

Welcome "Rookie" Members & Band Parents

First of all, congratulations on becoming a member of the Sylacauga High School Marching Aggie Band whether as a performer or as a parent. Band is a truly life changing activity that I hope will be as good for you as it has been for me and all the graduates in the past. Many times, parents say that they don't understand what is happening around them. In turn, they found it hard to give 100% support to the band and their children. After all, the band was asking a lot of their family, especially the two things that seem scarcest in today's world: time and money.

The Sylacauga Band is a big organization on campus. We pride ourselves on the rich tradition of excellence that we enjoy. However, as with any successful organization, we work hard and follow set rules and guidelines. As a parent, your child looks to you for both answers and encouragement. I hope that this guide will help you feel more comfortable to provide them with both and familiarize you with the "inner workings" of our band.

What's so great about the Marching Aggie Band?

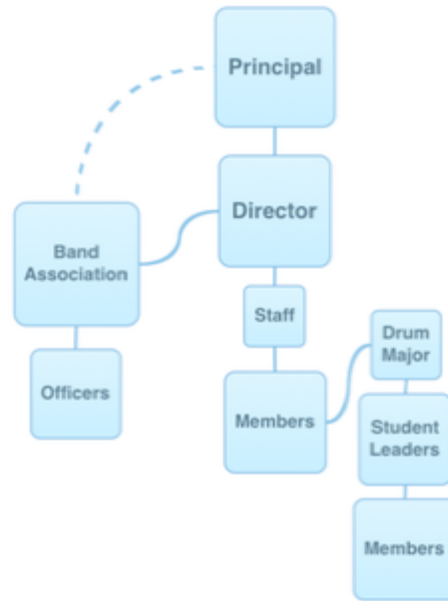
Ask 100 parents this question, and you're likely to get 100 different answers! Every child benefits differently from membership. For some, the greatest benefit is the increase in their child's self-confidence. For others, it's the friendship network that it has helped build. Or, it could be giving their child a sense of pride and accomplishment after working hard and giving a great performance in front of an excited crowd.

Being a member of the Sylacauga High School Band will give your children a valuable educational and social experience. They will work hard and experience many triumphs, as well as some hardships and disappointments – things that will prepare them for the “real world” and life after high school.

For parents, marching band lets you be a part of your child's life at a time when you are feeling less and less welcome in it. Sharing the marching band experience with your child will give you memories that are precious. Through marching band, you'll see your child grow from an adolescent to a young adult...and you'll be extremely proud of their involvement and achievements in the program.

For whatever the reasons for being a member, one thing is certain - marching band opens a door your children will not find anywhere else, and what they experience here will be remembered fondly throughout their lives.

Get to know the SHS Marching Aggie Band



Trying to learn all the aspects of the band can be a little overwhelming at first. Here is an organizational chart to help you see how all the parts fit together:

SHS MAB - This is just a shorter version of Sylacauga High School Marching Aggie Band. We use this abbreviation quite frequently, almost like a nick name.

Principal – The Sylacauga Band and band booster program exist with the approval and support of our principal. They are both huge supporters and we appreciate all the support and encouragement they give us!

Band Directors –The head director or assistant director. They are responsible for overseeing the daily operations of the band program, including hiring and supervising extra staff & consultants, managing band boosters, and educating our children!

Band Staff/Consultants - You will regularly see college students and other adults rehearsing the band. These are extra staff hired by the director to improve the band.

Drum Major – Our drum majors are Colin Bowen (Head) and Max Simon (Assistant). Once “rookies” just like your kids, they are now student leaders and conduct the band during marching season. Although they are junior directors, they are still students and do not make decisions for the program without the approval of the director.

Student Leaders – The SHS MAB has 5 components: Brass, Woodwinds, Color Guard, Majorettes, and Drum Line. Each of these components have student leaders, who help rehearse small groups of students. These experienced students were selected by the director and trained for their positions

ROOKIE PARENTS: CONGRATULATIONS! You are a band booster and member of the Sylacauga Band Association! You vote at meetings and have a say in the operation of the band booster organization! As a Band Booster, we ask that you give time & help. The band needs you. Your kids need you!

Officers direct the operation of the Band Boosters under the guidance of the band director. They coordinate the projects, fundraising, construction of equipment, care & feeding of band members, chaperones, and special events with the help of committees and committee members. Rookie parents need to become familiar with the operations of the Band Boosters. As your child grows through their experience and involvement during their years of band, we need parents to do the same!

The essence of the Sylacauga Band: Practice Together, Succeed Together

The Sylacauga Band is a group activity, and teamwork is the essence of what makes it a great program. The success of individual efforts are judged by group performance. It is important for parents to understand that, while your child is very important, the directors and staff must also consider the best interests of the entire program. That is why the first topic we'll discuss is the time commitment.

What is the Time Commitment?

Without a doubt, marching band is a big time commitment. Marching band requires 100% participation at summer band camps, rehearsals three times a week after school, Friday night football games, and several Saturday competitions. This season's calendar of events can be found on the band website and it will soon be posted to the website...there is also a hard copy you can pick up in the band room.

Time Management is a key to success in marching band and in life. This may be the most important skill your child acquires as a member of the Sylacauga Band. New students learn quickly that they must use every minute of their day wisely. Your student will learn how to keep a schedule, how to be punctual, and how to set priorities. Be patient...it may take a few weeks for "rookies" to get the hang of it.

Does My Student Really Have to Be There All the Time?

Yes! All camps, rehearsals, and performances are mandatory! If your child is absent or unable to play/march/perform their part, it will have a negative impact on the efforts of ALL the other students. Absences will result in consequences reflected in your student's grade and/or participation in the marching band. To put the best musical product on the field, the director and staff need all members present and prepared each and every time. During the week, your child will have Wednesdays without marching band. Arrange doctor's visits, family trips, etc., on Wednesday so your child does not have marching band rehearsals or performances. Conflicts must be discussed with the director in advance and our policy can be found in the handbook which students will receive during band camp to take home to have signed.

Won't All This Time Spent in Marching Band Affect My Child's Grades?

Maybe, but not always in the way you might think. You will often see students in the band room reading and doing homework in-between rehearsals. Granted, students who struggle with time management may have a harder time balancing band and academics, but many "Rookie" members can find informal tutors amongst older band students to help them with tough subjects. Educational research has shown (and parents agree) that the discipline and focus developed in marching band carries over into the classroom. Not surprisingly, many Sylacauga Band students are honor roll, honor society, and/or college bound and receive many academic accolades and college scholarships in addition to their musical accomplishments.

The band...on a budget

Marching band is an extracurricular activity which receives no funding from the school system (this is usually a surprise to Rookie parents). That is why the cost of funding this worthwhile activity is shared equally by all the participants and is referred to as a student's **band fees**.

Paying your student's band fees is part of the commitment of being in marching band. Currently, our band fees are \$500 for winds, \$550 for percussion, and \$400 + auxiliary expenses/uniform for auxiliary. However, parent participation in events can work off up to \$200 and selling 10 tickets for the game-of-skill works off another \$100 (you sign up for events at the August booster meeting). As well as participating in the events and selling the tickets, we have several fundraisers throughout the year that you can participate in to help knock off band fees. The band fees fund everything from purchasing music for the season, caring for uniforms, paying staff/consultants, equipment and large instrument maintenance, etc.

Band fee payments can be made in installments during marching band season.

If your child quits marching band or is removed by the director for disciplinary reasons, band fees are still owed and no refunds are issued.

A note about fundraising

You and your student will have several opportunities to fundraise to help the band. While fundraisers are designed to support the band's general operating fund, some fundraisers are specifically designated to help offset the cost of the band fees. Most of the families pay for all or nearly all of their band fees because of successful, committed fundraising and helping in concessions. Some fundraisers that exist are: sheets, chocolate bars, cookie dough, moon pies, haunted band room, game-of-skill, football concessions, and selling advertisement for t-shirts/sponsorships. Fundraisers are also a time to work together with your fellow band members and band parents and are a great way to make new friends.

Some fundraisers can earn students a credit that is applied to other band-related costs, such as trips!

Outfitting the Band

Donning the uniform of the Sylacauga Marching Band for the first time under the lights of the football stadium in front of a cheering home crowd may be a moment your child never forgets! Band members will receive band-issued T-shirt designed with the theme of the year's marching show. The T-shirt is included in the first band fee payment. Members will be given the option to order extras for themselves and family members.

The band will provide your student with a marching uniform which they will wear at football games and competitions. For Brass, Woodwind, Drum Line members, the band-issued uniform consists of pants that are secured by shoulder straps (referred to as "bibbers"), an overjacket (coat), and a hat. Colorguard and majorettes uniforms change each season.

All band members are fitted for their uniform early in the season. The uniforms are distributed before and collected immediately after every performance. Only in rare circumstances will the uniform be in the care of a student overnight. The band-issued uniform is only part of properly dressing a member. Some parts of the uniform must be provided by the student/parents. These items are purchased separately, but since they must still be "uniform" some are available to be purchased through the band.

These items are:

- Marching Shoes "dinkles" (Not Included in band fee...\$35 to purchase)
- Long Black Tube Socks (not through the band -- recommended to buy several pairs...dryers eat them)
- Warm-up jacket, make-up, hair accessories, and specific undergarments (for Guard and Majorettes only-a list provided by auxiliary instructors)

Some optional items that students can purchase are:

- Black band jackets
- Letter Jackets (yes...students earn varsity letters for marching band!)

Parent Involvement = a Successful Band Program

When you have a student in the band...Congratulations! You're now a Band Booster and **WE WANT YOU!**

The Sylacauga High School Band Association is a tax-exempt non-profit organization dedicated to supporting the band program. The band needs many things that cannot be done by one band director! He needs supportive, dedicated parents to help him keep the proud tradition of success represented by the trophies that surround the band room.

**As a Band Booster, we ask that you give time & help. The band needs you.
Your kids need you!**

9 Easy Ways For a “Rookie” Parent to Help the Band Program

1. **Give your child support & encouragement for being in band!** Tell him/her how proud you are of what they are learning and how they are changing as part of the band!
2. **When picking up your kids from band, leave your car and get to know the other parents!** Better yet, come early to watch the kids' progress and socialize with other band parents. Building relationships with other adults in the program will benefit both you and your child!
3. **Come to the Band Booster Meetings!** Meetings are the 2nd Tuesday of each month @ 6:00 PM CST in the band room. You'll always walk away with information your kids forgot to tell you.
4. **Pay your Fees on time.** We know it's not easy, but it is important to the existence of the band program and failure to pay on time will result in your student being dismissed from the marching band.
5. **Help out with football concessions.** Football concessions is our biggest fundraiser and we MUST have parents to work the concession
5. **Help build stuff.** Every year, something besides musical instruments needs repaired or built. This can be anything from repairing the drum major podium to rewiring the band's equipment trailer. If you need inspiration for projects, ask Mr. Childs. We still desperately need a tower built for the practice field!
6. **Attend football games and competitions to cheer for them!** The band ALWAYS performs better with a large cheering block behind them.
7. **Volunteer to Chaperone.** After all, you're coming to the game/competition anyway!
8. **Join our Field Crew for performances.** Not everything is heavy, and much of it is on wheels. Not able to attend? Lend a hand at the school when you dropoff & pick-up your child.
9. **Help with Fundraisers!** The more hands, the easier the work!
You Are More Talented Than You Realize! Please share your talents with us! The Sylacauga High School Band Association has a constitution, bylaws, officers, and regular meetings. Since you are a Band Booster, you also have a say in the operation of the booster organization and can vote at band booster meetings held regularly throughout the year.

What to expect...

...At Band Camp

The concentrated time spent during the summer Band Camps are vital to the success of the season. Band Camps are when students learn the majority of their marching routines, show music, pep band tunes, and the Sylacauga High School school songs.

Marching band is not an indoor activity. Students must be prepared to be outside during high temps. Wear light-colored loose clothing, bring extra water (water is provided, but some students want their own), use sunscreen and insect repellent. Only tennis shoes are allowed...no flip-flops!! They will also need their instruments and all the supplies (reeds, oils, etc.) needed to keep them working!

Rookie members sometimes question their desire to join the marching band after the first day in the heat. Encourage them to stick with it for a few more days. Students often change their mind once they get accustomed to the program, adapt to the heat, start making friends, and begin feeling more confident.

At the end of the summer band camps, the Sylacauga Marching Band hosts a "Family Preview Night" performance to showcase their accomplishments! This is held at the stadium and is open to all your family & friends!

...At Rehearsals

Rehearsals are not very different from band camp, but they are shorter. Weekly rehearsals are Monday, Tuesday and Thursday 3:30 PM - 5:00 PM. On competition weeks we go until 5:30 and there is a chance we will go until 6 PM if we have rain during the week. Your child will be unable to go home before practice, so they should bring rehearsal clothes and supplies to school (don't forget the tennis shoes!) Middle school students will go by bus to get on after school that will transport them to the high school building if you are unable to pick them up and drop them off for rehearsal.

...At Football Games

Students will report to the band room prior to the start of the game at a report time. During this time, students will change into their uniform and warm-up with their section. There will also be a uniform inspection. The band will march into the stadium before the game to a Drum Line cadence. During the game, they sit in a designated section of the stands. Parents and friends are not allowed to sit within the band, but are welcome to sit nearby.

The band plays their field show as halftime entertainment. The visiting school band also performs. After half-time, the students are given a break from performance, but must be back in their stands by the end of the 3rd quarter. If a student is late returning, they lose their 3rd quarter privilege for the next game. After the game, the band will march back to the band

room, turn-in their uniforms, complete responsibilities, get final announcements, and be dismissed AS A GROUP. Students are not allowed to leave from football games until formal dismissal, unless other arrangements have been approved in writing by the director PRIOR to the game. Again, this policy is explained in the handbook.

For away games, student meet at the school to board buses, and return once the game is over and wait to be dismissed. Students may be signed out at the games by parents who are listed on their “away form” and with a note turned into the office 24 hours before he event but the students who are not present to help clean up/complete their responsibilities will have to prepare to stay after Monday rehearsal to help clean up (they will be the last to leave on Monday rehearsals). Also, if you are checking your student out, the parent letter must be turned into the high school’s office by Thursday at 8 AM or your child will not be allowed to check out.

...At Competitions

Marching band competitions are like track meets or softball tournaments where many different schools compete/perform. For the band, competitions are their “game days.” Band competitions are hosted by another school’s band program and take place in their football stadium. (The host band does not compete). Bands that perform are critiqued and ranked in different areas of marching band performance by qualified judges.

Please come to as many competitions as possible! The band needs your support as a cheering section in the stands! We also need help chaperoning, dressing them, and moving equipment. Competitions are a fundraiser for the host school, so there is a small admission fee charged to attendees (not to marching band members). There are also concessions and other band-related merchandise available and we will eat lunch at the concessions to help with the schools fundraising efforts.

Competitions are always on Saturdays, but our band performs at different times each week. Once our performance time is set by the host school (often only a week before the competition) it will be announced through email and to your students.

On competition days -- Students will report to Sylacauga High School for rehearsal and equipment loading. They will be transported by bus to the competition. Students are expected to remain with the band throughout the entire competition, unless other arrangements have been approved in writing by the director PRIOR to the competition. At the competition -- Band members change into their uniform and a have final warmup. The band marches into the performance stadium, plays their show, and marches out. After the performance, uniforms, instruments, and equipment have been packed up, students return to the host stadium to watch the remainder of the bands performing.

Band members should have money to purchase lunch/dinner during competition days, which can last as long as 12-14 hours. Again, sunscreen and insect repellent are good items to have on hand. Also, students should be prepared for different weather conditions. It is often hot during the mid-day sun and occasionally rainy. Be sure to pack a jacket for the cooler weather after the sun goes down!

At the end of the competition, an awards ceremony is held. Once awards are given, students return to their buses and travel back to Sylacauga High. Back at the band room, students are formally dismissed as a group once everything is unloaded (the same format as a football game). Students are to be picked up within 20 minutes of final dismissal. Updates of arrival will be emailed out and your student will be informed to let you know of their arrival.

Rain or severe weather does NOT cancel band rehearsals or performances. Students should be prepared to perform in difficult weather conditions. We will not put your students or woodwind instruments in danger of inclement weather, but we will perform in the rain, snow, extreme hot or cold temperatures.