

Things Every Band Parent Should Know ...But Didn't Think to Ask....

AKA: The UNOFFICIAL Band Parent Handbook
2008-2009

Welcome!

This information has been put together by some parents who spent a large portion of their “rookie year” in various stages of confusion. In the many hours spent together watching practices and performances, waiting to pick up kids, and following yellow school busses, we asked lots of questions.

As novice band parents, of course we wanted to know what we should do. After all, the only people who were even more confused, and looking to us for answers, were our children. We wanted to share with the “upcoming parents” some of the answers to these many questions before we too forget how it felt not knowing what was going on...(of course we still don't have all the answers)!

Being a member of the Collingswood High School (CHS) Marching Panther Band Program will bring your children an interesting, and fulfilling educational experience. They will work hard and experience many triumphs, as well as downfalls; two things that will prepare them for the real world after high school.

We sincerely hope this guide will answer some important questions about time management, time commitment, band trips and how to pay for them, fundraising, and uniforms. We would also like to give you some “insider” information on what it takes to be a “band parent” of a band student!

Plans are well underway for the upcoming year of competitive marching band. This year's show will be titled “Seven”. The music will be very exciting to listen to and our drill will be written specifically for us.

Mr. Lerch is in the process of developing an intriguing visual package to accompany this music. This will be presented to the kids during band camp, and developed and modified as needed while the marching season progresses.

We know that there are many challenges facing the first-year marching band student. It has been our experience that while this is a demanding activity and schedule, the rewards are tremendous. In fact, being in band helps make the transition to high school a pleasant experience. Being in the marching band gives the kids instant friends who all believe in them and their contribution to “the family.”

Helpful Hints to Save You Time and Grief:

- Make your child responsible for being prepared. The first time they forget something will be the last!!! They learn to be resourceful (and how fast they can run from school to home and back) when they have to be.
- Network – This is how we meet each other. It is also one of the best ways to get helpful hints on band parenting from others.
- Carpool to competitions.
- Be prepared to cheer! The band loves it when they have their own cheering section.
- Don't put uniform items away in the closet or drawers when cleaned. Keep all items (socks, shoes, band shirt, gloves, etc.) in a bag. These tips will save time hunting for them each time they are needed.
- Keep extra gloves, socks, needle & thread, etc. in your car or purse just in case.
- Visit the band web site to stay informed. (www.pantherband.net)

- Sign up for the e-mail notification list by contacting the booster secretary – Brenda Nestel-Burg at bln720@aol.com.

Glossary of Terms and Phrases:

- Dinkle – special marching band shoe.
- Bibber – band uniform pant.
- Shako – band uniform hat.
- Plume – a white feather that is attached to the front of the Shako.
- Dickie – yes, the kids giggle every time – false shirtfront for uniform.
- USSBA or TOB – different band circuits marching bands compete in our area.
- Classes/Group – the number of marching members determines the Class in which a marching band competes.
- Judges - Each band is evaluated in four areas, Music Performance, Visual Performance, General Effect Music, and General Effect Visual. The judges' comments are taped and given to the director so that the band may listen to and learn from the comments.
- Competition (Invitational) - This is an event where bands are judged and ranked in classes. Several judges score specific areas of the performance. Place awards are presented at the end of each competition.
- Awards — the awards given may vary somewhat from one competition to the next. Awards for best guard or best percussion may be given in addition to those for 1st, 2nd, 3rd place, etc.
- Show - This is the performance that the marching band does for competitions and halftimes at football games. It usually is based around a theme, a composer, and a type of music or a story. The band performs and perfects the same show all season.
- Show Shirt/ Tour Shirt - Each year a shirt design is made up to reflect the theme of the show. Families are encouraged to purchase show shirts to help show support for the band.
- “Gram” – Air Gram - Messages read over speakers before the kids take the field in competition. (Kids say they don't really listen to these, it is more for the parent's entertainment.) Candy Gram – Candy delivered to the kids after they perform. Several parents are under threat of pouting children at home if candy gram is not delivered for each competition.
- **“Play to the box!”** - This means that instruments should be directed toward the tower on the practice field, where the powers-that-be live and flourish.
- Pit (Front Line) – no, this isn't anatomy or a bad thing –The students in the pit play instruments that are stationary (often in the front of the band toward the sideline). The pit includes a variety of percussion instruments.
- Battery – (Drum Line) marching pieces of percussion made up of :
 - Tenor – big “belt” of drums
 - Snare – single small drum
 - Bass – large drum
- Color Guard (Guard) – These students move with the music, often display flags or colorful props, and add visual excitement to the total presentation. In some shows, they enact the stories and may be dressed in costumes to fit the roles.
- Crabbing – marching sideways while keeping your body facing the stands.
- Up field, downfield, front field, backfield – front, back, left, right – depending on where they are on the field.
- Cool Tie – a special sewn, gel pellet filled, water soaked bandana tied around the neck that helps keep the kids cooled down during band camp.
- Drill - This refers to the formations the band makes and the movement from one form to another. It's the marching part of the program. Small changes and additions are made to the drill throughout the season.

The drill that is learned at band camp will be built upon all season to become the bands' outstanding visual performance.

- Captain -This is usually an upper classmen from guard and each instrument section of the band. This person makes sure his/her section is following instructions and is achieving what the drum major and director expect. This is a position of authority and requires maturity and strong leadership skills. The students apply for the position in the spring and are selected by the band director.
- Drum Major -These students are second in command (behind the director). They direct the band for the show and are given authority to make many decisions. All band members are expected to follow his/her leadership. Drum Major auditions are held each spring.
- **“Where are your pages in sheet protectors or dot books?”**
These are small notebooks that students carry during band camp that tell them exactly where they stand for different setups, like Opener 6. A good place to keep these is in their band binder or music folder.
- **“Where’s my dot?” or “Do we line up on the hash?”**
This does not refer to food. These terms indicate how the practice field is marked off. Students use their dot books to answer these questions.
- Pit Crew -**“Are you working the Pit?”** - No, not music played by arm flapping... A very important group of volunteers that (VERY QUICKLY – Nascar has nuttin’ on us!) assemble, and sometimes, hide behind - holding in place, props and pit instruments for the performance. After the show, the pit crew quickly breakdown and remove all these items. The show is timed and the pit crew plays a vital part with their speed and accuracy to help the band avoid penalty points. Each band has four minutes to set up and only three minutes to exit the field. The Pit Crew also assists in the loading and unloading of equipment before, during, and after competitions and football games.
- **“Band practice is at 6 o’clock.” “If you are early, you’re on time; if you’re on time, you’re late.”**
When you drop your child off at **5:30**, there will be students already there, ready to play. At this point, the anxiety level for being late dramatically increases. The band actually takes the practice field for warm-ups around 5:45. This is when your child will be sweating bullets. Always allow extra time. There are no excuses.
- **“Oh, just sit where band parents sit.”**
The “just outside of the band room” is where parents willing to help meet to load the equipment truck. When it is time to enter the stadium, the band will march in. The band enters the stadium and goes to their seating area. When the kids are marching in, they are not allowed to move anything except their feet, not even a smile, so don’t distract them! A lot of band parents sit together at football games and competitions.
- **“Last Time”**
This can mean one more time, a few more times, it can mean you’re beginning to approach the road to the last time, or it can mean we’ll keep doing it until you get it right!

What Time Commitment Does Band Require of My Child?

How will our children have the time to go to rehearsals two days a week after school, perform at eight to twelve Friday night football games, and compete on Saturdays? How will they have the time to do all of this, within a three-month period, and keep up their grades??

TIME MANAGEMENT will be the most important tool that your children will acquire when they become members of the CHS band program.

Your student will learn how to keep a schedule, how to be punctual, and how to set priorities.

In the director's packet is a detailed schedule distributed to all band students. It will list every rehearsal, football game, and competition your student will be required to attend the next three months (well, almost every rehearsal). You can also view this schedule on the Band's web site at www.pantherband.net and this schedule will now become a permanent attachment to your refrigerator.

What about Practices, Competitions and Games?

Practices, competitions and football games during Marching Band season are mandatory. One absent member will disrupt practice for all members of the band. To be able to put the best possible musical product on the field, the staff and director need for all members of the band to be present during all scheduled practices. Please see the Band Handbook for the consequences of missed practices. Your membership depends on consistent participation. Management of a band this size is a monumental task and it becomes next to impossible if members of the band are absent. Please help your student make every effort to be there.

Before the school year begins, practices will be held every Wednesday night from 6-9pm. Band camp at home will be August 19th and 20th. These are all day events and mandatory. From August 21st through August 25th is sleep away band camp at Green Lane Camp in Lansdale PA, which is also required. (This is our second year with an away camp.) After band camp, there will be practice on August 27 and then September 3 and 4 from 6-9pm culminating that week with the 2nd Annual Panther Band Picnic that Saturday from noon to 4pm. Thereafter, practices during the season will be Tuesday and Thursday nights from 6-9pm.

Attendance is mandatory for all school year practices, competitions (usually Saturdays) and football games (usually Friday nights). Excuse letters must be submitted to the band director before school starts (see band director).

On competition day, kids usually need to set aside the entire day. They usually need to report to the band room at 9 or 10 am to rehearse, then are bussed to the competition site and may not return until 9 or 10 pm (sometimes later).

There is the possibility that an entire weekend will be filled with band events. Please consult the calendar on a regular basis for what is happening in the coming weeks. If there is a change in date or time for an event, your child will be notified by the director in advance of the change.

How Do Parents Get Involved?

PARENT INVOLVEMENT = A SUCCESSFUL BAND PROGRAM

Getting involved in the band program will give you the opportunity to share with your child the last few years of their education, years that go so fast and are rarely enjoyed by many parents. Your child might say they would rather not have you around, but most parents actually learn that in reality they appreciate your involvement and will thank you in the future.

CHS is fortunate to have a great director and staff. The band parents are needed to support the director, and help with the details of fundraising, transporting (aka: schlepping/pit crew), and cheering on our band. The band needs parents who are willing to help to be able to function; it is for this reason that we urge you to get involved. Join one of the many committees; we need your help. Grandparents, siblings, or any member of your family can get involved and make a difference. You are a Band Booster; it is a great way to meet the parents and the kids your student will be spending much of their time with for the next few months. How did you get to be a booster? Your child joined the marching band so **THEY DRAFTED YOU!**

The easiest way to volunteer is by attending the monthly Band Booster meeting where you will learn more about the program and where it needs your help.

How Can I Support the Band and My Band Geek?

Keep your sense of humor!

Come watch a rehearsal.

Attend competitions!

Volunteer for any and all fundraisers.

Keep the uniform in good, clean shape.

Come to a Booster Meeting.

HELP OUT!!!!

Where do my talents lie?

Construction

Sewing

Cooking

Artistry

Solicitation- no, not what you are thinking – for the Spring Auction!

Crafter – see the line above!

Schlepping – load and unload the truck/trailer from games and competitions

Just standing there – you can hold a backdrop when the band “takes the field in competition”

If you are a pro (or even a novice – heck, just willing to help) using any of these talents, please let us know. It takes minimal time in your part to create maximum gratitude from your band. If **every** parent contributes even a small amount of time, everyone benefits!

EXECUTIVE BOARD:

Director – Joe Lerch, (jdlerch@pantherband.net)

President – Karen Hartung, (karenjean2@hotmail.com)

Vice President – Peg Schnyer, (pschnyer@gmail.com)

Treasurer – Robin Laino, (robquilts@comcast.net)

Secretary – Brenda Nestel-Burg, (bln720@aol.com)

VP of Ways and Means – Janis Danielewicz (janisdee16@aol.com)

Band Booster Meeting Dates 2008-2009

All meetings will be held in the band room unless otherwise noted, and will begin at 7 PM.

- July – No regularly scheduled meeting
- August – Wednesday, August 13, 2008
 - (This meeting will also be the Band Camp Meeting for parents and students.)
- September – Tuesday, September 9, 2008
- October – Tuesday, October 14, 2008
- November – Tuesday, November 11, 2008
- December - No regularly scheduled meeting
- January – Tuesday, January 13, 2009
- February – Tuesday, February 10, 2009
- March – Tuesday, March 10, 2009
- April – Tuesday, April 14, 2009
- May – Tuesday, May 12, 2009
- June – Tuesday, June 2, 2009

How Do We Keep Informed?

All of the information you will need during the year will come from several places, our website and a handout that the director gives the students each week as a reminder. You can access our website by going to www.pantherband.net. The director updates this website on a regular basis, so be sure to check it out. Booster meetings are another wonderful place to get information.

Another way to keep informed is through email. Our Secretary, Brenda will be compiling a list of all Booster parents who have an email address and would prefer to be notified via email concerning all band events. Included in this Welcome Packet will be a form for you to fill out. **Please complete this and return it to the “Booster Box”,** as soon as possible (next rehearsal would be fantastic! - have your band member put it in the “booster mailbox” located on the wall of the band room) If you are computer challenged, please be sure to let us know and we will contact you via smoke signals – actually, by phone.

Every week your child will receive a handout from the staff. This handout includes time schedules for the weekend, directions to the event, etc. The director does email this to the Booster secretary, who in turn emails this to the parents on the email list. If, by some chance your child does not come home from a weekly rehearsal with a handout – or forgot to tell you it was in the back pocket of the jeans that just got washed (don’t ask how we know this), please check your email.

www.pantherband.net

What Financial Commitment Does Band Require of My Child (and me)? How Do We Pay For This?

Due to budget constraints in our school, it is necessary for the students to fundraise funds to pay for various band activities such as away band camp and the annual spring band trip. Some of the trips can be costly, especially for families with more than one child in the band. We do not want the economic factor to keep any student from participating in any band activity. Therefore, throughout the year there will be many opportunities for your child to earn band profits in order to pay for these band activities. (There have been families that did not pay anything out of pocket for their student to attend band trips and away band camp due to their successful fundraising.) We have a fundraising chairperson – Janis Danielewicz - dedicated to provide many opportunities to earn band profits. The best way to learn about these fundraising opportunities is by keeping informed; and the best way to keep informed is by attending the Band Booster meetings that take place all year long. One of the goals we, as Boosters have, are to provide various ways your child can raise enough money to fund these activities without the parents shouldering all of the costs. Also, part of the money raised by the Boosters and the students go towards trip support for all the students.

When your child participates in a fundraiser, the profits are recorded and overseen by Mr. Lerch on a computer program, which keeps track of the student's accounts. Some profits may be split with the Booster organization and some fundraising profits will be 100% for the student's accounts. If you are interested in the amount in your child's account, please contact Mr. Lerch for that information.

If your child chooses not to fundraise, and we sincerely hope this isn't the case with your child, the money owed for the band activities will be their own responsibility. Your child will still have an account with Mr. Lerch, which you will be responsible to fund. The Director will inform you when payments will be due for any given activity. Due dates are not flexible; however unique circumstances can always be discussed and worked out with the Band Director.

Uniforms are provided for the marching band; upkeep is the responsibility of the band parent. However, you should anticipate purchasing the special type of marching shoe - Dinkles, (approx. cost about \$25) and gloves (\$5). The uniforms must be kept clean and neat and the child must have all parts of the uniform in order to perform. (Also, hair must be off the collar, or in a ponytail. NO jewelry is allowed to be worn during competitions). Dry cleaning and hemming of the bibbers (pants) is recommended before the first week of school. The bibbers MAY NOT be cut for hemming, but need to be hemmed so they don't drag (or "flood") while marching. If your child's bibbers need some TLC, and sewing is just not your "thing," just contact anyone on the executive board and they will direct you to a parent who has a talent for these things. On the other hand, if you are handy with a needle and thread, please let us know.

Kids will need to bring food and/or money to purchase food at the competitions. Lunch (and sometimes dinner) purchases must be anticipated.

Parents are encouraged to attend competitions; you will often find Collingswood band parents sitting together and cheering on our kids. Tickets to these events usually cost \$8 - \$12 and are a great way to see the kids in action. You will often be surprised to see how the show evolves over the season, and how talented our kids are!

Band camp this year will be away at a cost of \$150.00 per band member. This will include lodging and 3 meals per day for the 4 days while they are at the facility. See the Band director's information for more on this ...

What Sort of Fundraising Commitment Does Band Require of My Child?

Fundraising benefits both you and your child immensely! Fundraising offsets the costs of the annual spring band trip (usually \$300), future trips and band camps. Due to school district budget constraints, parents & kids participate in fundraisers such as:

- Coin drops
- Car washes
- Cheesecake sales
- Holiday raffle
- Candy bar sales
- Spring auction
- Dinner Out fundraisers
- Home show competition (ad book sales, concession sales)
- Concession stand sales during home football games (parents volunteer to run this)
- Any other fundraisers the boosters deem necessary – have any good ideas? Make a suggestion to Janis Danielewicz - our ways and means VP.

Where Does All the Money Go???

When your child participates in a fundraiser, a portion of the money raised is put into their account, which is overseen by the director. We encourage every student to participate in these fundraisers. A portion will also go towards to Booster account to offset the cost of various items throughout the year. Some of these Booster expenses include:

- Band camp subsidy
- Trip support
- Trailer – (truck rental until then!)
- Honorariums (for the volunteer staff)
- Equipment
- Competition Fees
- Show Music
- Social – for the students – we host at least one party during the school year
- Scholarships (for graduating seniors)

What Do Parents Bring to a Competition?

Sunscreen

Blankets

Warm clothing – these are almost always held outdoors in the fall and can get quite cold.

Stadium seats – can be purchased at sporting good stores & Walmart

Money – support other boosters by sending your child a gram

Money – for dinner (NOT for the band members –they have to stay with the band) for those parents who can't eat another boiled hot dog for dinner. Some parents try to find a decent restaurant in the area during long competition nights!

Sense of humor!!!

Noise makers – shakers, cow bells – NO AIR HORNS!

Camera – to record those Kodak moments

Uniforms, Uniforms – What Do They Wear?

Marching Band Rehearsals

Wear comfortable shoes, closed toe, no flip-flops. A light colored t-shirt and shorts are appropriate. Students may want an extra t-shirt in case of a sudden rain shower.

Football Games & Competition

Band uniforms must be kept in the band room unless taken home to be repaired or cleaned.

Band Uniform parts consist of:

Marching band Dinkles (shoes) – These are special marching band shoes that clean up well with a Mr. Clean Magic Sponge.

Band Uniform top

Band Uniform bibbers (pants)

Band Uniform Shako (hat)

Black T-shirt / shorts to be worn under uniform.

MODEST undergarments or thermals. Consider purchasing “under armor cold gear” for your entire family.

Gloves (these can be purchased when the shoes are purchased). We suggest having several pairs. They cost about \$5 per pair.

Black socks – NO COLORS or Stripes on them!! We suggest having several pairs exactly alike. (Dryers love to eat socks.)

Color Guard uniforms change from year to year.

Tips to remember while in uniform:

- No visible jewelry
- No make up (Guard is the exception, it is part of the uniform)
- Colored drinks, condiments, and any other messy or greasy food are not to be eaten while in uniform. Clear liquids only.

Final Note

The band room is the sanctuary of the musicians and staff. We, therefore, have been asked to be respectful of this area. Please do not enter the band room during practices or before the students have been dismissed. The staff needs the students to concentrate solely on their musical and performance directions without the distractions of parents asking, “Are you done yet?”, “Mr. Lerch, I have a question,” etc. Also, after practice there is usually a “staff meeting.” This needs to be handled in a closed session (parental involvement is not needed or welcome.) Your kids will be out as soon as the staff dismisses them. Note “Last Time” above in glossary of terms and phrases. The staff is mindful of the time and will dismiss as soon as possible. Please wait at the bottom of the steps or find parking and wait in your car.

If you need to talk to Mr. Lerch, please email him at jdlerch@pantherband.net.

Band Parent Questionnaire

**** The Booster secretary and Mr. Lerch will keep all this information
confidential

Return to "Booster" box on the band room wall ASAP

Band Member First Name: _____

Last Name: _____

Address: _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone of band member: _____

Band Member's Email: _____

Instrument: _____

School: (circle one) Colls. High School Colls. Middle School Oaklyn

Grade: _____

Mother's Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Father's Name: _____

Cell Phone: _____

Work Phone: _____

Email: _____

Would you prefer to be contacted by: EMAIL PHONE
(Please circle preference)

I can help with: _____

And _____

My other talents are: _____