

ST. SOPHIA DANCE GROUP

AGREEMENT AND SIGN-UP DIRECTIONS 2025 - 2026

- 1. Read this agreement WITH your child/ren.**
- 2. Then, complete the Google Form at the bottom to sign up your children for dance. All sign ups are electronic and are due by September 5th.**
- 3. If you were not a member of our Remind class last year, be sure to download the app and join our class. We will use this app to communicate with families and dancers again this year. If you were a member of the class last year, you are all set. Dancers with phones should also join our class. The class code to join Remind is dkd4khe.**
- 4. Dues must be paid separately.**

Members of our dance group are a vital part of the St. Sophia Community. They bring the face of our Greek culture to the community-at-large during their Festival performances. In the past, each of the dance events has proven to be opportunities to learn to work as a team toward a goal while having fun. Dancing instills a love of music, language and traditions in their Greek roots, as well as discipline in fine art, and friendships that last a lifetime.

This agreement has been signed by the directors and teachers acknowledging their commitment to follow the established criteria for the St. Sophia Dance Group (SSDG). Your electronic submission of the Google Form Sign Up shall acknowledge your commitment to also follow the established criteria.

MEMBERSHIP:

Membership in the SSDG is open to all children entering first grade through their senior year of high school. Each family must be a member of St. Sophia Church. Each dancer must be a member of Sunday School, Choir or Altar. See below for attendance criteria. **A fee of \$30 per child will be assessed for dance group expenses throughout the year.** All members joining the St. Sophia Dance Group will be placed in groups based on the criteria stated below.

ASSIGNED GROUPS:

Dancers will be assigned into a specific group based on the following criteria:

- First and foremost movement into groups will be based on the number of dancers who graduate from the senior group, thus creating the domino effect of openings to the rest of the groups. This past year we had only 5 graduates, so there will be some movement for the 2025-2026 year.
- Attendance at rehearsals is critical.
- Ability to learn the dances
- Experience in dancing
- Number of years in present group (varies between two to four years)
- Maintaining balance for each group
- Students advancing to 9th grade does not automatically mean dancers will be placed in the senior group. All the above bullets also have an impact on group placement.
- The assignment of partners within each group is not negotiable and is at the sole discretion of the teachers.
- We anticipate informing dancers of their assigned groups by the middle of September, once sign ups have been completed.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULES:

Participation in rehearsals is imperative for dancers to learn all the dances and dance with skill and in harmony as a group.

Sunday rehearsals will begin approximately 5 minutes after the liturgy ends. There is not a definite time as to when rehearsals begin on Sundays, as it depends on when the Divine Liturgy ends. If dancers are in attendance in Sunday School, Choir or Altar, they should always be on time for dance rehearsal. Dancers should report to their rehearsal 5 minutes after service ends; teachers cannot delay practice in order to search for students. The groups' teachers or director will notify dancers if practice is canceled through the Remind app (see below).

Rehearsal schedules for this season: We will begin on

September 27 for the Senior group and September 28 for the Junior, Sophomore & Freshmen groups:

Senior Group: Saturdays at 11:30 in the gym - rehearsals will last between 60-90 minutes

Junior Group: Sundays during coffee hour in the gym, after Divine Liturgy

Sophomore Group: Sundays during coffee hour in the preschool room, after Divine Liturgy

Freshmen Group: Sundays during coffee hour in the cultural room, after Divine Liturgy

Rehearsals will not take place on holidays or holiday weekends (i.e., Thanksgiving, Christmas, Holy Week and Easter). We follow the Sunday School schedule. If Sunday School is in session, dance is also taking place. If a group's practice is canceled, the teachers or director will notify dancers via the Remind App text message. Directions for this communication tool are listed below.

REMIND APP - COMMUNICATION:

This year we will be using the Remind App to send out weekly dance practice information. **If you are new to the dance group, please download the app and join our class with this code: dkd4khe. The name of our class is St. Sophia Dance 2025-2026.** If you were a member of our Remind class last year, you are all set and can disregard joining our class. We are using the same class on Remind as last year. We would encourage all dancers with cell phones to download the app and join our class as well.

Communication using this app will be used for weekly dance practice reminders, last minute cancellations, and any other information pertaining to the festival.

ATTENDANCE:

All dancers must be in attendance in either Sunday School, Choir or Altar in order to attend rehearsal each week. If a dancer is not in attendance in either Sunday School, Choir or Altar, they will not be allowed to attend rehearsal. Consistency in a dancer's attendance is also imperative to learn all the dances and dance with skill and in harmony as a group. Poor attendance results in the dancer not knowing a dance which further results in the dancer having to sit out that particular dance during the festival. **If a dancer drops out of the dance group for a year or more and decides to return to the group, they will be assigned to the same group from which they left so they can catch up and not take up a spot of someone who is eligible to move up or has been in attendance.** Extenuating circumstances will be decided on a case-by-case basis (such as injury, surgery, etc.).

COSTUMES:

Dance costumes are very expensive to buy and clean. Some costumes cost as much as \$600 each. Dancers will be fitted for a costume for the festival during the year. Fittings will be scheduled by group. If there is damage to a costume during the festival beyond repair, or if pieces are missing, the dancer is responsible for monetary compensation to the St. Sophia Dance Group for purchase of a new costume or pieces, as needed. At festival time, some items will need to be purchased by the dancer, i.e., stockings, socks, pants, shirts and shoes. Many dancers donate shoes to the group as feet outgrow shoes. So, if you would like to borrow shoes for festival weekend, please just ask. If we have your child's size, we are happy to loan them to you. There may be circumstances when girls are needed to dance as boys. We evaluate this as needed.

SENIOR GROUP ONLY - This year there may be only 3-4 boys in the Senior Group. Therefore, many girls will need to dance as boys. It will not always be the same girls dancing as boys, unless a girl prefers to do that. This will rotate year to year so that all girls will have to dance as boys at some point. We need to be fair to all dancers.

EXPECTATIONS:

Dancers must demonstrate their dance ability, musicality, showmanship, preparedness for rehearsal, personal discipline and motivation, a positive attitude and positive behavior during rehearsals and in the community.

Dancers must also demonstrate respect toward their teacher and group members. If a student demonstrates disrespectful, disruptive or rude behavior toward a teacher or group member, the parent will be asked to remove the student from practice. If the negative behavior persists, a conference with the director, teacher, parent, and student will take place.

If a dancer knows that he/she will not be dancing at any time during the festival due to proms, vacations, recitals, field trips, sports events or other commitments, etc., please advise the teacher as soon as possible so she makes necessary changes before the weekend of the festival.

All dancers are expected to meet these standards in order to make these dance years memorable for all.

CONTACT NUMBERS OF DIRECTORS AND TEACHERS:

Diane Cohen: (518) 729-8487
Panorea Misko: (518) 528-3665
Bessie Sokaris: (518) 330-9448
Nia Cohen: (518) 275-8595
Bella Sokaris: (518) 925-8178

Maria Pidgeon: (518) 461-9829
Mary Googas: (518) 222-3712
Maria Ziamandanis: (518) 312-0350
Alexia Kordas: (518) 925-2855

This group of volunteers collectively spend hundreds of hours and their talents from September through May to help our children learn this beautiful art so it will not be lost through the generations. Support and respect from all dancers, parents, teachers and directors are paramount in keeping the SSDG harmonious. As with all families there are times when there are disagreements. It is only through discussion and understanding of a situation that problems are resolved. We have to be examples for our children. Rumor, misinformation, insinuation, anger, and even hatred are not what we want to teach our children. We want to be positive role models. We, the directors and teachers, pledge to support this program to the best of our abilities.

Please click on the link below (Sign Up Form) for the electronic Google Form sign up. Mail in your payment of dues to church (Attention Dance Group) or hand it to a dance group instructor or director. Dues are \$30 per child. Cash is preferred. Checks can be payable to St. Sophia.

Thank you and we are all looking forward to another great year!

Diane Cohen, Maria Pidgeon, Mary Googas, Maria Ziamandanis, Bessie Sokaris, Nia Cohen, Alexia Kordas, Panorea Miszko, and Bella Sokaris

[Revised Sign Up Form 2025-2026](#) - St. Sophia Dance Group - **Sign ups are due by September 5th. Dues are due by October 1.**