

The Unofficial Guide for New Marching Band Parents

Plant City High School Band Boosters
www.raiderregiment.com

Marching Band 101

A guide for new band parents (and veterans, too)

This booklet is the product of former “new band parents” who spent a good bit of time in our first year in various stages of confusion. In the many hours we spent watching practices, picking up our kids, and going to competitions we have all felt confused, lost and totally bewildered at one time or another. We hope this document will help ease you through the transition from “new” band parent to “veteran” band parent.

For most of us (parents and students alike), the transition from middle school band programs to high school band programs is huge, especially in marching band. The increased expectations come with greater rewards, in terms of your student’s accomplishments and the pride you will have in watching their accomplishments. This document is our attempt to share with you some of the finer points of making the most of your years as a band parent.

The PCHS Marching Band program is supported by a parent run organization – the Plant City High School Band Parent Association (PCHSBPA). The PCHSBPA exists solely through volunteer parents in order to help provide your students with an enjoyable and rewarding band experience. Please join us in meeting this challenge by volunteering your time and talents. The students will reap the benefits. We welcome all new parents and look forward to getting to know you and your students!

Fees associated with participation with the band (concert and marching) are outlined in the Band Handbook and can be found on the Plant City Band website at www.raiderregiment.com. The fees are used to offset the expense of running the marching, concert, and jazz bands, including band camp, uniforms, transportation, staff, etc.

Band Booster meetings are on the calendar. The meeting begins at 6:00pm in the Band Room. Any change in the schedule will be posted on the band website at www.raiderregiment.com. Your participation is most welcomed.

REGARDING THE STUDENTS

Marching Band, Percussion Camp, & Sensations Camp

Band camp is conducted in late July/early August a couple of weeks prior to the start of school. The percussion and Raiderettes usually meet 4-6 times throughout the summer or during a week just before full band camp. Dates and times are always announced before the end of the school year. The staff and students work **very** hard throughout those days. The scheduled start and stop times may vary and can be found on the band website at www.raiderregiment.com. It is important for the students to attend because this is when they learn the music for their marching band show.

The kids get quite a workout. Be prepared for plenty of sweating. It is an experience most of the kids “love to hate.” Dress appropriately – t-shirts, shorts, comfortable sneakers, hat, and sunscreen. Bring a water container – unlimited refills are available throughout the day – water is your best friend.

Band camp culminates with a “show-n-tell” and cookout for the band families. It is great fun to come out and see how far the kids have come in just those couple of weeks. We plan for a parent meeting following the show-n-tell/cookout, so you can meet other band parents, the staff, and the booster organization, and complete and have notarized necessary paper work for the school year.

A major benefit of band camp – when your freshman or new marching band student arrives for the first day of high school, he or she will already be a part of a well respected group and will have a whole new group of friends (across all grades) to help with the transition into high school. Our band students look out for each other and especially for the new members.

Marching Band Season

The Marching Band season starts as band camp ends. Practice continues after school during the week. Mr. Blair will provide your students with a practice schedule, which is typically every Tuesday and Thursday 4pm-7pm. Be sure to ask your student for the schedule. The schedule is also posted to our web site: www.raiderregiment.com.

Football games

The band performs their show at half time at all football games (Friday evenings), as well as playing in the stands during the game. The band has a roped off section in the stands and many of the band parents sit together near the band – a great opportunity to get to know other parents and see your student perform up close. The band will also be fed before the game!

Uniforms

Your student will be issued a marching uniform consisting of jacket, pants, shoes, hat, gauntlets and gloves (as appropriate by section). You will need to provide black socks (at least mid calf). Students are responsible for assuring that they treat their uniform with great care. Each event, the uniform and gauntlets are issued to the student on a labeled hanger. The student is responsible for returning the uniform properly hung to the parents and student volunteers in the uniform room. Uniforms and gauntlets are sent out for dry cleaning throughout the year. The uniform or gauntlets should not be removed without permission from the band director.

Each student is also issued a Show T-shirt to be worn to school on Friday during Marching Band season. The shirt is also worn under their uniform at all marching events. Additionally, your student should bring a pair of cool, comfortable shorts to be worn under their marching uniform. We strongly recommend against denim material.

It is imperative that your student comes to each event prepared! They should have their instrument, music (if needed), CLEAN shoes, hat, gloves and black socks (at least mid calf). Without these items – they will not be able to participate.

HELP US HELP THE STUDENTS- Many hands make lighter work!

During the year, but especially during marching season, the students need many helping hands behind the scenes to make their shows successful. As your student enters high school, this is one of the few opportunities you may have to stay involved with their activities and get to know the kids they spend a great deal of their time with through the week. The students realize very quickly that Marching Band does not happen without a lot of parental support. The boosters will be looking for parents to:

- Help with uniform fittings and alterations
- Help with cleaning and organizing the uniform and equipment rooms
- Help “lost and bewildered parents and students” find their way
- Help to load, provide, and distribute water to band members during football games and competitions
- Help load equipment onto the track as needed or getting the equipment down to the field during home games
- Help wipe down bleachers where students will be seated (we are all about saving those uniform pants!) and rope off band section
- Help distribute uniforms to the section leaders
- Help sell gloves as needed (\$5 per pair) in uniform room
- Help assist students in the auditorium prior to inspection by responding to uniform emergencies (my zipper won’t zip, my gauntlets don’t fit, I need a band aid to cover the earrings I’m not supposed to be wearing and do you have any nail polish remover for the fabulous purple polish I am not supposed to be wearing??)
- Help to assimilate students in line to march to field or board buses
- If buses, assure that supply bags and medical release forms folders are present and roll is taken prior to departure at each location
- Help getting equipment on and off the field during half-time shows and events (drum major podiums, props, instruments)
- Help chaperone events, parades, competitions we host, and the Strawberry Festival Book
- Help with post event uniform collection, inspection and instruction on hanging of uniforms
- Help with any other special talents or skills you have to offer the program!
- Help with planning and creative suggestions on Senior night, Band Banquet.

All volunteers must complete a SERVE form and log their hours in the volunteer book, kept in the Uniform room.

Planning Ahead for Band Cookout, Senior Night, and the Band Banquet

Band Picnic - It has been a tradition in the PCHS Band to gather for a pre-marching season picnic where we meet and catch up from the summer. It is also a time to get to know the new marching band students and parents that have transitioned from middle school or from another location. We also begin to reflect on the activities that lay ahead and how we meet will the student's and the programs needs. The boosters provide hamburgers and hot dogs while each section brings something for everybody.

Senior Night - It has been a tradition in the PCHS Band for us to honor our senior students and their parents prior to the game (see schedule at www.raiderregiment.com). Students are escorted onto the field by their parents or to be greeted and acknowledged by the principal and band director. Try to be there for Senior Night to see the presentation.

Band Banquet - It has been a tradition in the PCHS Band for us to celebrate our successful year with students, family and faculty for a year-end Band Banquet. Dinner, videos and award presentations are lots of fun. The highlight of the evening includes the announcement of next seasons marching show.

Fundraising

We conduct several fundraisers throughout the year to support the Band program. Your Band fees only scratch the surface of the expenses incurred in running PCHS's outstanding programs. Please try to participate as you can in any of these or provide us with your ideas for others. Our fundraisers range from selling products such as World's Finest Chocolate and discount cards to hosting a colorguard competition and running our cheesecake booth at the Strawberry Festival.

HELPFUL HINTS TO SAVE YOU TIME, GAS & GRIEF

Mr. Blair, the staff, and the booster organization want this to be a positive experience for all the students and their families. Here are some helpful hints (learned from our own experiences):

- Hold your child responsible for being prepared. The first time they forget something, will likely be the last. They really do learn to be resourceful when they have to be.
- "If you are early, you are on time. If you are on time, you are late. If you are late, get ready for Blair!" This means that students are expected to arrive for scheduled practice about 20 minutes early so they are in position and ready to rehearse at the scheduled start time.
- When you pick up your child from practice, try to be there a little early: The staff cannot leave the premises until all students have been picked up. This is a safety issue for students as well as the staff. They have families they want to go home to as well!

- Mr. Blair and the staff try very hard to end practice at the scheduled time. Occasionally practice may run over. Please be patient ... it is usually for a very good reason.
- Ask your student for the schedule each week, but be prepared for changes.
- Check the web site often – www.raiderregiment.com
- Network – Take the opportunity to meet other parents (after practice, at games & competitions, fundraising activities, etc.). This is how we all met each other. It is also the best way to find carpools and get helpful hints on band parenting from others.
- Be prepared to cheer! The band loves it when they have their own cheering section at games and competitions.
- Keep all small uniform items (socks, shoes, gloves, etc.) in a bag. That way, you will not spend time hunting for them when needed.
- Do not hesitate to ask any of the “veteran” band parents or PCHS Board Members. We have all been there and are anxious to help.

YOU KNOW YOU’RE A MARCHING BAND PARENT WHEN ...

- You make three more trips than expected to drop off your child with everything he or she needs. Shame on you!
- You can’t pick your child out of the crowd because they all look alike
- You no longer speak of your child as a fourteen-year-old son/daughter, but as a “freshman flute.”
- You prominently display a band calendar in your kitchen and have band dates marked on your work calendar
- You know that “are you ready to jig-i-lo?” is an opportunity to embarrass our kids beyond belief!
- Your newest best friends are fellow band parents!

CONCLUSION

We hope this has been helpful. Anytime you feel lost, tap a “veteran” parent on the shoulder and ask for help. Our main goal is for each of the students to have a great experience being part of the Plant City High School Raider Regiment and the other music ensembles. As stated earlier, we are a parent run organization. We look forward to getting to know each family. Each student and their parents contribute to the band programs and make it a great place to be.

Welcome to the Plant City High School Band family!