



New Parent Information
and
Frequently Asked
Questions
for
Marching Band

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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.

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 someone on the current Booster Board. You can find information on the current Booster Board and Committee chairpersons at the Marching Band website at www.irmoband.org.

Booster Basics

Why consider marching band for your student?

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 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).

The Irmo band is an extremely high quality program that is very 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 music programs at Irmo High 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 Booster leadership develops the Booster budget with input from the director. The majority of the budget is for staff, lodging, music, drill, flags, costumes, props, food, equipment, supplies, and overall development of the marching show. There are many other expenses required to prepare and perform throughout the marching season. It is not unusual to have expenses come up during the

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season that are not in the initial budget. This happens because of the creative nature of what we do and the level of the performances that are expected of Irmo High School.

The third budget is for the Hi-Steppers and supports primarily their non-marching season Hi-Stepper program and clothes that are used throughout the year. Similar to the concert season for musicians, the Hi-Steppers may participate in summer or winter dance or colorguard events.

During the course of the season, the Boosters and music staff decides how money is spent. The Booster leadership occasionally votes on budgetary questions. The budget and detailed transactions are always available for parent review.

Who is part of the Band Boosters?

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

Why should I, as a parent, need to be involved with the Boosters?

It requires significant adult support for a quality band program. There are numerous costs in producing an outstanding music and marching program over and above what is provided by the school. The Boosters work to defray these costs and reduce the fees that each family needs to pay towards their student's music education. Many things are provided for the students such as props for the shows, chaperones, lodging and meals (when on the road), etc., and it takes adults to coordinate and provide these necessities. There are many, many logistic and support items that need to happen in order to get the band to all the places it needs to go.

The Boosters provide emotional support and encouragement to each and every student to obtain their highest level of success. Just as the marching band needs all students giving their best, the Booster parents need to give their best.

How can I become involved with the Boosters?

Parents are encouraged to sign up to help on committees such as Fundraising, Uniforms, Chaperones, Medical, Transportation, Hospitality, Equipment and Pit crew, Camps and Clinics, just to name a few. There are more committees that you may be interested in joining. There are also many small tasks you can do without joining a committee. Eventually you may want to become more of a leader of the booster organization by running for Booster President, Vice President, Treasurer or a committee chairmanship. Check out the website www.irmoband.org for ways that you can become involved. The Boosters generally meet on a monthly schedule, with dates and times posted on the website calendar.

The key is helping in some way – even a little help!

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

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assessment fee is set each year by the Booster board for those students in the marching band (musicians and Hi-Steppers). This fee is typically \$400.00. If there is an overnight, out of town performance trip, for example, to a Bands of America (BoA) competition, this fee is included to cover the cost of hotel, meals, etc. and depends on the location and duration.

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

These fees are broken into several payments paid to the Irmo Band Boosters. If payments are not made by the specified dates, the board has set aside consequences. These include inability to attend band camp and ineligibility of the individual to perform in competitions. It is **EXTREMELY** important that your assessments are paid on time because your student has been assigned a spot for the show and if fees are not paid there is a hole in the show that affects the entire band! Booster money can be earned by various fundraisers.

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 fundraisers are setup to provide the student assessment account with the majority of the profit, usually 80%, but may vary depending on the fundraiser. Many fundraisers are developed each year to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to offset their assessments.

What type of fundraising do I have to do?

There are many fundraising opportunities throughout the year. However, most are in the fall to coincide with the marching season and assessment payment schedule. Listed below are some of the major fundraisers, all of which are announced many times.

Patron Stickers: Patron memberships are a way that friends, relatives, businesses, doctors, etc. – anyone that you know or do business with or whom you believe might be interested in supporting the band. Donations start at \$5.00 with all donors receiving the Patron Membership sticker.

Cobb Frozen Foods Sale: Held during summer band camp with delivery after the first week of school

Fruit Sales: Towards the end of the fall, the band sells fruit, usually for delivery in early December.

Pine Straw: Twice a year, in the fall and spring, the band takes advance orders for pine straw. Then, everyone participates in the unloading and delivery on a designated Saturday.

Palmetto *Esprit de Corps* Invitational: The Boosters hold a Marching Band competition each Fall for area marching bands to compete. Booster families are expected to help out with the advance planning and day-of-event help. Proceeds from this group project go towards the General Fund, which keeps the overall assessment fees lower for each student.

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Grocery Store Shopper Cards: Currently, we have shopper rewards or bonus cards for Publix and Bi-Lo. With these cards, each grocery store chain will donate money to the band based on the total purchases by all group members. There is no cost for these cards and they do not take away any benefits from your normal shopping card – it is an extra benefit for the band! This is a group fundraiser.

- Publix – Publix does not have their own shopper reward card to get special deals. You get an Irmo Band Boosters card from the Boosters and have the cashier scan your card each time you checkout.
- Bi-Lo – Bi-Lo issues you a Bonus Rewards card that you use in order to get special prices on certain items. Starting in August of each year, you can take an Irmo Band Booster Bi-Lo card (provided by the Boosters) to the store and have it scanned one time. This “connects” your Bi-Lo card to the Band Boosters for the remainder of that school year and adds your total purchases to the band’s overall total. This does not take away any of your individual shopper rewards.

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 are exchanged between various band members, sections, and big brothers/big sisters).

What uniforms does my student wear?

The marching band and Hi-Stepper uniforms are provided for the students to use but each marcher 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.

The Boosters provide each student a “show” t-shirt each year. Marching band students are also provided a ***Bands of Irmo*** t-shirt once in their marching career. These 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. The only exception is the “show” t-shirt, which can be worn anytime after the marching season.

Uniform Parts: The marching uniform 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 Drillmaster shoes. Percussion does not need gauntlets or gloves. Percussion Pit members do not wear shakos. Gloves and Drillmaster shoes are sized and ordered during band camp, and are paid for by students (not covered by assessments).

In addition, students are required to supply certain personal items including 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)!

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Uniform Bag: A numbered uniform bag is provided for each Band member for use with transporting the uniform and parts (except shoes). The student keeps the bag and uniform parts (not the jacket and bib pants) during the season. The jacket and bib pants always stay in the band uniform room. For trips, the jacket and bib pants are put in the bag after inspection for loading on the truck. The uniform bag must be returned at the end of the season

Fittings: Uniforms are fitted to the students each year. Uniform fittings begin with the seniors and continue down through the other grades. It is important that each student gets fitted each year for a uniform (sizes change for many students). Fitting schedules and times will be announced. Please make sure that the bibs are hemmed so that the bottoms of the trouser legs touch the tops of the dress band shoes with NO break in the crease. Bibs will be issued with ample hem material for alteration. **Under no circumstances should any material be cut from the uniform for alterations.**

Summer Band Uniform: The uniform for musicians consists of school-code black shorts (at least finger-tip length), black belt, a *Bands of Irmo* polo shirt, plain white ankle socks, and plain white (non-canvas) low-top tennis shoes (paint pens work well for covering small, non-white areas). Students are responsible for purchasing their black shorts, black belt, white socks and tennis shoes. The uniform is usually worn for football games in September, as well as travel to competitions when requested by the Director. Additional details are in the student handbook and provided at band camp.

Hi-Stepper Costumes and Other Clothing: The Hi-Steppers perform in the marching show in costumes. The costumes and any flags are similar to the musician's uniform but 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 Hi-Stepper member.

Hi-Stepper 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 Hi-Steppers, which is separate from their marching band assessments.

Wind Suits: Each Band student is provided a wind suit jacket and pants. Middle school members will return their wind suit at the end of the season. High school members will keep theirs for the four years they are in the band. This is worn while traveling and usually with one of the band t-shirts or the polo shirt. The summer uniform all-white tennis shoes and white socks are also worn with it. Many students also wear shorts underneath to facilitate uniform changes. The Hi-Steppers do not use the wind suit, but have separate pants and jackets, which are returned at the end of the year.

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 cafeteria or under the breezeway outside the band room. Students should be **in place with all**

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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 drillmaster shoes prior to each performance.

The Boosters or the school are responsible for dry-cleaning of the uniforms (jackets, bib pants, and gauntlets). **STUDENTS ARE NEVER TO LAUNDRER THE BIB AND JACKET.**

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. 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 you're financial support).

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. It is a great way to meet other students and it is not necessary or encouraged to chaperone the same group as your student. All chaperones are required to attend a chaperone training session each year. Several sessions are offered at the beginning of each season.

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.

For long trips, such as out-of-state competitions, charter bus companies are used.

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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.

Should I continue private lessons or add private lessons for my student?

This is an individual choice. Lessons are recommended and can only help anyone improve. Some families find that a more flexible lesson schedule during marching season is desirable.

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. At away games, the whole band may attend and perform the show. For many of the away games, a Pep Band of 25-35 students go and only play in the stands.

The band also performs at various competitions on Saturdays during the fall progressing towards the state championships and, in many years, a Bands of America regional competition. On some occasions (such as homecoming), the band will not perform at half-time.

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. It is remarkable to see the differences in the marching and music as the season progresses. The students also appreciate the support of the parents who take a few minutes towards the end of rehearsal to see what they are doing.

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. Your band directory is a valuable piece of information to help you set up carpools. (Older students are allowed to transport younger students to and from band rehearsals with parent permission.)

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 and is provided **48 hours before leaving for the event**. 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 bandroom.

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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 (www.irmoband.org)
- 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 Thursday nights, 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 and posted on the website.
- Booster leadership (see web site for contacts)
- Other parents

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). Those not attending or not meeting the physical, musical, and decorum requirements will begin the season as alternates. 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.

During the season, Band Alternates can earn the spot of members not performing to the standard expected by the director and staff. The member then becomes an alternate until which time has earned a spot back into the show. When possible, alternates will perform on Friday nights and regular members will perform for contests. This cannot always be decided well in advance of performances or can parents necessarily be notified of last minute changes in status.

How easy will it be to get to know other band members?

The Irmo band has a history of being a second family to their members. Many of the students who have experienced marching band have developed friendships with students of different grade levels. Each first-year marcher is given a big brother/big sister to help them through their first year of marching band. The students (and parents) try to be friendly and are willing to help each other out.

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 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.

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What kind of recognition is given to marching band members?

Each spring there is a total *Bands of Irmo* recognition dinner 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.

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 2-3 hours 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, 1:00-8:30pm or 8:00 am – 3:00 pm for hi-steppers.

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 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- 6:30pm, unless otherwise instructed.

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/cafeteria area. 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 Hi-Steppers 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.

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What type of supervision is there at band camp?

Chaperones are carefully selected by the Boosters to ensure the students have adequate and appropriate supervision while at band camp. There is usually a first-aid person available to the students and staff for emergencies.

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
- Water bottle or jug, 1-2 quart size (mark your container)
- Music and instrument

What is expected of the students at rehearsals?

Students are expected to bring their own water container. We recommend an inexpensive, insulated water bottle or jug in the 1-2 quart size. The students should bring it full in the morning and will be able to refill it throughout the day at the rehearsal lot. For after-school rehearsals during school, they should bring it empty to school and fill it at the rehearsal field.

Drink lots of water! It is easy to get dehydrated quickly when marching. Marching is generally done early in the morning and in the later afternoon. Students are expected to learn to be on time at 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?

The Boosters provide healthy snacks during the outside rehearsals. Since these are full day sessions, the Boosters typically provide one meal (lunch or dinner) to the students. This allows them to stay on campus to focus on the camp and alleviates many transportation issues.

A tent and cooling stations are setup 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. Many volunteers are needed to support this effort!

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.

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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 5A. The 5A competition is conducted on one Saturday – preliminary competition in the morning and early afternoon, with the finalists that evening.

Bands of America (BoA): Bands of America is the nation's leading presenter of music events for high school band students. Irmo typically attends one of the BOA regional events in the southeast. Regional events usually include 30-35 bands in various classes.

Can I take pictures at competitions?

You can take pictures or video of the Irmo band at local and state competitions for non-commercial use only.

You may also take still pictures at BoA events. However, you may not video or audio tape any band, including Irmo, at BoA events. Doing so could result in our band's disqualification.

When and where do I get tickets for competitions?

For local and state competitions, event tickets can be obtained at the event ticket booth.

BoA tickets can be purchased on-line at www.bands.org/shop. General admission tickets are fine for most BoA events but you need reserved tickets for some regional events. The Boosters usually make arrangements for group tickets, in advance. When announced, make sure you sign up and pay for tickets.

An excellent way to find out more about tickets for competitions is at Booster meetings. Sitting with a group of Irmo fans during a competition adds to the fun. Booster meetings are a great place to find out who else is going to be attending the competitions.

Miscellaneous Information

How do I find out where the band is performing?

Come to booster meetings, watch your student's itinerary, and watch the band website.

Where can I get all those neat souvenirs I see others have?

The Boosters sell several t-shirts, sweatshirts, hats, and other souvenirs. Souvenirs are usually sold during Booster meetings and other announced times. A complete list of items is available on the website at www.irmoband.org/merchandise.htm.

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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 – listen up. This is your best opportunity to find out who, what, where and when things are going on.
- 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 when parent buses aren't available.
- Be prepared to cheer! The band loves it when they have their own cheering section. Learn the times during the show, when cheering helps and does not cover crucial parts of the performance. Plan a seating strategy with other parent's before-hand and get to events early to sit together. All this really helps the students.
- Don't put uniform (except dress uniform) items away in the closet or drawers when cleaned. Keep all items (socks, belt, gloves, etc., but not shoes) in their uniform bag. That way you won't spend time hunting for them each time they're needed. Please help ensure that uniforms are properly hung during those times the students has the uniform at home. Students are given clear instructions on proper uniform care.

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, 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 rehearsal field for warm-ups a little early and is ready to start at 4:00pm.
- “Where's my tick?” and “Do we line up on the hash?”
This does not refer to insects or food. These terms indicate how the rehearsal field is marked off. Students have the field coordinates to answer these questions.
- “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
Consists of about 1/3 of the marching band. They attend all football Away games. Director will have sign up sheets the week of Away games and will let students know how many can go from each section each week. Hi-Stepper and Pit members typically do not attend Away games unless the full band is attending.
- “Play to the box!”
This means that instruments should be pointed toward the tower when on the rehearsal field. The real box is the press box, which is what instruments should be pointed to during these times at performances.

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- Rehearsal field
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.”
The breezeway just outside of the band room is where parents who will be chaperoning meet and the buses are loaded. After inspection (see more under uniforms), the band will warm up in two large circles. When it is time, the band will march by two’s into the stadium. The band enters at the next to the last stadium entrance on the right and goes up to their seating area, which has railings around it. No food or drinks (except water) are allowed while in dress uniform. When they 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 just left of this area (facing the field), which is in the area of the 30 yard-line.
- “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!).
- “Are you working props?”
Props are visual field enhancements, such as tarps, graphics panels, and other visual items that enhance the show theme. These have to be transported, unloaded, setup, and put on the field for the show and the reverse done after the show. Parents help with all aspects of this. There is work involved with this, but it is a great way to be a part of the show, get closer to the students, and really understand what marching band is all about.
- Big Brother/Big Sister
New band members are assigned a big brother/sister at the beginning of fall band camp. The big brother/sister will often provide each other encouragement, guidance, treats, gifts, etc. prior to home games and competitions.

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. 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

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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.

If you have a younger student 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.

How to Contact Us

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