

# Marching Mustangs 101

Whether this is your first or last year of the **Marching Mustangs experience**, you may have a few questions about the Marching Mustangs. Here are some answers!

- **How do I get communications from the band, and where do I find information?**
  - **Boosters website - <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/>**
    - Alerts will always be posted at the top of home page
    - Google calendar - scroll down to bottom of the home page, and subscribe / add the calendar to yours
    - Email Boosters - [dgsbandboosters@gmail.com](mailto:dgsbandboosters@gmail.com)
    - Charms - see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/charms.html>
  - Remind app - @devanbrook "Marching Mustangs 2019"
  - Remind text - 81010
  - GroupMe - check with your students for their section's group chat
  - Twitter - @DGS\_Bands
  - Instagram - @DGS\_bands
  - Facebook - Facebook.com/DownersGroveSouthMustangBands/
  - Email section staff leader - contact them for best email
  - Email Mr. Brooks - [dbrooks@csd99.org](mailto:dbrooks@csd99.org)
  
- **Who are the Band Boosters, what do they do, and why should I join?**
  - Boosters are an organization of parents with children enrolled in the band programs (Marching Band, Pep Band, Jazz Bands, Ensembles, Winter Guard).
  - Boosters provide volunteer support and funding to the band programs. The largest fundraiser is the Music Bowl.
  - Funding for the bands includes new equipment, instruments, uniforms, trips, meals, competition fees, music licenses, composer visits, workshops, band banquets, etc.
  - Booster Board meetings are generally held once a month; all band parents are encouraged to attend.
  - Being a Booster is a great way to meet other parents and get more first-hand information about what is going on in the band program.
  - Participating family memberships are \$50, and directly support all band students.
  - For more information (including online payment), see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/membership.html>
  
- **Do I really need to be at every practice? What about vacation?**
  - **Rehearsals during Marching Band season are mandatory.**
  - One absent student disrupts rehearsal 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 rehearsals.

- Please help your student make every effort to be there.
  - Planned vacations and conflicts are expected, as are unplanned illness, deaths in the family, etc.
  - Please notify Mr Brooks of all planned absences in advance for approval
    - [https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/uploads/2/1/1/3/21137436/absence\\_request\\_form.pdf](https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/uploads/2/1/1/3/21137436/absence_request_form.pdf)
  - Your student should notify section leaders and staff of any updates.
- **What happens if I'm sick?**
    - If you are sick from school, or previously in the day, it is assumed that you will not attend marching band practice.
    - Your absence impacts the whole section and band, so please let your section leader, section staff, and Mr. Brooks know as soon as possible, so they can accommodate and plan for your absence.
- **What happens if I'm late?**
    - Tardiness affects the whole section, and sometimes the band, and is heavily frowned upon.
    - In the past, if students are repeatedly late in a section, the whole section will be asked to run laps, or other exercise. Rest assured, this only happens once or twice before students ensure they aren't late again!
- **What time does practice start?**
    - The google calendar will list start time for all practices.
    - Your student will get updated via GroupMe or Remind for any updates or changes.
    - **Always plan on being at practice at least 15 minutes prior to listed time.** You need to make sure that you are ready to start practice at the listed time, not enter the building then!
- **What time does practice end?**
    - The google calendar will list end times for all practices.
    - However, if practice ends at 9:00pm, that may mean that they stop playing on the field at 8:55, then have a quick band recap, then a section meeting, and then move all equipment and instruments back to the building.
    - This may mean that your student is not dismissed until 9:15 or later.
- **Why are percussionists always the first to arrive and the last to leave?**
    - Percussionists have the most equipment to move and put away. Most are heavy and large, and are not easy to roll across the parking lot. All equipment must be put away in several different rooms, and those rooms are often congested with other band students.

- **Percussionists should generally plan on arriving 30 minutes early, and staying 30 minutes late.**
  
- **What's with all the dancing?**
  - Over the years, marching band performances by serious competition bands of all levels have become more than just playing music and simple formations. The performances are now a Show. They included scripted and choreographed movements, and may include singing or voice-over recordings to tell the story of the 3 distinct musical movements of the performance as a whole.
  - Yes, there is likely to be some “dancing” on the field. But not to worry - you don't need to be (and won't look like) a ballerina on the field! The “dancing” is simply a further expression of the music you're playing, and is a part of the overall effect.
  - Also, there is stretching, movement, and “dancing” elements included as part of warm-ups; primarily to stretch muscles you didn't even know you had, or needed!
  
- **Where can I see past performances and pictures of the band?**
  - See <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/videos--photos.html>
  
- **What is band camp, and how does it work?**
  - Band camp (and mini-band camp) are a series of long days of extensive practicing of the Show.
  - Students will be at the school for 8-14 hours, depending upon the day.
  - The long days are filled with hard work, exercise, learning the Show music and production.
  - There are plenty of times for breaks, section bonding, snacks and meals.
  - See the google calendar for exact days and times.
  - Please make sure your students brings
    - Sunscreen - reapply every hour or two
    - Hat - to cover eyes, and preferably ears
    - Water bottle - at least 16oz, will be refilled throughout the day
    - Bug spray
    - Ear plugs
    - Snacks - if wanted
    - Jacket/sweatshirt/sweatpants - for cooler mornings or nights
    - Comfortable shoes!
    - Music and any other requirements from your section
  - For more information see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/band-camp.html>
  
- **How do I learn and memorize all that music?**
  - All students are expected to learn and memorize their own music for the Show as quickly as possible.
  - Practice is the best possible way to do this - so practice, practice, practice!

- **How much should I be practicing at home?**
  - All band students are expected to be practicing at home to help the entire band move along with the production of the Show as quickly as possible.
  - Only your student will know how much, and what, they need to work on most.
  - **Don't practice until you get it right. Practice until you can't get it wrong.**
  
- **How can I practice at home if I play percussion?**
  - Percussionists may play 12 or more instruments, and the band does not expect you to have any or all of them at home (you're welcome, parents!).
  - Percussionists will have several months of practice and auditions leading up to the marching season. Placements on each individual instrument are based upon auditions, number of students auditioning, number of parts needed for each instrument in the musical selections, and other factors determined by band staff and directors.
  - If you need time to practice your instrument at school, please speak with your section leader, section staff, or Mr. Brooks to arrange a time to access the building and practice rooms.
  
- **What is a dot book?**
  - These are cards that students wear around their necks during band camp that tell them exactly where they stand for different parts of the Show.
  - Students will learn quickly: **DO NOT LOSE THE DOT BOOK!**
  
- **What is the Pit?**
  - Marching band percussion is broken up into 2 sections:
    - Battery - march on the field during the Show; typically base, snare and tenor drums
    - Pit or Front Ensemble - large instruments on the track area, do not march during the Show; typically vibraphones, marimba, timpani, drumkit, cymbals, gong, keyboards, etc.
  
- **The band is really loud - is that safe for my ears?**
  - The band IS loud! Depending upon section, and location, **practices and performances generally range from 90 - 105 dB.**
  - Sounds greater than 85 dB can lead to hearing loss in both adults and children in a few hours. Levels at 90 or 100 are safe for approximately 15-30 minutes.
  - While **wearing earplugs** for hearing protection is not mandatory for band students during the 2019 marching season, it is **STRONGLY recommended by all band directors for EVERY practice and performance.** *Use will be mandatory for the 2020 marching season!*

- For more information on purchasing high fidelity ear plugs, at a discount for Marching Mustangs (students and parents!), see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/store.html>
- **What happens if my student gets sick or hurt?**
  - The band has a designated Nurse - Christina Coyle - who is at every practice and performance.
  - Eating well before and during practices, and staying hydrated are key.
  - Be sure to bring and apply sunscreen regularly.
  - If medical care is needed due to any kind of illness or injury, Christina will assess and treat as needed. She has all medical forms available for all band members.
  - If you have any questions, contact Christina Coyle directly.
- **What about food allergies, or special dietary needs?**
  - The band takes food allergies very seriously. At all meals provided by the band, there will always be vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free, and nut-free options (and others, per request), clearly labeled for students to choose from.
  - Please make sure that Marching Band Hospitality Chair Galinda Tunney (galindat@comcast.net) and Nurse Christina Coyle (chriscoylewiseman@gmail.com) knows your student's specific needs.
- **Who takes care of the band uniforms, and what do I need to buy?**
  - The uniforms for all band members are kept in the loft above the band room.
  - Uniform fittings happen in June. Each student is measured by Booster Uniform Parent volunteers to find the best fit.
  - Band -
    - Uniforms are organized by number - each student will be given a number for their own uniform bag to use the whole season.
    - Uniform bags include pants, jacket, shoes, gloves and any other required uniform components.
    - Boxes include the hats and/or plumes. All members wear a hat/plumes except percussionists in the Pit / Front Ensemble.
    - Shoes will be provided, unless there aren't any to fit your student or you want to purchase your own new (for \$40 though the Boosters).
    - **All band students must wear the Show Shirt, shorts (or UnderArmour-type wear), and long black socks to every performance, to wear under their uniform. *Students not wearing black socks will be charged \$2 for a new pair, or not allowed to perform.***
  - Color guard -
    - Each student will have their own uniform bag and each uniform will be labeled with the student's name.
    - Students should be prepared to purchase special shoes (\$55) AND a bodysuit for under uniforms (\$10).

- Color guard members are strongly encouraged to purchase Color guard warm up jackets (\$50).
  - Makeup is part of the uniform. There may be additional costs for show makeup.
  
- **What are band competitions** and how do they work?
  - Marching band competitions are long days of awesome music!
  - Competitions are not like football games; during performances, it is quiet with minimal or no talking. Cheering is encouraged at the appropriate times to let the band and the judges know you appreciate their show.
  - Most competitions have 10-15 high school marching bands of all sizes competing throughout the day. Each school will perform their Show, approximately 8 minutes long.
  - Each show varies in music, style, and props. Bands are scored on visual performance, general effect and music performance.
  - Depending upon the competition, bands either compete by school size or by band size. Most are made by band size (A, AA, and AAA). We are unsure of our classification this year. At the larger state competitions (Illinois State University and University of Illinois), our band competes in the 6A category which is based on school size.
  - Our rival bands include -- Lincoln Way, Lake Park, Naperville Central and North, Plainfield North, Prospect and Marion Catholic.
  - Plan on a long day of sitting on bleachers. You may want to bring cushioned bleacher seats, blankets, etc. as necessary.
  - Most competitions have limited parking, so carpooling is suggested if possible.
  - Most competitions require a ticket to enter the stadium (usually \$10 or so), unless you are a marked volunteer with our band.
  - Many competitions are cash only, so be prepared with \$\$!
  
- **What does competition day look like?**
  - Students usually arrive at DGS early in the morning, pack uniforms, and load the trucks with all necessary show equipment, instruments and props.
  - Students ride the bus to and from the competition.
  - Once at the competition, there will be time for warm-ups, usually a meal, and a performance (some competitions have preliminaries and finals).
    - Some band meals are provided and paid for by the Boosters, others are provided but require a small payment by students. You will be notified in advance of any necessary payment (typically \$5).
  - The band will often stay through the awards ceremony.
  - After their performance(s), all students must change out of their uniforms and return them to the Uniform Parents for checking, before hanging them in the carry cases. All uniform parts must be included and hung correctly!

- When buses and trucks return to DGS, everything is unloaded. No students are allowed to leave until all uniforms and equipment are put away - from ALL sections!
  - Parents are encouraged (and begged!) to help load and unload. The faster it's done, the faster we get to go home!
  - See the google calendar for exact days and times. **Depending upon performance times, the day may last from 7 am to 11:30 pm.**
  - You will be emailed an itinerary for each competition a few days beforehand. It will also be posted on the website - <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/marching-schedule-2019.html>
- **What is Music Bowl and how does it work?**
    - Music Bowl is one of the largest and most well-regarded marching band competitions in the area, and our largest fundraiser.
    - Boosters, and therefore the bands, rely primarily on profits from the Music Bowl to support all band needs for the entire year.
    - This year, we are hosting 17 (or more) bands, with approximately 1,800 students and an estimated 4,000 spectators.
    - **Every band family is required to sign up for at least one shift per student, and we need all the volunteers we can get!**
    - We have a wide variety of jobs and times throughout the day. Sign up for a spot today!
    - More information will be provided as the date approaches.
    - This year's **Marching Mustangs Music Bowl is Saturday, October 12.**
- **How many performances will there be?**
    - In addition to all scheduled rehearsals, the Marching Mustangs will perform at
      - Downers Grove 4th of July Parade (with the DGN band)
      - Friends and Family Show (last day of band camp in August)
      - 6 home football games
      - 6 competitions
    - See the google calendar for updated dates and times
- **What are Friday night home football games like?**
    - The marching Mustangs perform the half-time show at all DGS home football games. Students will perform all or part of the Show, as decided by Mr. Brooks.
    - Typically, band practice will begin approximately 5pm, for pre-game warmups. The band will walk out to the field before half-time, and wait to perform (usually about 8pm). After the half-time show, the band will sit in the stands to play pep music for the 2nd half.
    - After the game, all equipment and uniforms will be returned to the building, and put away. Students are generally finished about 10:30pm.
    - See the google calendar for updated dates and times

- **Why doesn't the band perform at away football games?**
  - Transporting our large band is time-consuming and expensive. In addition, half-time of football games are times, so there's not enough time for the home and away bands to perform during most games.
  - The band typically uses the empty home field on Friday nights to practice our own Show, often before a competition the next morning.
  
- **What is the 4th of July parade like?**
  - DGS and DGN bands combine to perform in annual Downers Grove 4th of July Parade - from DGN south to the tracks in downtown Downers Grove.
  - There is generally one practice beforehand, on July 2.
  - Attendance at the parade is optional, but preferred that all members play and march if possible.
  - Students will wear shirts provided by the bands, with their own khaki shorts.
  - Detailed information will be provided by the band directors as the date approaches.
  
- **Why does DGS practice and perform so much more than DGN?**
  - Although the schools are in the same District, the philosophies of the bands are different.
  - DGN band tends to play only in the 4th of July parade, events around town, and as spirit support for football games. Participation is mandatory for all band participants. They begin practicing for the season in August, a couple of weeks before school starts.
  - DGS Marching Mustangs are a serious competition band, and highly competitive within the region. Participation is optional for all band students. The Band practices from April - October. Percussion began practice for the current season in December.
  
- **How will my student have time for marching band?**
  - Time management is key!
  - Most band members are Honors / AP students, are on the honor roll, play sports, participate in other extracurricular activities, and hold jobs.
  - It looks like a lot of time - and it is! - but if your student loves to play music and be a part of one of the closest-knit groups at DGS, then they'll make it work!
  
- **The band program costs a lot, are there going to be any additional expenses?**
  - The band staff and Boosters have worked very hard to budget the year to avoid any additional expenses beyond the dues already paid.
  - That said, sometimes unplanned expenses may come up throughout the year. you may be asked to pay for an additional meal at a competition - perhaps one that wasn't planned for due to the unknown performance time, etc. When they arise, these meal fees are typically around \$5.



- **The band program costs a lot, are there fundraisers?**
  - The Boosters coordinate several fundraisers throughout the year, including Plant Sale, Cheesecake Sale, Restaurant nights, Car Wash, etc.
  - A portion of many of these sales will be placed into your students' account, to offset the costs of Fees, travel (Disney, March 2020!), etc.
  - For more information see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/fundraisers.html>
  
- **The band program costs a lot, are there scholarships?**
  - Scholarships in the amount of \$200 are available for every eligible band student.
  - **To be eligible, students must**
    - **volunteer at least 9 verified hours at 3 different approved events throughout this year.** This includes events like car wash, plant sale, Music Bowl, help at concerts of other bands, etc.
    - have parents who volunteer
    - have parents who are paying members of Band Boosters
    - answer 2 short essay questions
  - These volunteer hours are accumulated from April 16, 2019 - April 15, 2020.
  - Students are also eligible for a 2nd possible \$200 scholarship to cover private music lessons.
  - The application for the scholarship is generally posted in early March.
  - For more information see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/scholarships.html>
  
- **Will my student get any t-shirts to wear for the band?**
  - All students will receive a "Show Shirt" during band camp. The Show Shirt is designed by/with students, and will be required apparel for many practices and events throughout the fall season, including all performances of the Show.
  - Students will receive a section shirt before or during band camp. These are designed and provided by each section leader.
  
- **Is there any spirit wear?**
  - Of course! Spirit wear is usually available 2 times throughout the year. This is your best time to pick up Marching Mustang swag to wear with pride!
  - Spirit Wear is available for both students and parents, and is recommended for parents who are working the field or moving equipment for the band at performances.
  - For more information see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/store.html>
  
- **Are there any yard signs?**
  - Of course! Yard signs are available for order at any time throughout the year, though PS Signs and Apparel in Downers Grove.
  - Yard signs are 18" round corrugated PVC, with a metal yard stake., and come with a matching 5" car decal.

- Signs come in a variety of options of logos, wording, group (“band”, “marching band”, “color guard”, etc.), and may be customized with your student’s first or last name, and graduation year or instrument.
- **PS Signs and Apparel donates \$5 of each \$31 sign purchase back to the Band Boosters.**
- You can pick up at the store, or pay for yard delivery.
- For more information see <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/store.html>
  
- **How can I help? What volunteers do you need?**
  - ***PARENT INVOLVEMENT = A SUCCESSFUL BAND PROGRAM***
  - Band parents are needed to support the director and staff, and help with the details of fundraising, transporting, feeding and watering an organization this size.
  - To make the band program run smoothly, **it is recommended that every family contributes at least 25 hours to the Band throughout the year.** Grandparents, siblings, or any member of your family can volunteer!
  - We have many committees, positions and activities available for the entire year, as well as for our largest fundraiser - the Music Bowl - including,
    - Color Guard / Winter Guard
    - Equipment
    - Membership
    - Picture Day coordinator
    - Student Accounts
    - Uniforms
    - Volunteers
    - Water
    - Ways and Means (fundraising)
    - Music Bowl
      - Concessions
      - Finance
      - First Aid
      - Hospitality
      - Parking
      - Program Ads
      - Publicity / Marketing
      - Sponsorship
      - Stadium
      - Ticketing
      - Unit Movement
      - Video
      - Volunteers
      - Website

- Volunteering is a great way to show support for your student, the band and DGS. It's also the best way to see the Show and be a part of the Marching Mustang experience.
- **WE NEED YOU!**

