

Band Parent Boot Camp

Welcome to the Jay Band! This is Band Parent Boot Camp – the UNofficial guide for parents new to the instrumental music program and all things Jay Band. This information is for you as a parent, guardian, grandparent, other family or friend of a student in the Jay Band. It is presented to you from the perspective of a parent – a survivor – of the Jay Band program! Please read and absorb the information and then ask another parent or your friendly band booster officers for their input and advice as experienced band parents.

Jay Band: The Show That Never Ends

Now this is a slogan that truly means what it says! The Jay Band program is a never-ending show. Unlike other activities and sports in school, the band program is a year-round activity. The band performs in every season for every type of occasion ranging from special community events, school concerts, sports activities, governmental events including the Inaugural Parade, as well as performing with other high school music programs at such events as Capitol Caroling. The band regularly competes at the state and national level with other high school music programs and consistently performs at a highly competitive level. With many trophies, awards and other types of recognition received, the Jay Band program lives up to another well-known slogan, Jay Band: A Winning Tradition.

Again, welcome to the Jay Band! Let the fun and memories begin!

FAQs for New Band Parents

There are many things to share with you and some of those things you will learn over time, but here are a few critical ones to help you become more familiar with the program from the start.

“Early is on time; on time is late.” This phrase is very familiar to our band students. Whether reporting for class, marching practice or a competitive performance, timeliness is critical. Students need to arrive before their required reporting time so they may get their instruments and/or equipment ready, music out and be in their assigned seat or field position at the start of class or practice. This is a very important skill your student should learn from day one. When one student is late, the remaining members of the band are delayed from beginning their practice or performance. Every student and instrument is important in a practice or a performance. Please encourage your student(s) to remain aware of report times and to be certain they comply.

The Band Handbook: The band program has a specific set of expectations students are required to meet as part of their course curriculum. These expectations are spelled out in the band handbook that is distributed to every band student prior to the start of the band year. Should you have questions about the band curriculum or any specifics contained in the handbook, please contact your student’s director.

Parental Involvement: As with any other school, extracurricular activity or sports program, parental involvement is critical. Our band students deeply appreciate the time and effort of the parents and boosters who take time out of their schedules to help them. In fact, they often say ‘thank you’ for even the simplest of things without ever being prompted.

Opportunities to assist the program and our students are available year around and include fundraising events, uniform distribution and collection, pit crew (see more about pit crew below), equipment handling, event set up and tear down, food preparation for special events and other volunteer opportunities that arise during a typical band year.

The most important thing to do is to ask questions! Those friendly people you see working in Jay Band polo shirts and red band t-shirts are fellow parents and band booster volunteers who were new once just like you. They won't bite, we promise. Just stop someone and ask a question! They have been in your shoes as a new band parent, so they can help you out.

Time Commitment: As the parent of a student new to the band program, there is often the question of how much time is involved? Here is a bare bones basic 'calendar' of a typical band year. Of course your actual experience may vary as each school year is unique, but here is a 'calendar' of sorts that will give you an idea of the year ahead.

Getting Started....

March/April/May: The 'band year' begins as early as the months of March and April with the placement of students in the Concert Band and Wind Ensemble through tryouts (freshmen are in the Concert Band), the auditions of students for drum major, the writing and initial run-throughs of the new music for the field show in the coming fall, and the beginning of marching skill drills for new and returning marchers. All of this goes on while the completion of the current school year is moving forward: district and state solos and ensembles, spring concerts and graduation ceremonies. Once again, Jay Band: The Show That Never Ends! The specific dates your student must report for these activities will vary based upon the school calendar and the band they are in, but in general this is a time of transition from the middle school to the high school band program and from this year's program to the next.

In May, the students also celebrate the end of their school band year with the annual Band Banquet, which features a meal, a student video capturing the past year, awards, scholarships and a dance.

Learning the basics....

May/June: Once school is out for the summer, marching band kicks into gear. Beginning with basic marching skills and the first trial run-throughs of the marching show music, the students begin to form the band that will be featured during the fall at football games and marching band field competitions. Typically these practices are held on Thursday evenings in June from 6-8 PM. (The actual times may vary. Please consult your band handbook for the schedule.) During these Thursday evening practices, students will learn marching basics and begin playing the music for the fall show. Your student should bring their instrument and music to all evening practices. It will also be important for them to wear comfortable, closed-toe shoes (tennis shoes are perfect!), sunscreen and clothing that are both comfortable and are within the school dress code. Please also have your student bring water. Hydration is extremely important for both your student's safety and performance.

**Please note: During the summer please have your student practice their marching music. This saves time and helps students become more comfortable with the music when group rehearsals resume in July.

Band Camp!!!!

July/August: Band Camp officially begins the last week of July. Participation in band camp is required and it is strongly recommended that schedule family vacations and doctor appointments around band camp. (For more information on the specific band camp requirements, please consult your band handbook. If you have any specific questions about band camp requirements, please ask your band director.)

The first few days of band camp are spent on marching basics and learning the music. Typically these days run from around 7 AM – 12 noon, depending upon the schedule set forth in the band handbook. Students should bring the following with them to these first few days of band camp: instrument or guard equipment, drill sheets, chip markers, a pencil, music, sunscreen, a hat, a light snack, a lunch, water, water and more water. Then the real fun begins!

Beginning with the first full week of band camp and until school starts, students will begin learning the drill portion of their show. These days will be longer, typically lasting from 7 AM – 2 PM, again depending upon the schedule set forth in the band handbook. Attendance and participation is critically important during these days as the students learn their drill (steps) for the show and then begin overlaying the movements with the show music.

On these longer band camp days it is important that your student bring the following with them to band camp: instrument or guard equipment, drill sheets, chip markers, a pencil, music, sunscreen, a hat, a light snack, a lunch, water, water and more water. Students should dress in weather-appropriate clothing within school dress code guidelines.

Please note: We strongly caution students against bringing and drinking carbonated beverages and energy drinks while practicing during summer band and while traveling and performing. These drinks do not hydrate the body and can result in students getting sick from the beverages. The side effects of these beverages, combined with the physical stress and heat of summer band and the stresses of travel and competition can make for an unpleasant experience for your student, their fellow band friends and the teachers and chaperones supervising the event.

Marching Season....

August/September/October: These three months are the main months of the marching band performance season. Here are a few key components of this very exciting and busy season.

- **Uniforms:** There are a few expenses involved during marching season that are specific to this time of year. First, all marching band students (and guard) are required to have a summer marching band uniform. This uniform is comprised of: show shirt, Jay Band shorts, short black socks, and black marching shoes. These items are purchased from the band boosters at cost at the scheduled uniform sizing and pick up days. (See band calendar.)

In addition to the summer uniform, each marching band student must have the formal marching band uniform, which includes: uniform shirt, pants, hat, tall black socks, black marching gloves, black marching shoes, show shirt and Jay Band shorts.

A uniform cleaning fee is required in addition to the purchase fees for the summer uniform parts.

Typically the first year is the most expensive for a new marching student and typically runs around \$150 +/- (returning students spend approximately half this amount). This includes the fees for uniform cleaning and the purchase of marching shoes, Jay Band shorts, show shirt, socks, and gloves. Guard students must purchase the Jay Band shorts, show shirt, short black socks and black marching shoes in addition to their show uniform, which changes each year and is designed to reflect the theme of the show.

If your student has been in marching band the previous year, they will only need to pay the uniform rental fee and purchase the show shirt, assuming they have not lost or outgrown their marching shoes, black socks, Jay Band shorts or gloves. The boosters are aware these things happen and there are some handy policies in place to allow for trade-in credit on some items. For example used marching shoes in good condition can be traded in for a partial credit toward the purchase price of a new pair of marching shoes. This is quite handy for those who outgrow their marching shoes from year to year. Similar practices are in place for concert uniforms as well. Please be sure to read your uniform schedule and cost sheet closely and ask any questions you may have about trade-in credits.

- **Early morning marching:** During the first term in the Fall, marching band students and guard participate in required marching practices before school during zero hour and first block. These marching practices are a required part of the band class and attendance is mandatory as students receive credit for both the zero hour and first block. Any absences are reported to the attendance office on a daily basis. The band handbook addresses the specific curriculum requirements for the marching band class.
- **Thursday night practices:** During the marching band season evening marching practices are held on Thursday nights at the high school. These typically run for 2-3 hours. It is recommended that student have sunscreen and water with them for these practices. They should also have a good dinner. Consuming carbonated beverages and/or energy drinks is strongly discouraged. Please consult your band handbook and schedule for the times of the Thursday evening practices.
- **Percussion:** The percussion section is a critical portion of the marching band. This dedicated and passionate group of young musicians practice and perform many times as a stand-alone unit in addition to regular marching band performances. Please consult directly with your percussion instructor regarding practices times, places and performances.
- **Color Guard:** The color guard provides additional visual effects during the marching band performances both on field and in parades. They are an important part of the marching band. Please consult with the band directors and the guard instructor(s) regarding practice times and uniform requirements, which occasionally include practice times in addition to overall marching band practices. Typically color guard students purchase the summer band uniform in addition to their performance attire.
- **Annual Ice Cream Social (August):** During the first week of school in August the band will perform one evening after school and debut the fall marching show at

Adkins Stadium. This performance will be followed by an ice cream social. Students will wear their summer band uniform (show shirt, jay band shorts, short black socks, and black marching shoes). This annual event truly kicks off the marching season and is an enjoyable time!

- **Football Games:** Typically a Friday night football game kicks off the formal performance season in August. The marching band performs pre- and post-game and will march the half-time show at all home football games. Sometimes the sections will hold extra practices prior to the football game rehearsal. Please make sure your student has access to water, sunscreen and a good dinner as this can be a very long evening.
- **Section Practices:** A sectional is an extra practice held for a specific section of the band, say trumpets. These may be called by the band director or section leader. Sectional practices are often held after school on Thursdays or Fridays before Thursday night practice or before Friday night football game warm-ups begin. Please make sure your student has had a good meal and has access to water to stay hydrated.
- **Stadium Clean-up:** During football season it is customary that the band performs stadium clean-up on the mornings after events at the Adkins Stadium. The funds raised from working at these clean-ups are typically applied to student travel accounts for National Music Heritage Festival or Bowl Game Trips or other events. Please consult with the band director regarding how these funds can be raised and used during your student's band career as the rules may change. Please also note that stadium clean-ups may not be available to the band during any particular year.
- **Marching competitions:** Depending on the band's progress and the competition offerings, the competition season for the marching band typically begins in September and is completed in October. These field show competitions are typically held on Saturdays at various locations in Missouri or occasionally in an adjacent state. Most competition trips will be done in a single day and will involve a very early departure time (6:00 a.m. anyone?) and late return (11:00 p.m. or later). Students should always bring their full marching uniform (uniform, tall black socks, black marching shoes, show shirt and band shorts, instrument and any other required equipment) and any other snacks or meals recommended by the directors. As previously mentioned, it is important students bring plenty of water and avoid consuming any carbonated beverages and energy drinks during competition trips!

Occasionally, students will need to bring a small amount of money with them for meals to be provided by the boosters or they may wish to bring a small amount of cash for the purchase of snacks on-site at a competition if time allows.

Typically one competition trip each year will involve an overnight stay and a trip to an amusement park. This cost of this trip varies, ranging from \$55-\$65 per student for the overnight stay, a meal and the amusement park ticket.

- **Band BBQ (October):** Typically on the first Thursday evening of October the band program holds its annual Band BBQ. The BBQ is the first opportunity for the middle school band students to perform a concert for the crowds. This is followed by the marching band performing their fall marching show. This is a wonderful family event that everyone enjoys.

- **Parades:** The band and color guard participate in parades each year. These include the Homecoming parade, the Jefferson Christmas Parade and often the Holts Summit Christmas Parade. Once every four years the band also performs in the Governor's Inaugural Parade. Occasionally the band will participate in a bowl game parade if offered.
- **Trip Year:** Every 3-4 years the marching band takes a 'big' trip, typically to a Bowl football game. During the most recent bowl trip (2008-2009) the band traveled to the Gator Bowl in Jacksonville, Florida over Christmas break. This big trip is an anticipated 'reward' of being a member marching band and is a trip enjoyed by all. It often features trips to amusement parks such as Universal Studios, Sea World and other similar locales. The student cost of a bowl trip will vary depending on the trip length, location and other factors. A good estimate is somewhere between \$850 - \$1,250. The majority of meals are factored into the cost of a bowl trip.

In 2012 the band will take a National Music Heritage Festival Trip, which will cost approximately \$500 per student. This trip, which is arranged through the Fine Arts Department, offers the opportunity for the band students to perform in concert, percussion and jazz competitions depending on the decision of the band directors and the event location and competition offerings. Heritage trips tend to cost a bit less than a bowl trip, ranging from \$500 to \$850 per student. Students should plan to bring funds for meals and souvenir purchases as not all meals are covered in a Heritage trip.

- **Student Accounts:** Student bowl accounts are established about one year prior to the bowl trip and funds are paid into this account.

**** Please note:** During the 2011-2012 school year a new approach to student accounts will be implemented. As part of the new recordkeeping, a portion of some fundraisers will be allowed to accrue toward student accounts. Obviously this cannot occur with every fundraiser, but when and where it is feasible a portion of net proceeds earned from specific fundraisers will be applied to individual student accounts. This will allow students to reap the rewards of their hard work and fundraising efforts.

It is important to note that it takes a large operating budget to fund the many activities of the band, including show writing, music rights, music composition, travel, competition fees, uniform purchase and maintenance, repair and operation of the band truck and trailers for travel and the many other expenses involved in the operation a winning band program.

Again, please watch for updates!!! The band boosters are constantly re-evaluating and updating their approach to such things as bowl trip funding to help students meet their goals. Expect changes, be flexible and most of all have patience as the new plans go into effect.

Concert season...

Just as the marching season is coming to a close, the concert season begins! Concert season begins as early as October, shortly after the end of first term and will run through the end of the school year. Students will need to purchase a concert uniform for the concert band class

in which they are enrolled. Please review the uniform requirements for concert wear and the anticipated fees.

- **District Band:** Students are encouraged to compete for spots in the District Honors Band and District Concert Band in October. The music for the tryouts is available in early spring of the school year before the fall tryouts. This is a wonderful opportunity for students who earn a seat in the bands to perform alongside other mid-Missouri band students under the direction of a guest conductor.
- **Winter Concert:** The Winter Concert is typically held in early December at the Miller Performing Arts Center.
- **Capitol Caroling:** Held on the second Tuesday in December in the Capitol Rotunda, this annual holiday concert brings the band, choir and orchestra programs together to produce one breathtaking concert in our very own State Capitol building.
- **Band Spectacular:** The annual Band Spectacular concert is held each year in February and features all levels of the band program. This is a highly anticipated community event each year.
- **Jazz Bands:** The high school jazz bands compete at 3-4 jazz competitions each spring. These students often practice after school during the weeks leading up to the competitions. The locations and dates for these competitions vary from year to year. Tryouts are typically held during the early part of concert season so the bands have time to practice and develop their group style for the competition season.
- **Pep Bands:** During basketball season, Wind Ensemble and Concert Band perform as pep bands at specific basketball games. Information is provided in band class regarding the dates each pep band is required to perform.
- **Spaghetti & Jazz:** This annual event is held every Spring to showcase the jazz bands, typically in the month of March.
- **Percussion Ensembles:** Throughout the year various percussion ensembles perform at both concert events and district performances and other competitions. Please consult directly with your percussion instructor regarding percussion ensemble practices and other guidelines.
- **Concert competitions:** There may be occasional trips involved during concert season. Each trip and/or event will have its own specific schedule and requirements, including the National Music Heritage Festival or other similar concert competition the Wind Ensemble and/or Concert Band may participate in during the concert season.

For example, the National Music Heritage Festival, like a Bowl Trip, involves a several day out-of-state trip to a concert competition. This event is a wonderful privilege and offers the band, choir and orchestra the opportunity to compete against other music programs across the country. This trip does involve a student trip account. Such trips often cost \$500 - \$850 per student and typically occur in the spring each year. This is a school sponsored trip so the arrangements for this trip are handled through the district office since it involves all areas of the music department.

- **District Ensemble and Solos:** In the spring of each year the concert bands, jazz bands and percussion ensemble(s) will participate in district music festival. Individual instrumentalists may also perform for ratings in ensembles and as soloists. Wind Ensemble students typically have specific performance requirements for districts. Please refer to the band handbook for more information.
- **Capitol Rotunda Concert:** This annual event is a concert that highlights the musical growth of the students in the band program. This is typically held the first week in May.
- **Commencement:** This is the first official concert for the band students for the upcoming school year. There will be a couple of evening practices held prior to baccalaureate and commencement performances.

**** Beyond Band Basics ****

Band Boosters...

The official support team of the Jay Band!

Who are the band boosters? The band boosters are parents, friends, and family just like you, who are interested in seeing their student and the band program succeed. We are there for the students to support their activities and to help ensure every student has a positive experience while in the band program.

We have a great staff of band directors who do their best to develop the skills and talents of our students. They often seek out opportunities to grow and expand upon these skills by participating in events such as marching band competitions and the National Music Heritage Festival. These events offer students the opportunity to showcase their talents and earn recognition for their hard work. Pursuit of these high-caliber activities is not without hard work, time and occasionally expense. The school district provides funds to help operate the band program and provide instruments and other needed equipment. However, there are occasionally gaps in one or more of these areas and we, as boosters, work hard to fill in those gaps when and where possible. Support provided by the boosters includes financial, physical and moral support to our students. We believe in our students and want them to have the best experience possible.

How can I help? What can I do?

A few of the many roles parents, boosters and other volunteers play:

- **“It takes a village...”** It takes a team of adults, both directors and parent volunteers, to move a group the size of the Jay Band. Please consider volunteering where and when you can. There are lots of positions available. Sometimes just assisting in the smallest of ways (making a few phone calls, preparing something for an event, typing up something, setting up equipment, donating your time at a fundraising event) is always appreciated. Plus you get to meet other great parent volunteers just like you!
- **Pit Crew:** This is a dedicated group of adult volunteers who help move the ‘pit’ (percussion) on and off the football field during marching season. The pit crew works

at all football games and competition performances when the field show is being performed. The number of adults involved in the pit crew varies depending on the show and the amount of percussion and other equipment that needs to be moved about. Even if you cannot attend every competition or every football game, your help is greatly appreciated when you can volunteer.

- **Chaperones:** Volunteers serve as chaperones on every band trip to help keep our students safe and organized. Chaperones are volunteers who travel with our students to competitions and performances both in and out of state. Chaperones are the unsung heroes of our volunteers because it is often these people who help your student(s) when he/she has misplaced something, feels ill, needs instrument repairs or simply needs some encouragement when they are feeling overwhelmed. Please volunteer to be a chaperone. It is truly a rewarding experience and you get to know the students so much better.

We do try (although it is not required by the school) to have a nurse on hand at football games and competitions to treat any minor medical emergencies should they arise. We also have a sick bay on the tractor trailer that allows any student not feeling well to lie down in a climate-controlled environment when we are traveling to competitions. If you are a nurse or have a background in first aid, we would appreciate it if you would be willing to volunteer your time during our travels.

If you are not able to chaperone due to work schedules or other obligations, please ask how you may be of assistance. We often have other areas of need which may include the preparation of or donation of food or other items, organization of travel packets or a myriad of other things that need to be taken care of as part of the overall picture. Every little bit helps. More hands make the work load lighter for everyone!

- **Football Games:** During football games we typically have parents who volunteer to assist with the supervision of our band students, in addition to pit crew activities. We provide ice water and/or hot chocolate as the weather dictates to keep our students hydrated in the stands. Plus we get up-close pictures of our kids in action!
- **“And other duties as assigned...”:** There are so many other roles too numerous to mention. If you are interested in helping out the band at any event, please contact the Volunteer Coordinator or the nearest band booster or band director. They can direct you to the person in charge of welcoming new volunteers and coordinating events. Your help is always welcome and deeply appreciated!
- **Become a booster member!** Becoming a booster member is highly recommended. Membership costs only \$10 per family if your oldest student in the band program is in high school; \$5 per family if your oldest student in the band program is in middle school. This small investment in the booster program will pay big dividends for you, your band student and the band booster program as a whole.

Band booster meetings are always held on the first Tuesday of every month at 7 PM in the High School Cafeteria. These meetings are open to all parents and are a great place to learn more about what is going on, to ask questions and to meet other band parents. We hope to see you there!

We hope this answers a few of your questions you may have. If you have more questions, please be sure to ask a booster officer, visit the Jay Band website: www.jayband.org, the Jay Band Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/jcjayband>, or send an email to: jaybandinfo@gmail.com

Welcome to the Jay Band Family! We are glad you are here!

