

General Marching Questions

Q. Does my student have to be in marching band?

A. All students placed in Concert Band I and Symphonic Band must march. All other band students are encouraged to march.

Q. How do I try out for marching band?

A. You don't have to "try out" for marching band. You will need to audition for the band directors so that you can be placed according to your skill level.

Q. Who is required to go to camp in August? All band members, or just marching band members?

A. Those band students not marching do not need to attend band camp in August.

Q. Does my student need a physical to be part of Marching Band?

A. No, but they must have a band emergency care form filled out and notarized (before the first day of marching band).

Q. Does the medical authorization form need to be signed by a doctor?

A. No. It needs to be notarized by a Notary Public.

Q. Can my student carry medicines on their person?

A. No. The band must follow Fairfax County School policy in this matter. Students may not carry medicines, even OTC ones, on their person. The only exceptions are inhalers and epipens which may be carried with proper authorization.

Q. What is "Pre-camp"?

A. Pre-Camp refers generally to the first two weeks in August, which the marching band spends at Oakton. New marchers are taught how to march and returning marchers get a refresher course. Students begin to learn the new marching drill.

Q. What is Band Camp?

A. "Band Camp" refers to the week the band spends at Orkney Springs each mid-August.

Q. What is Post-Camp"?

A. As the name implies, this is the week after the band returns from Orkney. The marching band will usually practice daily at Oakton in preparation for the first performance of the season - usually the first home football game.

Q. What if I play an instrument that doesn't march?

A. In some cases, one instrument is substitute for another. For example, piccolo is substituted for flute and mellophone for French horn. In other cases, you may be asked to try a new instrument. Don't worry, if you want to march, an instrument will be found. Or you can join the color guard.

Q. What are "States"?

A. "States" is short for State Marching Festival. Bands compete against a "standard" rather than against each other. There are no 1st, 2nd, 3rd places. Each band receives an independent rating of Superior, Excellent, Good, etc. Receiving a "Superior" rating at the State Marching Festival is the first step toward receiving Virginia Honor Band status.

Q. What is the dress for marching band when they don't wear their uniforms?

A. This varies depending on any number of things - weather, what the band is going to be doing, etc. Sometimes they wear their "show shirts" (a T-shirt they will receive at Orkney) and sometimes they wear street clothes. The students will be informed of what they are to wear before each event.

Q. Are parents able to go to competitions and festivals?

A. Yes! Not only are parents allowed, they are encouraged to come and cheer for the band. The students love to hear cheers and applause from Oakton supporters.

Q. Why don't we know earlier the play times (schedule) for the festivals/band competitions?

A. In most cases the order of performances for competitions is not set until only a few days before the competition. As soon as the band directors know what Oakton's schedule will be, the parents are told.

Q. What about homework when school starts? Will they have time to work on it before practice?

A. All Freshman are required to be present for a mandatory homework period between the end of classes and the start of marching each day (approximately 2:30PM-3:30PM). Upper classman are encouraged to take

advantage of this time as well. Marching band season does require good time management skills - skills that will be useful for a lifetime.

Q. How does my student balance marching band and activities?

A. There is no denying that marching band requires a large commitment of time and energy. Practices last until 5:30PM four evenings a week and there are football games and/or competitions each week as well. With careful planning and efficient use of time, a student can manage marching band plus homework, athletics, Scouts, church, free time, etc. Keep in mind that marching season is only two months long.

Q. Does the band perform at football games? Do students stay for the whole game? When do they need to arrive?

A. The band performs at all home football games. Every other year the band also performs at an away game at Madison High School. If the football team advances to the playoffs, the band will travel with them to perform. Band students stay the entire game unless they have prior permission to leave early. The band usually arrives at school an hour before game time, however the exact time will be set by the band directors each week.

Q. Is there a pep band for away games?

The band no longer supplies a pep band for away games.

Q. Does the band play at basketball games?

A. No.

Q. Who do I need to notify if I need to drive my student home from an away game or leave early from a competition?

A. The student should notify the band directors before the day of the game or competition so that any necessary paperwork can be filled out.