

# Marching Mustangs 101

Welcome to the **DGS Marching Mustangs!**

- **What is marching band all about?**
  - The DGS marching band is an extra-curricular group comprised of students from all four years of high school. Members come from all the different bands, some pit members are from orchestra and choir, and non-music students may choose to join color guard.
  - The band marches with DGN in the Downers Grove 4th of July parade, performs at all DGS home varsity football games, and competes in several local competitions plus a large state or regional competition at the end of the season. We also host our own marching band competition in early October, called Music Bowl.
  
- **Why should my student join marching band?**
  - Your child will learn the value of hard work, and in exchange, they'll develop life-long friendships, have unforgettable experiences, and create lifelong memories. They'll become better musicians and better humans because they'll be surrounded by kids that have the same goals and that will have their back for whatever they need.
  - They'll start the school year already being familiar with the school and having peers from freshmen to seniors. They will have built-in peer tutors and friends to sit with at lunch.
  
- **It's a big time commitment! What about homework, sports or job responsibilities?**
  - By necessity, marching band students learn how to balance time commitments and develop independence and responsibility, all with the support system of their marching band staff and peers.
  - Many students in marching band successfully take honors and AP classes, are on the Honor Roll and in the National Honors Society, participate in school or outside sports and activities, and have jobs.
  
- **Do they really need to be at every practice? What about vacation?**
  - **Rehearsals during Marching Band season are mandatory.** For best musical results, all members of the band need to be present during all scheduled rehearsals. One absent student can disrupt the rehearsal for all members of the band.
  - Sometimes conflicts and illnesses are unavoidable. Students should notify section leaders and Mr. Kennedy of any absences. For pre-planned absences, please notify Mr. Kennedy asap via the [Request for Excused Absence Form](#) located on the website. Please review the form first to understand what qualifies as an excused absence.
  
- **What happens if I'm late?**
  - **Always plan on arriving at least 15 minutes prior to the listed time.** You need to make sure that you are ready to **start rehearsal** at the listed time. Tardiness affects the entire band.
  - **Percussionists should generally plan on arriving at least 30 minutes early and staying 30 minutes later to move their equipment before and after rehearsal.**

- **Why are percussionists always the first to arrive and the last to leave?**
  - Percussionists have the most equipment to haul back and forth and put away, most of which is heavy and large. Additionally, the equipment must be put away in several different rooms, which are often congested with other band students.
  
- **What is the Pit (How is Percussion organized)?**

Marching band percussion is broken into 2 sections:

  - **Battery** - Instruments that march on the field during the Show; typically bass, snare, and tenor drums
  - **Pit or Front Ensemble** - Instruments that do not march during the Show go up front along the track area. Typically: vibraphones, marimba, timpani, drum kit, cymbals, gong, keyboards, etc. This is where all the sound system equipment is also placed.  
(Parental help is needed to move items during football games and competitions.)
  
- **What is band camp, and how does it work?**
  - Band camps are a series of days with extensive practicing for the show.
  - The days also include times for breaks, section bonding, and snacks
  - Dinner will be provided for the second week of band camp (8/5-8/9)
  - Please make sure your students bring the following to **EVERY** Marching Band Event:
    - Have a specific bag just for marching band
    - Epi-Pen/Auvi-Q (If needed)
    - Inhalers (If needed)
    - Sunscreen - should reapply every hour or two, will be reminded as well
    - Bug spray
    - Hat - suggested but not required
    - Water bottle or jug - at least 24 oz, will be able to refill throughout the day.
    - Earplugs - 30dB 3M earplugs or similar are **REQUIRED FOR ALL PERCUSSION for EVERY practice and performance AND are STRONGLY recommended for all wind players.**
    - Snacks - highly recommended for mini camp days and band camp days
    - Jacket/sweatshirt/sweatpants - for cooler evenings
    - Comfortable athletic shoes! **NO flip flops/slides, sandals, Croc's**
    - Music - should be in a binder with page protectors
    - Binder Clips
    - Pencil
    - Dot Book - Section leaders will usually get for the section with the section paying the section leader back
    - Any other requirements from your section leader
  
- **What about food allergies, or special dietary needs?**
  - The band takes food allergies very seriously. All meals provided by the band will include a vegetarian, gluten free, dairy free, and/or nut-free option for students that need them. Please specify your child's allergy needs on the registration Health Form and notify the Marching Band Hospitality Chair and our Nurse Christina Coyle ([chriscoylewiseman@gmail.com](mailto:chriscoylewiseman@gmail.com)) prior to band camp so appropriate accommodations can be made.

- **What happens if my student gets sick or hurt at a practice or performance?**
  - Christina Coyle ([chriscoylewiseman@gmail.com](mailto:chriscoylewiseman@gmail.com)) is the band's designated nurse. She is at every practice and performance and will assess and treat any illness or injury as needed.
  - Students should eat well, stay hydrated, and get plenty of sleep to minimize chances of illness/injury.
- **Who takes care of the band uniforms, and what do I need to buy?**
  - All uniforms are kept in the loft above the band room
  - Uniform fittings occur in June. Each student will be measured by the Uniform Chair or volunteer parent to find their best fit.

**BAND:**

- Each student will be given a number for a uniform bag to use the whole season, and instructions on how to place their uniform components into it.
- 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).
- Students will need to purchase 2-3 pairs of white gloves
- **All band students must wear their provided Show Shirt and shorts (or Under Armour-type wear) under their uniform, and long black socks to every performance. *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 a bodysuit for under uniforms (approx. \$36). This is a one time purchase, as long as the bodysuit continues to fit.
- Makeup is part of the uniform. There may be additional costs for show makeup.

- **Will there be any other additional expenses?**
  - Though the band staff and Boosters work very hard to budget the year to control costs, sometimes unplanned or additional expenses arise. You will be notified as soon as possible when this happens.
- **Are there ways to help offset fees and expenses?**
  - The Boosters coordinate several fundraisers throughout the year, including the Plant sale, Restaurant dine-out nights, Music Bowl ad sales, and more. For some, all proceeds go to the general DGS band fund. But several contribute a portion of the student's sales to their personal student account to be used for music related expenses.
  - In addition, there are several scholarship opportunities available, including the \$200 DGS Band Booster Scholarships. Note that volunteer hours are important for the Booster scholarship, so keep this in mind when the sign up requests go out!
- **Is there spirit wear or yard signs?**
  - The Spirit wear store is usually available 2-3 times throughout the year. Options will be available online and available for a limited time. This allows us to group order to offer lower prices.

- Spirit Wear is available for both students and parents, and is recommended for parents who are volunteering on the field or moving equipment at performances. Or who just want to show their support for the band!
- Yard signs are also available. More information to come!
- **Competitions** - what are they all about?
  - Marching band competitions are long days of awesome music!
  - Most local competitions have 15-20 high school marching bands of all sizes competing throughout the day. Bands are either categorized by band size or by school size. Local competitions are usually categorized by band size (A, AA, and AAA), while the larger state and regional competitions are based on school size.
  - Each band's show is approximately 12 minutes long and varies in music, style, and props. As they perform, they are scored by a panel of judges on visual performance, general effect and music performance.
  - Unlike football games; it is quiet with minimal or no talking during the performances. However, cheering is encouraged at the appropriate times to let the band and the judges know you appreciate their show.
  - Competitions usually run for at least 7-8 hours. You don't have to stay for the entire day, but it's nice to watch at least some of the bands we're competing against. You will likely want to bring cushioned bleacher seats, blankets, etc. as necessary. (These are good for football games too!)
  - Most competitions have limited parking, so carpooling is suggested if possible.
  - Local competitions are used as fundraisers for the host high school's band program. There is an entrance fee, with tickets running around \$15 and concessions, souvenirs, and shout-outs are for sale in the stadium.
  - Many competitions are cash-only, so be prepared with \$\$! It's recommended to check they host school's website if possible for any details.
- **How do I get communications from the band**, and where do I find information?
  - **Boosters website** - <https://www.dgsbandboosters.com/>
    - Alerts and weekly newsletter are posted at the top of the home page
    - Google calendar is at the bottom of the home page. Subscribe or add the calendar to yours. All dates are posted here.
  - Instagram - @DGS\_bands
  - Facebook - Facebook.com/DownersGroveSouthMustangBands/
  - Email section or staff leader - contact them for the best email
  - Email Mr. Kennedy - [akennedy@csd99.org](mailto:akennedy@csd99.org) or Ms. Hicks - [rhicks@csd99.org](mailto:rhicks@csd99.org)
- **What are the Band Boosters?**
  - The DGS Band Boosters is an organization made up of parents of students enrolled in the band programs as well as the directors of the band program.
  - Booster Board meetings are generally held once a month; all band parents are encouraged to attend as it is a great way to meet other parents and get more first-hand information about what is going on in the band program.

- Boosters provide volunteer support and funding to the band programs. This funding includes new equipment, instruments, uniforms, trips, transportation, meals, competition fees, music licenses, composer visits, workshops, band banquets, etc.
- You are automatically a Band Booster by having a child in the band, but we encourage you to support the band program financially with a \$50 Participating Family Membership, which directly support all band students.

## **PERFORMANCES**

(specific times and information for all will be provide by the directors)

- **4th of July Parade:**
  - A combined DGS and DGN band perform in the annual Downers Grove 4th of July Parade. They march on Main Street from DGN to the railroad tracks in downtown Downers Grove.
  - Students wear their own khaki shorts and an undershirt. Band shirts will be provided AT THE PARADE and must be returned at the end of the parade.
- **Friday Night Home Football Games:**
  - The Marching Mustangs perform for both pregame and half-time at all DGS home football games. They also typically sit in the stands and play pep music during the game.
  - For games, the student section is located on the far north end of the home stands. The marching band section is directly next to them, and the marching band parents usually sit in the seats next to the band.
  - Students generally need to be at school by 5:00 pm for pre-game warmup and rehearsal.
  - After the game, all equipment and uniforms will be returned to the building, and put away. Students are generally finished about 10:30pm.
- **Homecoming Football game day:**
  - Band students generally arrive at school at 6:45 A.M. to play the fight song and march through the hallways. They will also typically perform during the faculty breakfast.
  - In the afternoon, the band is excused from class to perform at the assembly in the gym.
  - After the assembly, about 3:15, the band lines up and marches in the Homecoming Parade. Afterwards, they change out of their uniforms, and are served dinner.
  - There is usually some additional practice time before changing back into uniforms and heading to the field at approximately 6:45 pm for the football game.
- **Competitions:**
  - Most sections of the band have a “section breakfast” at one of the member’s house before each competition
  - There is usually a rehearsal at DGS in the morning before the competition, then the students help volunteer parents pack uniforms and load the trucks with all necessary show equipment, instruments and props.
  - Students ride school buses to and from the competitions
  - At the competition, there will be time for warm-ups, usually a meal, and a performance
    - Some band meals are provided and paid for by the Boosters, others will be the responsibility of the student through concessions.

- After their performance, 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!
  - Students will usually return to the stadium to watch other band perform and the band will often stay through the awards ceremony.
  - When buses and trucks return to DGS after the competition, everything is unloaded. No students are allowed to leave until ALL uniforms and equipment are put away. Parents are encouraged to help load and unload. The faster it's done, the faster we get to go home!
- **Music Bowl:**
    - The Marching Mustang Music Bowl is a competition run by the DGS Band Boosters and hosted at DGS. We welcome an average of 17 competing bands, with approximately 1,800 students and an estimated 4,000 spectators each year. DGS also performs in exhibition.
    - It is one of the most well-regarded marching band competitions in the area, and our largest fundraiser. We rely heavily on the profits from the Music Bowl to support ALL DGS bands for the entire year.
    - It is an all-day event that requires a lot of planning and a lot of help. Last year we had over 180 volunteers filling a variety of 350 volunteer slots on the day of the event.
    - **Every student is required to volunteer and every band family is required to sign up for at least one shift per student.** We need all the volunteers we can get - siblings, family members and friends are welcome too!
    - This year's **Marching Mustangs Music Bowl is Saturday, October 5, 2024.**

## HOW YOU CAN HELP

- ***PARENT INVOLVEMENT = A SUCCESSFUL BAND PROGRAM***
- To make the band program run smoothly, band parents are needed to support the director and staff, and to help with the details of fundraising, transporting, feeding and watering an organization of this size.
- There are many, many opportunities to help out, from helping feed the band during band camp, to co-chairing a committee for Music Bowl, to taking a position on the Executive Board. Any and all help is appreciated!
- Throughout the year, you will get many requests for a variety of things. Please jump in and lend a hand. You will get to see your child in their band element and meet other band parents. Volunteering is also a great way to show support for your student, the band and DGS. Plus, it's the best way to see the Show and be a part of the Marching Mustang experience.

**Visit the DGS Mustang Bands  
website here:**

