

Rookie Parent Guide

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Welcome

It is great to have new parents and students become involved with the James Madison Marching Band. Involvement with the Marching Band is hard work at times (for everyone) but leads to fun and excitement for the entire family. It is natural for rookie parents and students to have lots of questions. This booklet is an effort to answer some of your questions and get you off to a terrific start. After you have read through this information, if you still have questions be sure to ask someone who has been involved with the band for some time, or better yet, ask one of the current Booster Officers or Committee Chairs. You can find information on the current leadership committee at the Marching Band website, <http://www.madisonbandboosters.org> ([return to top](#))

WHY CONSIDER MARCHING BAND FOR YOUR CHILD?

Students in band are accepted into high school peer groups more quickly than students that do not participate in outside school activities. Students are exposed to and become friends with upper classmen who are able to help them cope with the high school environment. Marching band provides the opportunity and the encouragement to develop close relationships with other students who have similar values and interests. Marching band students learn many skills in addition to musical skills such as dedication, hard work, perseverance, responsibility, working as a team, acceptance of others, how to compete in a healthy friendly way, and leadership skills. Marching band also provides the opportunity for much needed exercise (the band is even known to run laps around the field at times, as conditioning, when learning to march a show). ([return to top](#))

WHAT IS THE MADISON BAND BOOSTERS?

The Madison Maverick Band Boosters is an organization of adults interested in supporting the band and color guard programs at James Madison High School. The focus of the boosters is the support of the music staff/students and to raise money to get the “extras” that the music programs and staff need to have superior music education in our schools. ([return to top](#))

WHO IS PART OF THE BAND BOOSTER ORGANIZATION?

Each family who has a child in the Madison High School Marching Band is considered a member of the Band Boosters. No membership fees are charged. ([return to top](#))

WHY SHOULD I, AS A PARENT, NEED TO BE INVOLVED WITH THE BAND BOOSTERS?

A quality band program, like we have at Madison requires a lot of support, both with money and time. There are numerous costs in producing an outstanding music and marching program above and beyond what is collected by the school in student fees. The band boosters work to defray these costs and reduce the fees that each family needs to pay towards their child’s music education. Many things are provided for the kids such as props for the shows, chaperones, transportation etc. and it takes adults to coordinate and provide these necessities. The band boosters provide emotional support and encouragement to each and every student to obtain their highest level of success. Just as the marching band is only as successful as its weakest members, the Band Boosters are only as successful as their weakest members. ([return to top](#))

HOW CAN I BECOME INVOLVED WITH THE BOOSTERS?

Parents are encouraged to sign up to help on committees such as Concessions, Uniforms, Chaperones, Communications, Hospitality, Fundraising, to name a few. There are so many ways to be involved. Eventually you may want to become more of a leader of the booster organization by running for one of the officer positions or becoming a committee chairperson. Madison Band Boosters meet on the third Tuesday of the month at 7:00 p.m. in the band hall. ([return to top](#))

Parent Concerns:

WHAT IS IT GOING TO COST ME FOR MY CHILD TO MARCH WITH THE BAND?

Fees - The fees assessed to the students in Madison Band are on the average if not below that of other schools in the area.

- Student Program Enrichment fee (SPEF) \$150 is required by all students in marching band and color guard. To make this easier on you this fee can be divided into 2 payments paid to Madison Band at specified times. Your child can raise all or some of the money through fundraisers.
- Uniform Fee \$25 (to aid in the cost of cleaning, repairs and upkeep of our marching and concert uniforms)
- Water Fee - \$10 (we provide bottled water to each student at all chaperoned events.)
- Maintenance Fee - \$30 (required by those students who use school owned instruments.)
- Marching Shoes - \$32 approximately, (each marching band student must wear the same style black marching shoes.)
- Gloves - \$2.50 all marching band students with the exception of percussion/pit must wear white gloves when performing in long sleeve uniform.

Optional costs – Parents will also find that there are optional costs involved with having a child in band. These costs include: admissions and travel to competitions and games (for the parents), patches and pins at competitions for the student's lettermen jacket, Spirit button with your child's photo, yard sign, "Show Shirt" with Band Mom or Band Dad on the back and other spirit items to show your support for your child and the band.

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HOW MUCH DO THE UNIFORMS COST?

(see also "WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE UNIFORMS" for further details about uniforms)

The band and guard uniforms are provided for the students to use by the school but each student is responsible to buy certain pieces of the uniforms. Generally these items are only purchased once unless the student loses them, out grows them, or damages them beyond use.

MARCHING BAND: Specific white cotton gloves and black marching shoes are required. These are ordered through the Band Boosters on uniform fitting day. Sometimes, it is possible to obtain these items from students who are graduating or who are no longer in band at a reduced cost.

The students are also responsible for supplying their own white v-neck short sleeve t-shirt, solid black over the calf socks black socks, lightweight shorts like bike or exercise shorts to wear under their uniforms.

CONCERT UNIFORMS: the boys are required to wear a white dress shirt, black socks and black dress shoes with the issued tuxes and the girls are to wear black hose and shoes with their concert dresses.

COLORGUARD member's uniforms are provided by the Band Boosters. Uniforms are ordered shortly after auditions in April so they will arrive in time for competitions. A \$150 refundable deposit is required for a uniform to be ordered. The Band Boosters organization does not bear the expense of the uniform if the member does not return in the fall. As long as the student returns and completes the fall semester, the deposit will be refunded in December.

The colorguard receives no funding from the state or district all, all aspects of the program are provided by the Band Boosters through SPEF and fundraising activities. Guard members purchase a few personal items: a monogrammed windsuit, performance shoes and black jazz pants, and a guard duffel bag. In addition foundation garments are needed, each member must purchase those. Guard members will be given information on the specific details by the guard staff on what needs to be purchased for their uniforms. ([return to top](#))

WHAT TYPE OF FUND RAISING DO I HAVE TO DO?

You don't have to do fundraising but it is highly encouraged. The money you and your child raise through fundraising will go into their account to be used for their band trips.

Below are some examples of fundraisers we have done in the past. You will be contacted by email and information will be posted on the website for various fundraisers as they become available for your student. ([return to top](#))

Entertainment Books – These books are filled with valuable coupons for use at many restaurants and business. Even out of town family and friends can participate in this fundraiser by purchasing books for their area on through a web address linked to Madison Band so your child can get credit for the sale. Students in the past have actually paid for their entire trip with the money raised from this sale.

Coca Cola Sales – sell cases of Coke products for family and friends to earn money for student's account.

Cookie Dough and Pies Sales – take orders for frozen cookie dough and pies. This is one of the best selling products we do. Everyone likes cookies!

Magazine sales – Selling subscriptions for popular magazines are another way to get out of town family and friends involved in fundraising. You can even renew your subscriptions to your favorite magazines. ([return to top](#))

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF A PARENT OF A MARCHING BAND STUDENT?

A parent of a marching band student requires flexibility – places, times of practice, etc. do change based on the needs of the band. Changes in schedules are kept to a minimum but they do occur and consequently, parents need to be flexible. Your child, as well as all students and staff, need your support. There will be times when your child or your child's friend becomes discouraged. Your encouragement to keep plugging along will help get them to the next competition. Even the experienced marchers occasionally need to be reminded of why they are investing so much effort. We also need your assistance on various committees and activities (we value your time and energy as much or more than your financial support). ([return to top](#))

HOW CAN I GET IN CONTACT WITH OTHER PARENTS IN THE BAND?

The Band Booster Officers contact information is on the website at <http://www.madisonbandboosters.org>. You can meet other parents at the end of practices and at the performances but one of the best ways to meet other parents and students is to volunteer. ([return to top](#))

WHAT KIND OF SUPERVISION DOES MY CHILD HAVE WHEN THEY ARE WITH THE BAND?

Boosters volunteer to chaperone all events with the band. Contact the head of the chaperone committee if you are interested in helping out with the chaperone duties at chaperones@madisonbandboosters.org. It is a great way to meet the kids and it is not necessary or encouraged to chaperone the same group as your child. ([return to top](#))

SHOULD I CONTINUE PRIVATE LESSONS OR ADD PRIVATE LESSONS FOR MY CHILD?

This is an individual choice. Lessons never hurt and can only help anyone improve. Some families find that a more flexible lesson schedule or no lessons during marching season is desirable. Other families do not take lessons at all. If your child is serious about continuing with music, private lessons are encouraged. ([return to top](#))

WHEN WILL I GET TO SEE WHAT MY CHILD IS DOING WITH BAND?

In general, the marching band will perform their show at each Friday football game. The first chance to see the band as a whole is prior to the potluck dinner before football season starts. The band also performs at various competitions. On homecoming the band will not perform at the entire show at half-time but will following the football game for alumni and others who wish to remain for their performance. Parents are able to watch practices but are asked, however, to not disturb students and staff during practices. It is remarkable to see the differences in the marching and music as the season progresses. The kids also appreciate the support of the parents who take a few minutes towards the end of practice to see what they are doing. ([return to top](#))

AM I RESPONSIBLE FOR ALL TRANSPORTATION OF MY CHILD TO EVENTS AND PRACTICES?

Students travel to and from performances by bus. A schedule is emailed as well as posted on the board in the band hall with the times the students need to be at the school and the approximate time to be picked up. ([return to top](#))

I AM GOING TO BE AT A BAND EVENT. DOES MY CHILD HAVE TO RIDE HOME WITH THE BAND?

Students are expected to ride to and from all events with the band. (Occasionally special exceptions are made by prior arrangement with the music staff.) Students may ride home from events with their parents IF a parental permission note is given to the band directors and the chaperones before leaving for the event. It is the responsibility of the parent to meet with the chaperones before taking the child. Do not take your child without the chaperones knowing. The buses will not leave the event until all students are accounted for. ([return to top](#))

DO I REALLY NEED TO FILL OUT THE CRIMINAL HISTORY CHECK?

If you plan on volunteering in an area where you come in contact with the students you must have a Criminal History Check and approval before you are eligible to volunteer. You can find the forms on the district website at <http://www.neisd.net/vol/forms.html> to print out and mail in or even better submit it on line for a quicker response. ([return to top](#))

I NEVER SEEM TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON WITH BAND. HOW CAN I FIND OUT THE INFORMATION I NEED?

There are a variety of ways used to communicate in the band and booster organization. Some of the ways you need to become accustomed to using are:

Booster web site (www.madisonbandboosters.org)

Email reminders

Booster meetings (generally the 3rd Tuesday of the month)

Weekly itineraries are posted on board in band hall (ask your child what it says early each week)

Band officers (see contact page)

Other parents ([return to top](#))

Student Information/Concerns:

DOES BAND AND GUARD SATISFY PHYSICAL EDUCATION OR FINE ARTS REQUIREMENTS?

Yes. Being in Marching band or Color guard requires physical stamina and exertions. It is considered both a performing art and a sport. It is a competitive activity that satisfies the Fine Arts and Physical Education required credits for graduation. ([return to top](#))

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE STUDENTS IN MARCHING BAND?

Freshmen are expected to attend a week long camp in early June to get them familiar with basic marching and get music so they have time to work on it before regular band camp starts. Students are expected to attend a two week-long band camp before school starts to begin learning the drill and music and get ready for the first performance. Students are also expected to attend practices though occasional excused absences may be made for rehearsals. Memorization of music prior to band camp is highly encouraged and is expected as the season progresses and the music is modified to fit the program. Students are also expected to want to be at practices and strive to do their best at each practice and competition. Students are graded for attendance at all practices and performances. As with all extra curricular activities students must be passing their classes to participate in performances. Even if a student is not eligible to perform they must still attend all practices. ([return to top](#))

HOW MUCH TIME IS SPENT PRACTICING?

Freshman camp – is a one week camp

Camp – is the last 2 weeks of summer break .

After/Before school practices - Band and Color guard members are to attend daily throughout the marching season 4:30pm-6:30pm except on performance days in which practice is 7a-8:15am. ([return to top](#))

HOW EASY WILL IT BE TO GET TO KNOW OTHER BAND MEMBERS?

The students get to know each other very easily. Being in band they automatically have a common interest with their fellow students. The students (and parents) try to be friendly and are willing to help each other out with transportation etc. The band ends up becoming a big family. ([return to top](#))

WHAT KIND OF PHYSICAL CONDITIONING DO I NEED TO MARCH IN BAND?

Marching is a difficult and physically strenuous activity. BUT it is possible for ALL students who are willing to make the effort to be a part of marching band. It is recommended that the student begin to do some exercise prior to band camp. At camp and during practices students learn to do stretches and at times run or jog to increase their physical endurance in preparation for the requirements of the show. ([return to top](#))

WHAT CAN YOU TELL ME ABOUT THE UNIFORMS?

Marching Band:

Fittings – Uniforms are fitted to the students each year. Uniform fittings begin with the seniors and continue through the freshmen. It is important that each student gets fitted each year for a uniform (sizes change for many kids). We have a uniform fitting day prior to the beginning of the school year, at the end of band camp. Schedules and times will be announced.

Uniform Parts – The marching uniform consists of a long sleeve and a short sleeve jacket, a pair of bib pants, a baldric, a pair of gauntlets, a shako (hat) and box, a plume, a pair of gloves, a pair of black marching shoes, and garment bag and 3 numbered hangers.

The students are also responsible for supplying their own white v-neck short sleeve t-shirt, solid black over the calf socks black socks, lightweight shorts like bike or exercise shorts to wear under their uniforms.

To be in uniform means to have on the proper undergarments not just the visible part of the uniform. Students often have to change in public areas and should plan undergarments accordingly! (hence the shorts and tee shirts). All uniform parts (except for personal items and shoes) are stored in the uniform room in the band hall.

How to wear uniforms – Students are taught proper care and respect of uniforms when they are fitted for a uniform. Uniform pants are hemmed straight across at the ankle with no break in the creases. Detailed hemming instructions will be sent home with the student and the uniform on uniform fitting day. Students **MUST** be responsible for returning ALL pieces of uniforms to the proper location between and after competitions and events.

Care and Cleaning – No food or drink is allowed while in uniform. No make up is allowed while in uniform. Uniforms must be hung neatly on the assigned hangers with creases properly aligned. Parent volunteers will check uniforms prior to hanging on rack to ensure proper care of the uniform. Students are responsible for laundering gloves and personal items (socks and items worn under the uniform). The uniform committee will be responsible for dry cleaning and maintaining the uniforms. If the uniform is soiled or damaged as a result of the student's carelessness the student is responsible for cleaning and repairs or replacement of the uniform.

Cost to replace uniform components – Any uniform that is lost or rendered unusable through negligence of any member shall be replaced by, and at the sole expense of, the student. Uniform components (particularly the marching uniform) are **EXPENSIVE**. The original cost of each complete uniform was approximately \$700. Cost at time of replacement may have increased. Shipping and handling cost will also be covered by the band member.

Concert Season:

GIRLS: Issued by the band: black formal dress. Personal: black hose and black dress shoes.

BOYS: Issued by the band: black tuxedo coat and pants, bow tie. Personal: white dress shirt, black shoes and socks.

Concert uniforms will be kept at home in the garment bag after uniform fitting day to be worn to the school immediately prior to concerts.

How to wear uniforms – Students should have uniform properly hemmed according to the directions sent home with the uniform on fitting day.

Remember the uniforms should in no way be permanently altered, i.e. no cutting excess material or tight machine stitching!!

All of our uniforms must last several years so great care must be taken with them.

Care and Cleaning – The uniform committee will be responsible for dry cleaning at the end of the school year. If additional cleaning is needed it is the responsibility of the student. Never leave the uniforms in car the heat and sun cause unnecessary wear on them.

Color Guard:

Fittings – Uniform fittings are done each year after auditions so the uniforms can be ordered and available early in the fall.

How to wear uniforms – Students are taught proper care and respect of uniforms and flags when they are given a uniform. Students **MUST** be responsible for returning ALL pieces of uniforms to the proper location between and after competitions and events.

Cleaning - Parents/students are responsible for laundering gloves, socks, and items worn under the uniform.

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Band Camp Information:

WHERE IS BAND CAMP HELD?

Band camp is held at Madison High School. [\(return to top\)](#)

WHAT SHOULD I BRING TO BAND CAMP?

Some type of thermos or water bottle is necessary.

Because most of band camp is held outside on the paved practice field be sure to always bring sunscreen, hat, shorts,

Light colored shirt, socks, tennis shoes (not sandals), water bottle, music, and instrument. [\(return to top\)](#)

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF THE STUDENTS AT CAMP?

Drink lots of water! It is easy to get dehydrated quickly when marching, bring your own water bottle. A limited amount of water is available if you forget, but it is best to have your own, so you don't run out or have to wait for the line.

Students are expected to learn to be on time at all activities.

Students are expected to learn to cooperate with each other and staff to enable the band to perform at the highest level possible. Students are encouraged to push themselves hard and strive for the extra little bit of effort at camp and in all practices and competitions. [\(return to top\)](#)

Competition Information

IS THERE ANYTHING SPECIAL I NEED TO KNOW ABOUT COMPETITIONS?

When attending a performance or competition be courteous of others. Spectators are asked by the judges to remain seated and out of aisles while bands are performing. Loud conversations are disruptive to those watching especially if you should be seated near the judging area.

At many competitions the souvenir stand sells patches commemorating the contest. These patches can be sewn on to your child's letter jacket when they receive it.

There are fees for the students to participate in solo and ensemble and district competitions. ([return to top](#))

CAN I TAKE PICTURES AT COMPETITIONS?

You can take pictures or video of the competitions but be aware of your surrounding. Do not block other spectators who are trying to enjoy the show as well. ([return to top](#))

Miscellaneous Information:

HOW DO I FIND OUT WHERE THE BAND IS PERFORMING?

Come to booster meetings, watch your child's itinerary, and watch the marching band website and check the football schedule.

If all else fails, check the board in the band hall. The directors write all the information there for the students. ([return to top](#))

WHERE CAN I GET ALL THOSE NEAT SOUVENIRS I SEE OTHERS HAVE?

The Band boosters sell many souvenirs. These include both band related (show theme memorabilia) and general school souvenirs such as shirts, hats, etc. Souvenirs are sold at the football games. You can also get souvenirs from the Booster member in charge of Spirit. ([return to top](#))

DOES THE BAND TAKE ANY TRIPS?

The band takes a trip every other school year. This gives the students longer time to raise money through fundraising to pay for their trip. The purpose of the trip is for the band to perform in a competition or a parade and have fun. ([return to top](#))

DO YOU HAVE ANY FINAL WORDS OF WISDOM FOR ROOKIE PARENTS?

Stay flexible and open to all possibilities.

Get involved!!!! The booster organization is filled with many wonderful and fun people and it is the only way to get input into your organization (after all the boosters are only the sum of its parts). When you get involved in the band boosters and start to get to know the students you will see how amazing our kids really are. You will be rewarded with hugs and unexpected thank yous and the satisfaction that you have made a difference in their lives just by showing an interest in them.

Don't be afraid to ask questions, we have all been there and understand how overwhelming it all can be especially if you are also coping with a child just starting high school. Booster parents love to give support to each other.

Stay positive for the sake of your child and the other students in the band. Marching band is a difficult

endeavor for many, if not all of the students. Students need parental encouragement to continue through the tough times. They (and you) will eventually be able to see the great rewards in marching band.

Attend at least some of the early competitions and watch other bands besides. It will give you an idea of what is being asked of your child and what the band is being compared to. If you have a younger child or know of one who is thinking about marching band for the future, encourage them to attend some competitions. Many people remember marching band from their high school days but a lot has changed with marching bands over the years. ([return to top](#))

Your child will bring home more information when school begins in the fall prior to uniform fitting day. If you have any questions before then please feel free to contact any Band Booster officer through our website: <http://www.madisonbandboosters.org>