



Pickens High School Bands

500 Dragon Drive Jasper, GA 30143

February 4, 2019

WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED “HIGH SCHOOL BAND?”

Pickens High School has a band program that is SUPERIOR in quality. We hope this letter answers the many frequently asked questions or concerns we commonly hear from upcoming band students/parents when considering participation in our superior program.

CAN I PARTICIPATE IN BAND AS A CLASS AND SPORTS?

Yes, with careful planning and coordination of the practice schedules of both athletics and band. Specifically, playing a sport and being in band as a CLASS is never a conflict. Most conflicts arise with after-school rehearsals for marching band and sports. In the spring, both concert and symphonic bands rehearse in sectional and full band formats occasionally after school, but provided the student informs us within a 24-hour period, minimum, of the conflict, a “sharing” or other similar compromise of the student’s time can usually be worked out. The coaches and I communicate regularly.

CAN I DO MARCHING BAND AND SPORTS?

Usually, with these exceptions: football, JV or varsity football cheerleading, volleyball, cross country and softball. All of these sports meet in the fall and practice at the same time as marching band rehearsals. Other types of cheerleading can be worked with, provided the student coordinates the practice schedule of both marching band and cheerleading, (i.e. basketball cheerleading). We do NOT share time with travel teams, as they are non-PHS groups.

IS MARCHING BAND MANDATORY?

No. Marching band is not mandatory, but highly-encouraged. The marching band is the most visual aspect of the PHS band program for the community and teaches skills that are essential for success in not only the band class, but in high school. Time-management, commitment, hard work, team-building and determination are daily skills we teach and develop. And, IT IS FUN!

Note: students will not be allowed to “come in and out” of the band program as a result of not wishing to participate in marching band or concert band. This creates interrupted ensemble rehearsal time, and time when the student’s progress on his/her instrument cannot be directly monitored in class every day. Dropping band fall or spring semester for non-academic or resolvable class schedule conflict reasons will result in the student being out of the band program for the entire year, and likely on a permanent basis.

Band should be a class on your schedule for both the Fall and the Spring semesters. All Freshmen should sign up for Beginning Band I AND II! As it says above, students will not be allowed to drop in and out of band class and no one will be allowed to march if they are not in a band class. The **ONLY** exception will be unavoidable class conflicts that Mr. Oubre will deal with on an individual basis- freshmen don’t have any of these! Excellence demands commitment and commitment demands choices being made sometimes. While it would be ideal to be able to take every single class you would like to in high school, it is just not possible.

I AM DOING MARCHING BAND...DO I HAVE TO GO TO BAND CAMP AT PHS?

Yes, because missing band camp is like missing 4 weeks of marching band rehearsal! How so? Well...in one day of band camp, we accomplish the same amount of work on the show as in a full week of marching band rehearsal once school has started.

Is Band camp hard? If you mean will it be tiring, for sure! If you mean will you be lost or unable to do what everyone else is doing, NO! A BIG secret has been kept for years, but now it’s out: last year, there were 8th graders just like you who thought they’d be lost or unable to do it, and now they’re “pros” at it! No kidding!

Band camp is not just marching around all day- we have social time in the afternoon, do indoor sectional music rehearsals in the hot part of the day, and have fun stuff like trivia and other activities. It is a hard few days- but it is also a great time, too.

WHAT IS THE TIME COMMITMENT FOR MARCHING BAND?

There are basically two divisions of time for rehearsal of the marching band: Spring/Summer time, and rehearsal time once school has started. Below is a chart that explains the Spring/Summer time commitment. Once school resumes in the Fall, the schedule is very regular; it is charted below, too.

This year, we will have a few summer practice dates before camp starts but these are totally voluntary and will help you if you attend. **Band camp is MANDATORY ATTENDANCE.**

MARCHING BAND (“MB”) DATES- SPRING & SUMMER 2019

Date	Event	Who is involved
April 8-12, 2019 (4-6 PM)	MB Percussion clinic- Middle school students can ride the activity bus from the middle schools	All 2019 MB percussionists (8 th grade perc. players go to this as well as old marchers)
April 22-26, 29, 2019 4:30-6:30pm	Color Guard auditions- April 22-25 dates are the clinic days, 4/26 is “help” day (optional), April 29 is the actual audition day. Middle school students can ride the activity bus from the middle schools	Girls interested in being on 2019 color guard (aka “flags”)- this includes veterans and new people.
April 16-17, 2019 4:30-6:00pm	“Rookie” Camp at PHS- learn how to march before band camp in August- it’s a fun learning time! Middle school students can ride the activity bus from the middle schools	Upcoming 8 th graders in MB, new MB officers/sect. leaders
May 18, 2019	First Full Marching Band rehearsal for 2019, 8am-Noon	Everyone marching in 2019!
June 2019	June 4, June 13, June 18, and June 27 (6:00-8:00 pm)	Everyone! If you are in town, come out!
July 7, 2019	***New- Uniform Fitting Day, Full Band	Times from 1-5pm- appt. times will be sent out later!
July 8, 2019	Leadership, Guard and Percussion Pre-Camp at PHS	Guard and Percussion, Leadership
July 9, 2019	Rookies (new marchers) report for camp at PHS	Rookies, Leadership, Guard, Percussion
July 10-12, 2019	Full Band Camp at PHS	All marchers for 2019
July 15-19, 2019	Full Band Camp at PHS	All marchers for 2019
July 23, 2019	Picture night and Indoor Music Rehearsal, 6-8:30 PM	Entire MB
July 25, 2019	Marching Rehearsal, 6-9:00 PM	All marchers
July 30, 2019	Marching Rehearsal, 6-9:00 PM	All marchers
August 1, 2019	Marching Rehearsal, 6-9:00 PM	All marchers
August 6, 2019	First Day of School	Every student in Pickens County

MARCHING BAND (“MB”) SCHEDULE ONCE SCHOOL STARTS

Day of week/time	Event	Who is involved
Monday, TIME TBD	<i>Guard sectional</i>	<i>Color guard</i>
Tuesday, 3:45-6:15pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire marching band
<i>Probably Monday</i>	<i>Percussion sectional</i>	MB Percussion section
Thursday, 3:45-6:15pm	<i>Marching band rehearsal</i>	Entire marching band

The entire marching season is effectively concluded after the fourth week of October. Our “peak event” is the last marching contest we attend in October. After that event, marching band is reduced to one rehearsal per week, for about a 30-45 minute rehearsal. ***So- the busy part of the season is actually only from the first week of August to October, a period of only about 12 weeks!***

SO...HOW DO I GET IN MARCHING BAND?

Easy! A commitment form will be given to each band student in February and it will be due by the date on the form.

NO REFUNDS OF BAND CAMP MONEY AFTER MAY 17, 2019 (except under extenuating circumstances- NOT for “changing your mind” or not fully realizing schedule conflicts!)

We hope these pages have served to answer the most frequently asked questions we encounter from new and aspiring PHS Pride of Pickens Band members. Additionally, you can see that the scope of activity that is possible in an active and superior band program such as ours is quite different from the middle school experience, both for the band student and their parents. It does require a lot of time, but, I promise, it is worth it!

Often, we describe high school band like this: “It’s called band, just like in middle school, but therein the similarities end.” High school band at PHS is truly an opportunity for many wonderful memories, rich musical experiences, and life-changing events that successful young adults need in the “real world,” regardless of their occupational or educational choice upon graduating. During my time as a director, I have had literally hundreds of former students come back to tell me of how their experience in band was a major factor in their success in college, business, etc. No one comes back and says “Quitting band was the right thing for me!” DON’T miss this chance- the chance to be a part of memories and music that are SUPERIOR!

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Unfortunately, marching band is not free. **The base cost to march at PHS is only \$350.00.** To let the new parents know, we are one of the cheapest marching bands in northern Georgia. Bands not so far away charge anywhere from \$500 to \$1000+ in order to participate in marching band. The average cost for a Cobb marching band member is about \$850. This fee covers hired staff (not the band director- people we bring in to help with camp!), music costs, arrangements of marching tunes, drill for the field, and supplies specifically related to the marching band. **Other fees include uniform fees and uniform parts (around \$75-\$100 for new members) due on July 7th.** Money should NEVER be the reason not to march. We are not in a position to provide scholarship to students, but we can work out payment plans for anyone as long as they are maintained! Let me say that again, MONEY SHOULD NEVER BE THE REASON YOU DECIDE NOT TO MARCH!

The Marching Show for the 2019 Pride of Pickens Band!

TO BE ANNOUNCED ON FEBRUARY 15th!!!!

EIGHTH GRADE EXCUSE LIST FOR NOT WANTING TO DO MARCHING BAND

“I can’t memorize music”

TRUTH: All MB members now in the band once said that, and they all did it- are they any different than you? We train you on how to memorize- the music is VERY reasonable to play for most 8th graders. Pass-offs are very reasonable...if you work for it. Anything you do a bazillion times can get memorized!

“I heard band camp for new members is awful!”

TRUTH: We have a very high survival rate for both band camp weeks. In fact, out of last year’s 2018 “rookie” class, all survived and are thriving! Only a few have a slight limp! ☺ (JUST KIDDING!)

“I don’t know how to march”

TRUTH: Walking is a skill that took you roughly 9-18 months of your life to learn. We guarantee you will learn to march like a pro in 6 hours! In fact, usually our best marchers are those who have just learned- they out-march the vets almost all the time!

“I don’t like getting sweaty/cold” (be sure to use a whiny voice when saying this...)

TRUTH: Yes, MB is an outdoor activity, and we have no power over the weather. However, in hot weather we take a lot of water breaks. We take every reasonable precaution. TRULY successful professionals know the value of REAL work ethic!

(YAWN...) “I’m lazy”

TRUTH: If you’re willing to admit that openly as an excuse to not do a great activity like marching band, then marching band may not be for you. Band teaches a high work ethic, and IT IS FUN, TOO! But, it’s not a place for lazy people, we admit.

“I can’t afford it”

TRUTH: **Money will never be a reason that someone cannot participate.** In cases where a legitimate financial situation exists that warrants it, we will work out payment plans, extend deadlines, etc. to make the activity financially feasible. We have a history of making this happen for people who need it. *Money is NOT a problem, as long the recipient of the financial aid/help shows effort in re-paying it.*

“It takes too much time”

TRUTH: The marching season is “intensive” for a 12-week period, roughly from the 1st week of August through the last week of October. After marching contests end, we cut the MB rehearsal schedule back to about an hour a week- just enough to make sure Friday night games rock! And, MB is the place where you’ll make memories that last a lifetime....A very small sacrifice for such a wonderful experience.

“It isn’t fun”

TRUTH: We offer this fun guarantee: If you don’t like MB after we’ve been to band camp, then you may get out at that point. We can say this because after someone has experienced enough of MB to take them through the pre-camp and band camp schedule, only every few years do we ever have anyone decide it wasn’t for them. Unfortunately, some 8th graders make this decision before they even try it, not having a clue what it really is, or operating on false information and rumor. ASK A PHS MARCHING BAND MEMBER if you don’t believe this letter!