



# Patuxent High School Marching Band

## Parent's handbook

This handbook is written for parents  
by parents

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## **Stuff I wish I had known...**

Overall when the season has ended and parents reflect back, they cannot believe how wonderful it was. In the beginning, worries about marching in the heat and long hours of practice give way to admiration for how the random movements come together and these students create a professional show.

Performing the show is also accompanied by a new sense of responsibility in our students. Homework gets done and grades are kept up, in part because of a new found ability learned on the marching band field.

By the end of the season we are watching polished performances. Each band member shows dedication and pride in the work done. Marching band becomes more than an extracurricular activity; it is a way of life. When the season ends no one can believe how fast it went.

Here are some quotes from parents of band members:

*“It may seem overwhelming and a lot of work but it’s fun and a great way for the freshman to meet other students”*

*“The band family is very supportive and comes together to help the students and program. No matter your contribution, every bit helps.”*

*“Becoming a member of the band booster board my relationship with my daughter has been strengthened. Not only am I sharing in my daughter’s experiences, but by being involved I know her peers and have a better understanding of her life which helps to open lines of communication between us.”*

*“I wish all parents knew that there is really no excuse not to encourage their children to participate in marching band. If it's transportation, someone will get them there. If it's financial, Mr. Ritenour will work that out. If it's grades, it's a proven phenomenon that the kids actually do better while they're deep into the marching band schedule. I wish there were some way to make people understand the impact that marching band will have on their children. “*

*“The day we performed at a huge professional football stadium I was nervous. But I looked around at the kids and not one of them was. I could not believe the confidence and focus of the group as they prepared to perform. I was blown away by how mature they were and how well they did that day. And I thought marching band was just a fun activity. I never guessed it would be so meaningful”*

## **Communication**

A program like the PHS Marching Band relies on effective communication. Here are some communication options:

**Calendar** – <https://www.google.com/patuxentband>

**Facebook** – **Patuxent High School Marching Band** (a closed group)

**Website** – <http://patuxentband.com>

- The band website has tons of important information regarding the marching band (and other ensembles at PHS), band boosters, and much more!

**Twitter** - [@patuxentband](#)

The best kept secret for communication is to show up for marching band rehearsal ten minutes early. You get to watch the band practice and on the sidelines meet all the parents who are also waiting. This is where the best communication occurs. People meet one another and share what needs are upcoming tidbits of competition news, and camaraderie. Don't think any question is too silly to ask. Band parents are happy to share what they know. This is also a great place to meet carpool parents. We all share in finding rides and love to help out.

## **Schedules**

The band maintains a Google calendar <https://www.google.com/patuxentband> [This is the best way to learn about what is coming up](#)

You do not need to have a Gmail account to use Google calendars.

All of the dates for rehearsals and performances for the PHS band are listed on the band website; [www.patuxentband.com](http://www.patuxentband.com)

Itineraries for the upcoming weekend are handed out at marching band practice Thursday nights.

It is very important for students to arrive for practice EARLY. All students have “dot jobs” such as helping to set up the field or filling water jugs. Many students need to get instruments and assemble them. If marching band practice starts at 5:00pm this means the students must have “toes on the line” lined up and ready to play by 5:00pm.

### Fees and Fundraising

You will read in the band manual that there are fees to participate. These fees help pay expenses associated with band. Sponsorship letters and account fundraising are both way to reduce the out of pocket expense. **NO STUDENT WILL BE TURNED AWAY FOR FINANCIAL REASONS!** If you have trouble paying band dues, please see Mr. Ritenour to make other arrangements.

Fundraisers are also a part of meeting band expenses. Parents will be asked to help with fundraising.

<b>Fees pay for:</b>	<b>Fundraising pays for:</b>
Tour T shirt	Travel- bus fees and trailer towing
Gloves	Equipment that breaks- drum heads, drum sticks, school owned instruments (the big sousaphones for example) and more
Instructors who work all band season- Assistant band director, woodwind instructor, pit instructor, brass instructor, Color guard instructor, Drum line instructor- all staff work band camp and accompany the band to all competitions.	Golf cart maintenance and repair
Custom written drill and instruction time at marching band camp	Everything in the medical bag that goes with the marching band. All medicines are refreshed in the off season.
Paper music and arrangements- a big cost!	Fabric for Color guard uniforms
Travel costs- the biggest cost!	The occasional food purchase (most snacks are donated) such as pizza for a special event
Fabric for Color guard flags	

It is important to note that other than money for concession stand there are no other “hidden” fees in marching band. Parents engage all year long in fundraising to make this possible. You can choose to send a lunch and not send money as well.

There are bus snacks too so if you worry they might be hungry-don't be!

**Marching Band Volunteer Opportunities**

**Volunteers make the marching band.** Coordinating all the moving pieces is a huge undertaking. Volunteers are welcomed in any shape of form. If you want to attend every event the help is welcomed.

If you refer a computer based job you can do from home there are job for that too.

ALL volunteer parents need to go to the online Calvert County Public Schools Volunteer Application and fill out the online application and submit electronically.

<http://www.calvertnet.k12.md.us/departments/instruction/volunteer/welcome.asp>

<b>Volunteer jobs if you will be with the band</b>	<b>Volunteer jobs if you prefer to volunteer virtually</b>
Chaperone- one event or all of them- fun times, singing and silly games riding the bus!	Band Booster member- easy to do from home with only one meeting a month to attend
Band camp volunteer- summer only commitment- sunscreen and Gatorade patrol	Historian- organizing photos, and more
Pit crew- more than a group of people to push instruments around- the pit crew is a tight knit group of fun-loving volunteers	Sewing- join the crew at summer band camp or sew from home
Water- makes sure water bottles are filled and handed out to band members during competition- you get to follow the band anywhere they go!	Donations- band camp needs Gatorade powder and sunscreen, competitions need hot hands, bakes sales need baked goods, snacks for bus trips are always welcomed
March in parades, alongside the band, for security	Mulch sale phone a thons need assistance
Sign up for jobs at band practice in a large poster in the band hall or contact the band booster president for guidance	Let the band boosters president know you prefer to work from home and want that type of volunteer job

Band Boosters volunteer positions:

President - The President presides at meetings and events of the Band Boosters, facilitates the formation of committees and is an ex-officio member of all committees and activities. The President will work directly with the Band Director to facilitate communication to the general membership regarding all band related activities. The president will also serve as the head of the Executive Committee.

Vice President - The Vice President assumes all the duties of the President in their absence.

Secretary - The Secretary shall keep the records and minutes of all meetings. Minutes of the meeting are to be submitted to the Executive Committee within two weeks of every meeting. The Secretary shall

also maintain a current copy of the by-laws and an updated membership list.

Treasurer - The Treasurer is responsible for tracking the income and expenditures of the band boosters. In addition, the Treasurer will coordinate with the PHS fiscal officer to ensure accuracy of all financial records. The treasurer will deposit funds within the guidelines of PHS and the Calvert County Board of Education. The Treasurer will provide a treasurer's report (accounting of all funds received and paid for by the band program) at each meeting of the Band Boosters.

Historian – Responsible for recording the history of the PHS Band and Band boosters. The historian will take photos at band events and fundraisers, and maintain a scrapbook consisting of photographs, news articles, programs, and other items tracking the activity of the PHS Bands. In addition, the historian will notify local news outlets (newspapers, community websites, etc.) of upcoming events.

### **Marching Band Uniform Committee Volunteers**

Uniform Fitting Day occurs at the school on a during summer rehearsals and Band Camp, It typically involves fitting Marching Band uniforms to students .At least 5 volunteers are needed on these days to sign in band students, to help fit students to the Marching Band uniform pieces.

About 1 or 2 volunteers are needed to assist the Uniform Committee Chair in assigning ID numbers to each uniform piece in order to link an entire uniform to a student. This is done one time per year.

### **Band Camp Volunteers**

Band camp is a critical time during which the Marching Band spends each day at the school to begin their quest for success as a cohesive team! At band camp, marching fundamentals are learned and refined, music and drill is learned, and students are prepared physically and mentally for the upcoming season. Each day, from 2 to 4 chaperones are needed to observe outdoor rehearsals and to help meet the needs of students. They tend to any emergency student needs that may arise. Generally, at least one chaperone is needed who is trained in emergency medical care. Chaperones may attend all or a portion of practice on a given day (i.e., morning or afternoon shifts), and you can select times and days to chaperone to fit your schedule. Bring your lawn chair and cell phone!

**Band Camp Water, Gatorade and Ice Volunteer.** To help students cool off during their midmorning Break. Select the day(s) on which you can volunteer (only one day is typically necessary). Band members are assigned to fill the water coolers. Parents are responsible for monitoring and encouraging students to drink water or to sit out if they are too hot. Ice packs can be applied to the backs of necks if students begin to overheat.

### **Marching Band Chaperones**

An adequate number of adult chaperones are needed at each Marching Band performance and activity that requires adult supervision of students, in order to provide an appropriate level of supervision and to help ensure safety. In general, at each performance event, one chaperone is needed for every ten students. Additional chaperones may be needed for away performances.

At football games, chaperones distribute water bottles to students and ensure that students clean up the bleacher area upon departing. They also monitor instruments and equipment in the stands while students are away (third quarter). Chaperones are not charged admission to the football games in which they work. But will need to have a badge provided by the band.

At each performance where the students wear their formal uniforms, the chaperones help with inserting plumes in uniform hats prior to the performance and then collect the plumes following the performance, returning them to the plume box. (Chaperones may also need to help with pinning hair up and out of sight under uniform hats.)

All assigned chaperones must stay with the band at all times. Chaperones tend to emergency student needs when necessary. Chaperones may also need to escort students to restrooms. Chaperones report any behavioral issues to a director or band staff member who is responsible for maintaining discipline.

For performances that are not at the school (e.g., away football games, contests), chaperones have additional duties related to overseeing students through the transport to and from the performance venue.

Chaperones are assigned to buses where they take attendance (prior to each departure to and from performance), using a student list provided by the Chaperone Chair. Chaperones must ride on their assigned bus to and from the performance, where they help to maintain order and ensure that all equipment and trash are off the bus at the end of the trip. Volunteers may use their own vehicles to drive to competitions but chaperones must ride the bus.

As a chaperone volunteer, you can request to help with events that fit your personal schedule.

### **Pit Crew Volunteers**

The Pit Crew supports the Marching Band at each performance in loading, unloading, and moving instruments and other equipment (e.g., drum major podium, percussion equipment) from one place to another and in helping to set up and remove front ensemble equipment from the field at performance time. Thus, the Pit Crew travels with the band at each performance. They assist the Band Directors by ensuring that setup and transport of equipment moves smoothly and timely at each performance.

Approximately 4 Pit Crew volunteers are needed at home games, where equipment is brought out from the band trailer and on to the field. Approximately 6 volunteers are needed at away games and contests, when it is also necessary to load, secure, and unload instruments and equipment from the band trailer to and from each performance venue. Some lifting of equipment is necessary but is not required for all Pit Crew volunteers. The golf cart will transport heavy equipment on a small trailer.



**Color Guard volunteers.**

Guard supports will help color guard with preparing equipment and flags. They will also help organize make-up hair for the color guard.

**Marching Band Historian.** The Photographers attend performances and selected practices of the Marching Band through the season, taking group and candid photos and videos for use in the end of band awards ceremony.

## **Glossary of terms**

Band camp – a week of intense daily Marching Band practice. SEND WATER BOTTLES with your students, and try to get them to slather on the sun screen. Breaks are provided as well as team building games.

Band Geek- Any member of the band. Student who lives and breathes all things band.

Band Parent- Any band geeks parent. Who takes on too many tasks and can't get enough of being with other band geek parents. Will be asked by band geeks to stop embarrassing them.

Boys' bus – bus assigned as the boys' "changing" area for Marching Band trips. Boys only- travel on this bus.

Chaperones – the wonderful parents who are willing to ride on a school bus all day with high school kids; a lot of fun – a good way to meet other parents, be indirectly involved in your kid's life, and watch the work, determination and heart of the Marching Band.

Drill – the steps and positions that make up the Marching Band show.

Dot book – the notebook or cards that holds each individual student's drill for the Marching Band show.

Drum major – Student conductor who directs the marching band as it plays.

Drumline – the entire percussion section of the Marching Band; includes both the Pit and the Battery.

Flags – flags used by the Guard during a Marching Band show.

Gauntlets – wrist and lower-arm covering; part of Marching Band uniform.

Girls' bus – bus assigned as the girls' "changing" area for Marching Band trips. Girls only-ride this bus.

Guard – a group of students who add color and style to marching-band performances with flags and other props.

Instructor – personnel hired to help out with various sections of the band.

Pit crew – parents and volunteers who help assemble the pit instruments, push them onto the field and set them up for competition, A.K.A. "Pit Parents."

Pit – Marching Band percussion section that does not march (plays on the sidelines), comprised of instruments such as tympani, xylophones, gongs, etc.

Poker chip- needed for marching band camp. Marks the location to begin drills on the field.

Plumes – the feathered portion of the Marching Band hats (very fragile); provided by band.

Run-through – practicing the Marching Band show.

Section leader – band student who is in charge of a Marching Band instrument section; such as “alto sax section leader.”

Shako – Marching Band hat.

Student account – financial account that holds funds designated for the student; source of funds can be from fundraising, parent/student payments, or scholarships.

Tower – raised platform upon which band director stands during practice. Also affectionately known as the tower of terror.

Trailer – the back half of a semi-trailer truck; holds Marching Band uniforms and large instruments.

US Bands- Founded in the fall of 1988, a competitive circuit for scholastic band programs

nationwide

<http://yea.org/programs/usbands>

## **Frequently asked questions:**

Band camp- ask early if you might need help with transportation to band camp. Parents are quick to share the responsibilities of carpooling as many people have work and other responsibilities. Not being able to get to camp is no reason to worry. Many parents ask about the heat. The band is encouraged to work hard to learn the drill but never allowed to overheat. Chaperones monitor students carefully for signs they need water or a break. Camp time is split between outdoor and indoor rehearsal. Games and team building are as much a part of camp as marching practice. Students pack a lunch but snacks are also available.

Football games- typically every Friday night and probably the most fun part of band. This is a great opportunity to practice the show before an audience, show your peers what you can do and support the school. Students march from the school over to the football field The band will march on and play the national anthem as well as the fight song. At half time they will perform. In the third quarter the band has an opportunity to visit the concession stand and have a break. During the game the band will play pep songs to root on the football team.

Competitions- each Thursday at the end of band practice an itinerary is handed out for the weekend's events. Times to show up, how long we will be gone will be shared. Students are encouraged to pack a bag for the bus with a lunch, a drink and maybe even a bus pillow or book to read. Students may bring money for the concession stand at the competition as well. Phones and such will be secured on the bus during competitions. Band members are always chaperoned at the competitions. Band members will not wander around venues. After the competition the band will stay and watch other bands to learn more about the sport.

Uniforms/Equipment- Uniforms will be assigned to band members Students are responsible for their garment bag although it will stay at the high school. There is a formal uniform and a warm-up suit. Mr. Ritenour will let band members know which one they are wearing when. Words about the cold...marching band uniforms are not insulated. Most of the competition and football season will be chilly. Investing in a good pair of long johns is a great idea. Band members must wear black socks but can wear warm socks underneath. Think about this when ordering shoes. Chaperones carry blankets and hand warmers to each venue and share them with the band.

Fundraising- it is necessary to keep the band in business. Some are as easy as eating at Roy Rogers, others like the mulch sale are a full band event. Please try to find one you like as we need all the help we can get.

Time commitment- while it might seem from the written schedule that the time commitment is too intense I promise you it is worth it. This group of students will bond with each other, work hard toward a goal, and be so proud of their accomplishments. Take the time to rearrange dinner, buy granolas bars, and don't worry. While marching band seems like it lasts a lifetime some days; it really is only a few months long. Once it is over you will miss it. I promise!

A quote from the parent of a Senior...

*"I did not know in the beginning just how good marching band would be for my son's overall school experience. I knew it would be good, but it's been beyond good for him. It's been a primary reason why he's become a positive, trouble-free and well-rounded young man as he graduates. I cannot thank enough the band and all the parents who were able to volunteer to help this be as good as it has been for him."*

