

Marching Band - Rookie Parent Survival Guide *(Revised April 19, 2023)*

First of all—welcome to the Marching Band! Marching Band is comprised of several sections: Drum Majors (student conductors), brass & woodwinds (collectively “winds”), batterie (marching drums) & front ensemble/pit (collectively “percussion”), & colorguard (aka visual ensemble).

Communication: There are several ways to stay informed in all things Marching Band:

- **Website** - www.jeffersonforestband.org — Our website is an important source of information—you will find practice and performance schedules, band news, registration forms, and online payment options for marching fees, among many other significant pieces of information. The website is also where you will find important information about upcoming social events. Please visit us often.
- **Remind (or similar app)** — a phone app that allows us to send brief messages & updates to all participants. We used Remind in 2022-23—we are looking into some other options that may be more versatile—stay tuned.
- **Newsletter** - Much of the band news, including competition itineraries, is broadcast via email (JFBB newsletter). It is highly recommended you sign up for this. To sign up, click the link on the right side our website homepage and follow the instructions. Please note this is the only way to receive emails regarding marching band.
- **Facebook** — We have two Facebook groups — *Jefferson Forest Marching Cavaliers* and *JF Marching Band Parents*— both of these pages contain information about upcoming events and specific volunteer needs. We also post estimated arrival times on competition nights.
- **JF Band Booster Meetings** — Meetings are typically held at 7pm in the JF band room on the second Tuesday of every month. The success of our program depends largely on parent participation throughout the year, and these meetings provide insight into the opportunities available to help our band program. In addition, it is a great way to find out about upcoming events and performances for both marching and concert bands. (This year they've been via Zoom).

Band Uniform and Equipment: The marching band uniform is provided with the exception of shoes, gloves, and long black socks. In addition, students will be provided one themed marching band T-shirt, which is required for all performances and competitions. It is recommended that you purchase an additional T-shirt for your student, as events often occur on both Friday and Saturday on a given weekend.

- All brass, woodwinds, batterie percussionist, and colorguard members need to have a functional smartphone for all rehearsals. We use an app called UDBPro (Ultimate Drill Book) for charting our drill—a subscription for the season will be provided but each student will need to download and install the app. This can be done on an old phone with no cell service using WiFi for downloads.
- Shoes, gloves, and shoe bags are ordered during band camp. The costs have been around \$35 for shoes, \$3.50 per pair of gloves, and \$1 per shoe bag. Prices are subject to change. 2-3 pairs of competition gloves are recommended. Guard shoes are ordered separately by the instructor and usually cost a little more. There is also a shoe exchange program where students may exchange shoes in good condition for a different size. Availability is very limited and we are always ready to take shoe donations (i.e., from seniors).
- Early in the season students (other than colorguard) will be required to wear their band T-shirt and khaki shorts instead of the full uniform. Please have khaki shorts on hand. Colorguard will have a different “uniform” for early football games—TBD.
- Students playing mellophone (marching French horn), baritone, and sousaphone (marching tuba) will be provided with an instrument. They will, however, need 2 pairs of white practice gloves and a large towel (VERY large for sousaphones). The boosters these instruments and we want to keep them looking new for as long as possible. Students will wear these gloves whenever handling the instrument and will place the instrument on the towel when not in use. Students will be responsible for washing their gloves and towels regularly. White practice gloves can be purchased at Lynchburg Music Center. Gloves with rubber grips on the palms and fingers are preferable.
- Percussion and Guard equipment is also provided. All other students provide their own instruments.
- Flip Folders and Lyres — required for brass & woodwind players for all football games and the Christmas parade. Your student may also need extra sheets for the flip folder beyond what it comes with. All can be purchased local music stores or online.
- Water — Students should bring a 1-2 quart water jug to all practices, especially during band camp.

Daily student pick-up: At the conclusion of practice each day there is an additional period of time needed for clean-up and announcements. This usually takes about 10-15 minutes. In addition, all students are expected to contribute in storing of all equipment on the band truck and trailers, which is currently done on a rotating schedule (our “dot” system). On your student’s dot day, he or she will be expected to stay and help until the truck is fully loaded. The short of it is, don’t expect your student to run down and hop in the car at 7:01 PM—it will likely be 7:15 or a few minutes after.

Sectionals: Each instrumental group of the marching band is considered a section. Each section, at their discretion, will hold sectional sessions. This is extra practice time usually scheduled for the lunch break during band camp. The guard is also considered a section, and often holds sectional rehearsals. Students often contribute a few dollars toward lunch (usually pizza) on sectional days which is usually arranged by the senior member(s) of the group.

Social events: There are several annual social events which may occur throughout the fall marching band season. In the past these have included an Ice Cream Social, a picnic, and a Bonfire.

Chaperones: To comply with Bedford County requirements, one chaperone is required for every 10 students. We are always in need of adult chaperones (minimum age 21) for both competitions and football games. Please consider volunteering.

Football Games: The Marching Band performs at all JF home football games. In addition to halftime, the band does a pre-game procession down the hill, plays songs in front of the stands, & performs the national anthem. They also play pep tunes 1st, 2nd & 4th quarter (they don't play 3rd quarter). Pizza & bottled water are provided for the band after halftime at the end zone pavilion. We do not attend away football games. In addition, the band may travel to support the football team at playoff games. Students are expected to participate in all scheduled performances.

- **After the Games:** Each student is responsible for putting their instrument & uniform away, as well as cleaning up the band room and adjacent areas. No one—colorguard included—is allowed to leave until these tasks are completed. We are one band and everyone helps...so...please be patient when picking up your student(s).

Band Competitions: Band competitions are usually an all-day affair. From late September to early November, there is a competition nearly every Saturday. Students must attend all competitions---this is non-negotiable, except in the event of a family emergency. Bands are classed from A to AAAAA depending on size (or Groups 1-5). JF is usually classed as AAA or AAAA (or Group 3 or 4). I encourage you to follow the band to competitions and cheer for our Cavaliers. It's a great way to enjoy a crisp fall afternoon/evening. Although the band is admitted free of charge to competitions, there is always a spectator fee.

- **Competition Itineraries:** The itinerary is emailed to parents and distributed to students a couple of days before the competition. This typically includes directions to the host school as well as arrival and performance times.
- **Meals on the Road:** For some competitions we have the opportunity to order food from the host ahead of time—that cost has been built into the band fee. When we don't have that option, students will need money for concessions or a fast food place.
- **Band Travel Reports:** When the band is traveling, updates on arrival time back at JF are usually posted on our Facebook pages, but most students have cell phones—they are your best contact for travel updates while the band is on the road!
- **Return to JF after Performance/Competition:** It is extremely important that you be at JF waiting for your student when the buses arrive. We will do our best to keep you informed on our estimated arrival time, and we ask for your consideration in honoring those times. There are usually long days associated with competitions and frequent late-night arrivals, and everyone needs to get home as soon as possible — even the staff and chaperones!
- **Overnight Trip:** We will attend a competition in Virginia Beach in October. That is an overnight trip, staying at a beach-front hotel. We will spend most of the day Sunday on the beach.

VMBC: The Virginia Marching Band Cooperative is a marching band competition circuit sponsored by & comprised of a consortium of high school bands in VA. We will act as host for VMBC Finals on Oct. 28 (and also participate in competition—since VMBC hires & trains all judges, there is no conflict of interest in our participation). **The competition will be held at Liberty University.** We will need a medium-sized army of parent volunteers to operate this event, and we will make a large amount of money for the band program for our troubles. Be on the lookout for volunteer sign-up requests as we get closer to the event.

BINGO: BINGO funds a large percentage of our operating budget—the largest percentage, in fact. This is our primary fundraiser, and is the lifeblood of our band program, which is among the finest in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The success of BINGO determines how many additional fundraisers parents/students will need to do to fund the band program. We **MUST** maintain a strong roster of BINGO volunteers. We operate the game on the first 2 Saturdays of each month. The game is held in Lynchburg at the Elks' Lodge and requires a commitment of 1 Saturday every few weeks (depending on the number of teams) from 4:00 pm to about 10:30 pm. It takes a lot of year-round volunteers to make it work. Also consider that we will lose a fourth of our volunteers each year to graduating seniors. We need your help. Please sign up for a team by emailing our BINGO coordinator or contacting Mr. Webb. If you're not sure...come hang out for a night and see what it's all about...with no obligation, of course. We have, for 25 years, investigated every fundraising avenue under the sun—the simple truth is there is no single endeavor that can bring in the amount of money BINGO brings in—the alternative is harder work with less return. Believe me...it's more fun than selling seasonal gift wrap and \$1 candy bars. **WE NEED 15-30 VOLUNTEERS BY JULY 1, 2023!**

Band Photos: Parents...please take lots of photos for our year-in-review DVD.

Marching Band Awards: The Marching Band Awards Ceremony is held in the spring for marching band students and their families. A year-in-review video is shown followed by recognition of all students by year of participation (rookies to 5th years), the marching seniors, & a few other awards. We start with a dessert reception.

Bedford Christmas Parade: usually held the first Saturday in December (time varies by year—usually morning). Participation is required, along with red Santa hats and lots and lots of candy canes (donations accepted).

Kroger Community Rewards: Earn rewards for marching band and winter guard or drumline fees simply by enrolling and then using your Kroger Plus Card when you shop. See our website or the newsletter for details.

Finally... have fun and enjoy the show!