Disrespect and talking back will not be tolerated in any way, shape, or form and will result in either individual or team consequences (we rise TOGETHER and fall TOGETHER).

## **OUTSIDE OF REHEARSAL**

BE SMART! We are all committed to this team. WE cannot afford to make any decisions that would jeopardize our participation on the team; i.e.. needless injuries, poor health, bad habits, disregard of SOJ policies and rules, etc. Most importantly, learn to use your time wisely!

Please realize you are always being watched. Young people are looking to you as a role model. Others will form their opinions of the entire organization based on YOUR behavior. Put your best foot forward - ESPECIALLY when wearing any SOJ attire.

Please keep what is happening with us as our business. Do not air laundry on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or any other social media outlets. This includes any videos posted on the SOJ Facebook page. These videos are meant for MEMBER EYES ONLY as another tool for improvement and learning.

## **HEALTH**

This is a physically demanding activity and you will definitely experience pain and discomfort at times.

USE YOUR BEST JUDGEMENT:

- If you need to sit down, sit down
- If you need ice, get ice
- If you need water, get water
- If you NEED anything – YOU need to let us know. We are not psychics or doctors; we won’t know there is anything wrong if you don’t say something.

You will need to learn to push beyond the pain and fatigue, but **never** to the point of damage or injury.

- We will work in the heat
- We will stretch and build our muscles
- We will do cardio-vascular conditioning
- We will dance and run and jump and spin and toss!
- Sore muscles, bruises, scrapes, and cuts are part of it. Learn to push yourself!

On the other hand... if you need to sit out, please do not continue to hurt yourself just to satisfy someone else. We only ask that you be HONEST with us - if you need to take it easy we will support your decision. It does neither the team nor yourself any good to aggravate an injury. However, we WILL know if you are faking, milking, or taking advantage of the need to sit out. Any member continually needing to sit out may be asked to see a physician and provide documentation of the issue and the plan for treatment.

If you have knee, ankle, wrist, or any other braces for past injuries, you are REQUIRED to wear them at all times! Waiting until you are in pain is too late; such braces are not meant to offer pain relief! Rather, they are meant to help support the injured joint in order to avoid further damage. The staff will have little to NO sympathy if you re-injure yourself due to failure to wear a needed brace!

Always try to give your body the rest it deserves; you only increase the risk of injury if you are too tired. Your body and mind need to operate at full capacity. There is a careful balance between working hard and working incorrectly, and many performers have achieved this balance in the past.

Remember the “24 Hour Rule:” there will be nights where those five counts of work might not fully click on the first time, but 24 hours later, after sleep, it makes total sense.

Be mindful of what you put into your body.

- Water ONLY at rehearsals
- Make an effort to cut back or cut OUT sodas, sugary drinks, energy drinks, etc. Water is your body’s best friend!
- Lay off the junk food – especially on rehearsal days.
- NEVER come to rehearsal on an empty stomach!
- Dairy and heat do NOT mix!

You are professionals. You are young adults. Make the appropriate choices to remain healthy!

### **LEADERSHIP**

- Leadership is NOT about control, power, or telling others what to do.
- Leadership IS about SERVICE to the ENSEMBLE at ALL times.
- Leadership requires a great sense of selflessness.
- Leadership is not always “glorious” or fun.

Section leaders are often chosen through staff observation over time.

- Who demonstrates a strong work ethic?
- Who demonstrates a willingness to help others?
- Who is willing to set the example through actions instead of words?
- Who makes an effort to SOLVE problems and not create them?
- Who demonstrates the ability to manage time and outside responsibilities WITHOUT interfering with SOJ responsibilities?
- Who demonstrates the desire to get better instead of being bitter?
- Who is most capable of being a cheerleader when times are frustrating?
- Who consistently shows respect to ALL SOJ members, regardless of differences?
- Have the candidates marched both fall AND winter seasons?

Section leaders are there to aid the process of helping the team be the best possible.

- You must listen to them on and off the field
- A VAST majority of the instructions coming from section leaders have been passed down from the staff. Failure to follow section leader instructions is essentially failure to follow staff instructions. Please take this into SERIOUS consideration if you feel the need to back talk or refuse to follow through with what you have been asked to do.

SENIORITY has NO bearing on leadership abilities.

- Being a senior does NOT guarantee one will be section leader.
- In the past, I have chosen sophomores/juniors over seniors because of their level of maturity, demonstrated ability, and willingness to SERVE the ensemble effectively.
- Section leader positions can be fluid from season to season.
- Section leaders can be replaced at ANY time if they are not following through with responsibilities. (This is an IMPORTANT life lesson; supervisors replace ineffective employees)

### **UNIFORM ETIQUETTE**

An ensemble's behavior while in uniform speaks VOLUMES about the organization and its members.

- NEVER walk around with your uniform unzipped, folded down, or half on/off.
- Absolutely NO eating in uniform.
- Drink water ONLY.
- Keep uniform properly stored in garment bag
- Take care to wash uniform regularly as designated by staff and follow the proper instructions.
- NEVER leave your uniform in a crumpled pile on the floor or in your show bag. Present yourself in a HIGH QUALITY fashion.
- ABSOLUTELY NO PDA WHILE IN UNIFORM!!!!

Uniforms are property of SOJ and MUST be returned in good condition at the end of each season.

- IMMEDIATELY notify staff of any rips, tears, holes, etc. so that they can advise the best method for repair.
- Please do NOT attempt to make uniform repairs without staff direction.

Make sure you have ALL pieces of your uniform at all times. Additionally, it is YOUR responsibility to load your uniform at the designated place and time for each show. Failure to do so can result in loss of performance privilege.

Please have solid black dance attire for warm-up at show sites. This means NO writing or color on shirts, shorts, or leggings. Tank tops or active-wear shirts are appropriate, as are shorts or capri leggings. Please do not wear baggy t-shirts or pants; it is important that we present ourselves in a high quality, professional manner. When possible, we will warm-up in all black (and show shoes) before changing into uniform. (Hair and show make-up will be completed prior to warm-up). This process allows for a more detailed warm-up process and is often cooler for the members. This also saves uniforms from unnecessary rips or tears that can occur in the warm-up process. This will vary from show to show depending on time and changing facility availability. In order to prepare, members will be notified of the warm-up process each week prior to the show day.

**A FINAL NOTE:**

This may seem like a LOT of information to digest; however, the procedures and expectations presented are an ESSENTIAL part of an ensemble's success! By understanding and dedicating themselves to the process, members are able to take MORE ownership in their performance experience, which results in a greater range of personal growth over the course of each season. Competing on the national stage in both fall and winter takes dedication, discipline, and an unbreakable desire to be the best performer possible, with the best TEAM possible. EVERY member is important. EVERY member has something to contribute. EVERY member is capable of achieving more than they ever thought possible!

Welcome to the next chapter! The ending is up to YOU!!

Sharon Ryles

Director,

SOJ Color Guard

#team561

#ONETRIBE

2017-2018

**SOJCG MEMBER AGREEMENT**

**Member Agreement**

I have read and understand the information presented in the SOJCG Handbook. By signing below, I agree to abide by the guidelines listed herein. By signing, I acknowledge that I am making a commitment, not only to myself, but also to the other members of the SOJ. I fully understand that my team will depend on me to attend all rehearsals and performances, be prepared for rehearsal, and meet all the other obligations outlined in the handbook. I understand that if I am unable to fulfill my responsibilities or act in a contrary manner to the standards and expectations set forth in the handbook, appropriate disciplinary action will be taken which may include my being removed from the team.

Printed Student Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

**Parent/Guardian Agreement**

I have read and understand the information presented in the SOJCG handbook. By signing below, I agree to support the guidelines listed herein. I acknowledge that if my SOJCG member does not follow these guidelines, s/he will be subject to appropriate disciplinary action, which may include being removed from the team. I am also aware of the financial commitment and

Printed Parent/Guardian Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return the signed, agreement to Sharon Ryles by July 19<sup>th</sup>, 2017.