



New Parent Information

and

Frequently Asked

Questions

for

Marching Band

(2017 Revision)

New Parent Information and Frequently Asked Questions for Marching Band



Welcome

It is great to have new parents and students become involved with the Irmo 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 new 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.

Booster Basics

Why consider marching band for your student?

Marching band provides the opportunity and the encouragement to develop close relationships with other committed 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 even runs laps around the field as physical conditioning) to have the stamina necessary to rehearse and perform a state of the art marching band show. Students are exposed to and become friends with upper classmen who are able to help them cope with the high school environment. The Irmo Band is an extremely high quality program that is much respected throughout the marching community even by much larger schools.

What are the Band Boosters?

The Irmo Band Booster Club (IBBC) is an organization of adults interested in supporting the band programs at Irmo High and Middle School. The focus of the boosters is the support of the music staff/students and to raise money to pay for the items not provided by the school system that the music programs need to have superior music education in our schools.

There are three budgets that support the program. The first is money from the school and is used primarily for staff, music education, instruments, instrument repair, and transportation. The second comes from money raised by the Boosters via fundraising and assessments. The majority of the budget is for staff, lodging, music, drill, flags, costumes, props, food, equipment, supplies, and overall development of the marching show. The third budget is from the Irmo Music Foundation. Created in 1998 by the Irmo Band Boosters, the Irmo Music Foundation is a 501(c)3 organization dedicated to supporting the Bands of Irmo through fundraising efforts with businesses, general fundraisers and individuals. The Irmo Music Foundation has its own Board made up of current and former Band Boosters and the Band Director of Irmo High School.

Who is part of the Band Boosters?

Each family who has a student in the Irmo Middle or High School Band program is considered a member of the Boosters.

How can I become involved with the Boosters?

Every parent of a marching band student is asked to join a band booster committee such as Fundraising, Uniforms, Chaperones, Hospitality, Equipment and Pit crew, just to name a few to help out in some way, large or small. All are expected to work at least one shift in our 2 main fundraisers: the Palmetto Classic competition and the 5A State Marching Band Competition, both held on Saturdays in the fall and hosted at Irmo High School.

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Parent Information

What is it going to cost me for my student to perform with the band?

Student Assessments: The School District extra-curricular fee and other school funds only cover a portion of the cost of providing an award-winning program for the students. A student assessment fee is set each year by the Booster board for those students in the marching band (musicians and color guard members). This fee for 2017 is \$350.00.

A separate assessment will be made for the concert bands, winter guard and percussion or other ensembles depending on their spring performance schedule and any planned trips or events.

Fundraisers: The students and parents of the program are expected to help with the fundraisers developed by the Boosters. The Boosters use fundraising for students to help pay their assessment and to provide for the general fund. Most individual fundraisers are set-up to provide the student assessment account with the majority of the profit, usually 70%, but may vary depending on the fundraiser. All band parents and students are required to work at the two band competitions we host, the Palmetto Invitational, October 7, 2017 and the 5A State Championship, Nov. 4, 2017. These two competitions fund a large percentage of our budget.

What other costs are involved?

New parents will also find that there are optional costs involved with having a student in band.

These costs include: the cost of a personal instrument or supplies for a school-owned instrument (such as Smart Music subscription, tuner/metronome, reeds and reed guards, mouthpieces, or percussion sticks and mallets), admissions to competitions (for the parents), travel (for parents going to competition), and gifts between band members (tradition has it that small gifts (\$5 or less) are exchanged between various band members, sections, and big brothers/big sisters).

How do I make payments? Checks can be made out to IBBC and put in an envelope labeled with student's name, amount and payment purpose and dropped in a band booster box (in band room and in portable at the grid). Payments can also be mailed to IBBC, PO Box 595, Irmo SC 29063. Or, payments can be made online, through PayPal at:

<http://irmoband.org/payment.htm>

What uniforms does my student wear?

Summer Band Uniform: The "Summer Uniform" for musicians consists of:

School-code black 'dress' shorts (at least finger-tip length) - provided by parents

black belt – provided by parents

Bands of Irmo white t-shirt - provided by the Boosters once during their marching career

plain white ankle socks – provided by parents

plain white (non-canvas) low-top tennis shoes – provided by parents.

The summer uniform is usually worn for football games in September, as well as travel to competitions when requested by the Director. The *Bands of Irmo* white t-shirts are to be worn at specified times, either as part of the fall, summer, or travel uniforms. They should not be worn outside band activities. Paint pens work well for covering small, non-white areas on tennis shoes.

Show Uniform: The marching uniform for musicians consists of a jacket, a pair of bib pants, a pair of gauntlets (one black, one white), a shako (hat), a plume, black gloves, and a pair of black MTX shoes. The Boosters provide all these uniform

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parts except for the gloves and MTX shoes. Percussion does not need gauntlets or gloves. Percussion Pit members do not wear shakos. MTX black shoes are ordered during band camp, and are paid for by students (\$40 in addition to assessments). Students may wear the same MTX as last year if they still fit.

In addition, students are required to supply a pair of black socks and a pair of shorts (to be worn under the bib pants and separate from the summer uniform black shorts). Students often have to change in public areas and should plan undergarments accordingly (hence the shorts and t-shirts)! The Boosters provide each marching band member a “show t-shirt” each year. This shirt or the white Bands of Irmo shirt will be worn under the marching uniform as instructed by the Director. The show shirt may be worn outside of band events.

Uniform Bag: A numbered uniform bag is provided for each Band member for use with transporting the uniform and parts (except shoes). All parts of the uniform – jacket, bib, gauntlets and gloves stay in the uniform bag in the band room uniform room.

Fittings: Uniforms are fitted to the students each year. Fitting schedules are during summer camp and times will be announced. Uniforms have snaps on the bottom so no hemming is needed. **Under no circumstances should any material be cut from the uniform for alterations.**

Guard Costumes and Other Clothing: The Guard performs in the marching show in costumes. The costumes and any flags are similar to the musician’s uniform and are provided by the Boosters. These are issued for use during the season and are returned at the end of the season. They are not to be kept by the Guard members. Guard members are also issued an Irmo tank that is provided by the Boosters and to be returned at the end of the season.

Guard members may need to buy various non-marching outfits, rehearsal, and travel clothing, similar to what a musician would do for a summer uniform. You will be given information on the specific details by the staff. Each member will be expected to purchase this clothing and will be assessed for this by the Boosters, which is separate from their marching band assessments.

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

Inspection: Inspections are held before games or traveling to competitions. They are held in the band room before leaving for competitions or football games. Students should be **in place with all necessary uniform parts on and instrument ready** prior to the time they were told to report. In this instance, start time means students should be in uniform and ready for inspection a few minutes prior to inspection! Allow time for changing into uniforms and preparing instruments for inspection.

Your student and their instrument (even the inside of the instrument) will be inspected as they stand at attention by sections. Students should be sure to not have any jewelry on while in uniform. Also, hair should not be showing out from under their shako. Facial hair should not be visible, nor sideburns below the ear.

Cleaning: Parents/students are responsible for laundering gloves and personal items (socks and items worn under the uniform). Students are also responsible for cleaning and polishing their black MTX shoes prior to each performance.

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The Boosters or the school are responsible for cleaning of the uniforms (jackets, bib pants, and gauntlets) and guard costumes.

What is expected of a parent of a marching band student?

A parent of a marching band student requires flexibility – places, times of rehearsal, 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 student, as well as all students and staff, need your support. There will be times when your student or your student's friend becomes discouraged. Your encouragement to keep plugging along will help get them to the next rehearsal, game, or competition.

What kind of supervision does my student have when they are with the band?

In addition to the director and staff, Boosters volunteer to chaperone all events with the band. A nurse, medical person, or designated first-aid chaperone is available to the students and staff at all events. A first-aid kit is available in the portable during marching rehearsals and one is taken on each bus while traveling. Contact the head of the chaperone committee if you are interested in helping out with the chaperone duties. All chaperones are required to fill out the District V Volunteer Paperwork forms.

What transportation is used for games and competitions?

For Away football games, local and regional competitions, district school or activity buses are used for students and chaperones. All drivers are supplied by the district and meet normal bus driver requirements.

All equipment for the full marching band is transported in the band's semi-trailer. A small utility trailer is used for smaller events, such as an Away game with a pep band.

A group of chaperones always accompanies the band for handling of the equipment, food, water, and general support of the students and staff.

When will I ever get to see what my student is doing with band?

In general, the marching band will perform their show at each Friday home football game. At home games, the band performs the entire show or the parts that are ready. For many of the away games, a Pep Band of 25-35 students go and only play in the stands. On some occasions (such as homecoming), the band will not perform at half-time.

The band also performs at various competitions on Saturdays during the fall progressing towards the state championships the last weekend in October.

Parents are able to watch rehearsals from the grassy area by the tower at the rehearsal lot at any time. Parents are asked, however, to not disturb students and staff during rehearsals

Am I responsible for all transportation of my student to rehearsals?

Yes. Many students carpool to/from rehearsals and to/from the school before and after events. (Older students are allowed to transport younger students to and from band rehearsals with parent permission.)

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I am going to be at a band event. Does my student have to ride home with the band?

Students are expected to ride to all events with the band. Occasionally special exceptions are made by **prior arrangement with the director by turning in an alternate transportation request 48 hours in advance**. Students may ride home from events with their parents **IF** a parental permission note is provided **48 hours before leaving for the event**. You may bring home your student's friend if the student has a note from his/her parents. It is the responsibility of the parent to meet the student at the bus and check-in with the chaperones before taking the student. However, the student is still responsible to make the necessary arrangements to ensure their uniform and instrument is returned to the band room.

I never seem to know what is going on with band. How can I find out?

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:

- Band Booster web site (irmoband.org)
- Facebook group: Bands of Irmo (lots of information and fastest way to get questions answered)
- Sign up for the marching band Remind10: <https://www.remind.com/join/lhsturner>
- www.charmsoffice.org (password = irmoband).
- E-Mail updates – sent one or more times a week. If you are not getting these e-mails, send a request to be added via e-mail to theirmoband@yahoo.com.
- Band Booster meetings (generally once a month on Tuesday nights – 1st Tuesday of the month, but subject to change). Check the web site for exact dates and times. E-Mail updates are also sent.
- Weekly itineraries for Friday games and Saturday competitions are e-mailed to students and parents typically on Sunday evenings.
- Booster leadership (see web site for contacts)
- Other parents including your section's Parent Mentor

Student Information

What is expected of the students in marching band?

Marching Band members are required to attend pre-camp in the spring and summer band camp, unless specifically excused by the director (usually for similar activities, such as summer drum corps or band camp). Students are also expected to attend all rehearsals. Memorization of music begins prior to band camp 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 rehearsals and strive to do their best at each rehearsal, game, and competition.

What kind of physical conditioning do I need to march in band?

Marching is a 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 highly recommended that the student begin to do some exercise prior to band camp. At camp and during rehearsals students learn to do stretches and at times run or jog to increase their physical endurance in preparation for the requirements of the show.

What kind of recognition is given to marching band members?

Each spring there is a total *Bands of Irmo* recognition reception that students and families are invited to attend. Awards for various categories are given out by the staff. Students also get their participation certificates and letters, etc. during this ceremony. Trophies and medals for championships are given at the various competitions.

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Band Camp and After-School Rehearsal Information

What is Band Camp and how much time is spent practicing?

Spring Pre-camp: Generally this is usually a week in May, where the students are given music for next season's show. These are usually 2 hours per day after school.

Summer Camp: Band camp usually takes place for two weeks at the end of summer before school starts, typically the last week in July and first week of August. These are typically full days, 9:00 am to 9:00 pm, and students will bring their lunch and be fed a snack and dinner by the boosters each day.

The students focus on music and drill for the up-coming show. There are also intense team building and leadership skills that are learned at band camp.

A Parent Preview show is presented at the end of camp or one evening in early August. Watch for announcements of the actual day and time.

After school rehearsals: Rehearsals are Monday, Tuesday, and Thursdays. These are usually right after school, from 4:00- 6:45pm, unless otherwise instructed due to heat. If practice is moved indoors for inclement weather this will be announced through the band Remind101

Additional rehearsals may be scheduled prior to special performances and competitions. Please consult the band calendar for the tentative times for these rehearsals. Students will be advised of these rehearsal dates and times in advance. Most rehearsals are held in the bus parking lot across St. Andrews Road from the school.

In the event of excessive rain, lightning and thunder, rehearsal will be moved to the Band Room/Orchestra Room. In the event those rooms are unavailable, rehearsal may be cancelled. Students should know how to reach parents should this occur in order to avoid students not having a ride home.

In addition to the full band rehearsals listed above, the band and guard team may have sectionals scheduled at the discretion of the Director or staff. Extra sectionals will be called as deemed necessary by the staff. Students will receive advance notice (at least 1 day) of these sectionals rehearsals.

Saturday Mini Band camps: During the season, there are some Saturdays that are used for additional rehearsals in preparation for competitions. Exact dates and times will be announced and posted on the website calendar.

What should I bring to band camp and after-school rehearsals?

- Sunscreen
- A good pair of tennis shoes (broken-in, but not worn out and no sandals) and socks Hat and sunglasses

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- **Water bottle or jug, 1-2 quart size (mark your container)** Students may leave these at the band field in the portable so they don't have to bring it every day to school. Drink lots of water! It is easy to get dehydrated quickly when marching.
- Music and instrument
- T-shirt and shorts (school dress code applies so finger-tip length shorts – no tank tops)

What is expected of the students at rehearsals?

Students are expected to learn to be on time to all activities. Students also learn to take proper care of their instruments at camp. 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 rehearsals and competitions.

What is provided for the students at camp?

Since these are full day sessions, the Boosters typically provide snacks and dinner. Students should bring their own lunch which will be put in coolers in the portable until lunch. This allows them to stay on campus to focus on the camp and alleviates many transportation issues.

We have two air-conditioned portables to provide a place for overheated students to cool down or provide for basic first-aid needs. Please make sure that students drink lots of water and clear liquids and rest between rehearsals. Please also ensure they get plenty of sleep at night.

I have heard horror stories of band camp fatigue. What can I expect?

It is very possible that you will be very tired after camp. It is recommended that you don't plan for a heavy duty/action-packed week after camp. On the other hand some students finish camp with lots of extra energy and excitement. ALL students can expect lots of fun memories and a true sense of accomplishment.

Competition Information

What is the difference between competitions?

Local/Regional Competitions: The band participates in various competitions sponsored by other high schools, similar to Irmo's own *Palmetto Esprit de Corps*.

State Championships: The South Carolina State Festival/Championships are sponsored by the South Carolina Band Directors Association (SCBDA). The SCBDA sponsors championship festivals in each of five classes – 1A-5A. Irmo High School currently participates in class 3A whose preliminary upper and lower state competitions are one Saturday in October and then the following week will have their finals competition for those top bands that are selected from both upper and lower state.

Bands of America (BoA): Bands of America is the nation's leading presenter of music events for high school band students. Irmo has participated in these competitions in the past and may in the future.

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Can I take pictures at competitions?

You can take pictures of the Irmo band at local and state competitions for non-commercial use only. If you record the show, please do not share on social media until after the state championship. Depending on the venue, video may be prohibited at state competitions.

When and where do I get tickets for competitions?

For local and state competitions, event tickets can be obtained at the event ticket booth. Tickets usually range from \$6 - \$10 for adults.

Miscellaneous Information

Where can I get Bands of Irmo t-shirts?

The Boosters sell several t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and other souvenirs. Souvenirs are usually sold at Parent Preview and Friday night football games.

Are there any helpful hints?

- Make your child responsible for being prepared. The first time they forget something will be the last! They learn to be resourceful when they have to be.
- Keep extra gloves, socks, needle and thread, etc. in your car or purse just in case.
- At the end of each rehearsal session there are usually announcements – so ask your student what was said immediately when they get in the car before they forget!
- Join the Bands of Irmo Facebook group
- 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. Plan a seating strategy with other parents before-hand and get to events early to sit together. All this really helps the students.
- Don't put uniform items away in the closet or drawers when cleaned. Keep all items (socks, belt, gloves, etc., but not shoes) in a designated spot during marching season. That way you won't spend time hunting for them each time they're needed. What do you really mean?

Listed below are some phrases you may hear, but may not know their *true* meaning.

- "Band rehearsal is at 4 o'clock."
If you're early, you're on time; if you're on time, you're late. When a rehearsal is set for 4:00pm, the students will already be there, ready to play. The band actually takes the rehearsal field for warm-ups a little early and is ready to start at 4:00pm.
- "The band received an Excellent rating."
Excellent is the second highest rating. A Superior is the top rating.
- Pep Band – for non-home (Away) football games

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Consists of a part of the marching band who attend Away games. Director will divide students into 2 or more pep bands which will rotate Away games. Guard and percussion pit members typically do not attend Away games unless the full band is attending.

- Rehearsal field “the grid”
The rehearsal field is actually in front of IHS across St. Andrews Road where the buses park, and not on the football field. The asphalt surface has been marked with tics and hashes. Bring a lawn chair if you want to outsmart the ants. Usually there will be a “run-through” near the end of rehearsal.
- “Oh, just sit where band parents sit.”
On Friday nights you’ll find most band parents near the 30 yard-line on the right hand side of the field when looking at the field, near where the band is playing. Parents must purchase a ticket.
- “Are you working the PIT?”
The PIT is not something bad. It’s the group of percussion instruments that travel on carts and are stationary during performances, also referred to as the Front Ensemble. Parents in the PIT Crew work feverishly to set up and take down the pit in record time, before and after a performance (and they think race pit crews are fast!).
- Big Brother/Big Sister
New band members are assigned a big brother/sister at summer band camp. The big brother/sister will often provide each other encouragement, guidance, treats, gifts (\$5 or less – creativity and home-made gifts preferred), etc. prior to home games and competitions.
- Parent Mentor – Each section has a veteran parent who is available to answer questions about the band in general and especially the particular section your child is in. Each section may differ slightly especially when it comes to uniforms (ex. Battery Percussion wears Shakos but Pit Percussion does not).

Do you have any final words of wisdom for new 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).

Ask questions: we have all been there and understand how overwhelming it all can be especially if you are also coping with a student just starting high school or a parent of a middle schooler who is adjusting to middle school and the rigorous band schedule. Booster parents love to give support to each other.

Stay positive for the sake of your student and the other students in the band. Marching band is a challenging 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 Irmo. It will give you an idea of what is being asked of your student and what the band is being compared to.

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