

Frequently Asked Questions

Regarding the Harrison Band Program

Band Class Questions

Is High School Band just Marching Band?

No, in fact, the Marching Band is only a small portion of the total high school band experience. The Harrison Band program is centered on the concert music program and developing creative, artistic musicians. Since its inception in 1991, the Harrison High School band program has quickly established a reputation for musical excellence. The 55-member Wind Ensemble is the top-performing ensemble within a three-tiered band program, which also includes Symphonic Band, Concert Band, and the Fall Wind Symphony. Each of these ensembles meets for ninety minutes every day within a four-period block schedule and performs 5-6 concerts each year. With the concert bands at the core of the curriculum, students also have the opportunity to participate in a variety of extra-curricular ensembles offered through the department. These include a 200+-member volunteer marching band, a very active chamber music program, a Symphony Orchestra, two jazz ensembles, and a concert percussion ensemble. In addition, the band parents association sponsors an after-school private lesson program with an outstanding faculty of professional musicians.

Does high school band conflict with academics?

No, research shows that it enhances academics! - Students participating in band for two years score higher: SAT Verbal-20 points higher SAT Math-25 points higher And gains increase with each additional year!
-MORE THAN 75% of Harrison Band Students take Honors & AP Courses!
-60 - 75% of band seniors graduate "with honor" distinctions.
-MORE THAN 80 Band Students had a 3.5 or higher AND were in Marching Band
-25% of the Marching Band Students had a 4.0 or higher while participating in Marching Band

Harrison Band students have been accepted in some excellent universities:

University of Georgia • Georgia Tech • Emory • Stanford • Harvard • Michigan • LSU • Cincinnati Conservatory • University of South Carolina • Auburn Furman • University of Tennessee • U of Alabama

Can students participate in other activities and band at the same time?

Band students are members /officers in almost every club!

NHS, BETA, KEY, THE WALL, MODEL UN, FRENCH, LATIN, SPANISH, DRAMA CHORUS, NEWSPAPER, and more!

Band students are also athletes in football, softball, basketball, track, baseball, hockey, swimming, soccer, volleyball and lacrosse.

What are some of the music opportunities outside of Harrison?

Students in the Harrison Bands are consistent members in the District Honor Band, Georgia All-State Band, Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, Atlanta Youth Wind Symphony, Metropolitan Youth Symphony, Orchestra, Honor Band of America, Georgia's Governor's Honors Program, and Atlanta Youth Jazz Orchestra.

What financial responsibility do I have once my student enrolls in band class?

The amount of money that the band classes receive from the county each year does not begin to cover the cost of operating these classes. Therefore, in order to be able to afford to run a band program with the national reputation for excellence that Harrison High School has achieved, the Booster Club supplements funds for enrichment. In return, we ask that each student enrolled in band class participate in several general budget fundraisers and assume the personal responsibility for a per semester curriculum enrichment fee of \$100 that can be raised via fundraising to cover the remaining cost of running these classes. All other student bucks earned may be used on other band-related expenses. Students who use school owned instruments for one or both semesters, will be assessed an annual cleaning fee of \$90 per instrument per year. Each student is also required to have their concert attire professionally dry cleaned at the end of each school year.

What about fundraising?

The Harrison Band program is funded, almost exclusively, through fundraising projects organized by the Harrison High Band Boosters (HHBB). Throughout the year there are many opportunities for both parents and students to raise money first for the band program as a whole, and then for their individual student bucks accounts.

What is a student bucks account?

Students earn "bucks" by participating in a variety of Booster Club fundraising projects. The student bucks accounts are updated monthly and posted in the hall to the band room. Student bucks can be used to pay for most fees, excluding the commitment fees for marching band.

What other expenses should I be prepared to pay while my child is in band class?

Students order sticks, mallets, and other equipment periodically through the band. Also, symphonic camp expenses, meals on trips and before certain events (generally not on the day of the competition or performance), performance polo shirts, and miscellaneous other expenses will be incurred by your student while he/she is in band class.

Occasionally, a fun trip will be planned to provide additional education experiences and reward the students for their hard work and dedication. This trip is optional and not required for students to attend. Expenses for these types of trips would be in addition to any other band fees.

The Booster Club provides financial support for supplemental enrichment opportunities to the curricular band classes in addition to funds provided by county and state. The Booster Club also provides organizational and financial support for extra-curricular activity opportunities like Percussion Ensemble, Winter Guard, Jazz Ensemble, a Conservatory private lesson program, Marching Band and spring band trips. If your student chooses to participate in these opportunities then you accept responsibility for additional fees for those activities. However, the Booster Club provides many services to parents and students such as payment schedules as well as a variety of fundraisers designed specifically to create realistic opportunities for families to cover additional fees through their personal participation in these fundraisers.

What is Symphonic Camp?

One weekend during the winter (generally in February) the band class students are required to attend Symphonic Camp. The camp generally is on Friday night and all day Saturday. The purpose of the camp is to give the students the experience of working with other conductors and work in-depth on the music that will be played during Festival in March. The Booster Club brings in Guest Conductors for each band for the weekend and provides lunch for the students on Saturday. In addition the students have received sectional instruction with specialists on their individual instruments during class time leading up to Festival. The cost for Symphonic Camp is paid via the per semester curriculum enrichment fee.

What are the required concert dress items for my student in band class?

All students in band class are required to wear appropriate concert attire, which consists of a black two-piece dress for the ladies and a tuxedo for the men. The students will be fitted in the fall and both of these items are rented from the booster club for a rental fee of \$50 for the school year. In addition, the ladies must wear pearls (available for purchase from the booster club), black hose and black, dressy, *closed-toe* shoes. The men must have a black cummerbund, black bow tie, wing-tipped tuxedo shirt, studs and cufflinks (all are available for purchase from the booster club) and black socks and black dress shoes.

Marching Band Questions *(includes Color Guard, Winds, and Percussion)*

Is there a prerequisite for Marching Band?

All wind and percussion students must be enrolled and be members in good standing in a performing ensemble class both spring and fall semesters to be eligible to be in the Marching Band.

What forms do I need to complete for my student to march?

The commitment form, medical form, permission to participate and permission to publish forms are all located in the form section of the website (www.harrisonbands.org). These forms must be completed each year and the *medical form must be notarized*. Also, the commitment form must be signed and returned prior to your student having a "dot" in the drill.

When are all of the rehearsals for marching band?

The calendar for the marching season will be given to you in the July newsletter and is posted on the band calendar at www.calendar.yahoo.com/harrisonbands or click on the link from the band website. Please remember that doctor's appointments, homework, etc. are not excused and conflicts are to be avoided. It is critical for your student to attend all rehearsals and events. After school begins, rehearsals are after school on Monday, Tuesday and Thursday, with football games on Friday nights. There are also weekend events that the student **must attend** (i.e. competitions, mini-camps, Taste of Kennesaw, etc.)

What is Band Camp?

Band camp is the culmination of the creative process for the marching band show. Marching band camp is held on the campus of Harrison High School. Students will learn how to march, play while marching, play in the outdoor environment, and the importance of team membership to create a musical experience. Students will receive instruction from staff members in marching and playing in both individual and ensemble settings. Many bonds are formed in the marching band camp. Aside of marching and playing, ideals of trust, responsibility, teamwork, goal setting and achievement, and character are all components of the camp experience.

Is Band Camp mandatory if I plan on being in the marching band?

Unless previously discussed with directors, yes, the marching band camp is mandatory. We will cover the equivalent of nearly six weeks of regular rehearsal hours in the two weeks of camp. The process of learning marching drill is dependent on the "dots" in the drill being filled. Without the charted marcher in attendance at any given time, it becomes a hardship to those around him/her to successfully march their drill. Likewise, promptness to all rehearsals is required, so we may all begin at the same time. When the rehearsal time is posted, please plan to arrive 15-20 minutes prior to be ready to begin at the given time. We also ask that unless already cleared in writing that all doctor appointments, unless an emergency, not be scheduled during band camp. Attendance and promptness will be documented at each rehearsal per handbook policies. Leadership members will notify the directors of tardiness and/or absence.

What should I do if my student is sick?

If your student is ill on any given morning of band camp, it is imperative that we are contacted (678-594-8104 x249). Do not assume that we will know they are sick if they are not in attendance. Upon returning, whether it is that particular day or another day of band camp, please send a written excuse for your child's absence. Any student present for the school day is expected to be present for any after-school rehearsals.

Will meals be provided during Band Camp?

No. We request that all students bring a sack lunch during Band Camp. Some meals may be provided by the Booster Club. A detailed Band Camp itinerary will be provided. Please do not send perishable items unless your student provides their own small cooler, we do not have means to refrigerate everyone's sandwich. Supervision is provided during the lunch breaks. Students may leave campus if necessary. We ask that parents monitor their own students' needs. Due to safety reasons, parents are responsible for their students if they leave campus during lunch breaks.

What should I wear to Band Camp?

T-shirts, shorts, and tennis shoes are the suggested attire for camp. Please remember that attire must be school appropriate and school dress code rules are in effect. Bare midriffs, cut-off T-shirts, bathing suit tops and T-shirts containing suggestive material or advertising/advocating drugs or alcohol will not be allowed. You will be asked to return home to change. Your feet are very crucial to your success as a marching member, therefore please wear athletic shoes that will be comfortable and allow you flexibility to move easily. Flip-flops, swimming shoes, and sandals are not allowed for any marching rehearsal including band camp. Students must wear shoes at all times while at camp. Stepping on a sharp object could potentially take you out of the show for the season. *Please bring sunscreen, baseball caps, sunglasses and lots of water to drink.* You will spend approximately 4 hours per day, minimum, in the sun. Be prepared and take care of yourself during these hours. Color Guard should wear black shorts, black tank top, black split sole dance shoes and a bandana.

Will my student be supervised by adults, other than the staff during camp?

Parents are on hand during all rehearsals and meals to assist your student in all facets of the day.

What should my child eat during Band Camp?

Please see that your child eats a good breakfast each morning (preferably no dairy). They will start the day running and will use lots of physical energy during the morning rehearsal block. Many students who typically do not eat breakfast find this a difficult three hours and can become ill due to the lack of nutrition. We strongly encourage your student to eat all meals well during camp and to avoid caffeine to help prevent dehydration.

What do I need to bring to camp each day?

You need to bring your well-maintained instrument. Please have the instrument in good playing condition for band camp. You will be spending a lot of time playing and poor conditions will not aid in your progress during the week. Please have valve oil and extra reeds, as well. If you will be using a school-owned instrument (percussion, sousaphone, marching baritone, etc.) you will be issued an instrument. A form will be sent home with you for your parent's signature outlining the responsibilities of using a school-owned instrument.

You will be issued a dot book in which you will place your individual drill. It is required that you bring your dot book to every rehearsal and have it in a pocket or around your neck for quick referral.

Please plan to bring a water cooler full of ice water at the beginning of each rehearsal. Fill it up before you come to school! Everyone is expected to bring his or her own water. Do not plan on sharing! Water and sports drinks are recommended. Caffeine should be avoided when participating in outdoor activities. PREHYDRATION is a must! Remember that 8 glasses of water a day is for "normal" exertion. Students should increase water intake three days prior to band camp and should replace fluids every night during camp.

Your name should be clearly marked on your water cooler, and EVERYTHING else that you bring to camp. Every year, we give DOZENS of coolers, shirts, shorts, etc. to MUST Ministries because they are left in the band room and have no name on them.

What are Marching Fees and what do they cover?

Marching band is classified as an extracurricular subject and as such is not directly funded through the Cobb County Schools. Therefore, fundraising and marching fees become the financial support for the marching band. Marching fees cover the cost of arrangement and writing of the music, original drill writing, 150 hours of individual and group instruction during band camp, special event nights during band camp, band camp t-shirt, medical supplies, specialized instruction for color guard and oftentimes a choreographer brought in to help with movement of the band, over 85 hours of instruction after band camp, mini-camp instruction, marching competition fees, travel to competitions, cost of prop construction and movement to locations, water at football games and at competitions, maintenance and repair of marching band school-owned instruments, purchase of new uniforms and color guard performance uniforms, etc.

How much are Marching Fees?

Marching fees total \$1250 for the season (\$800 marching fees / \$400 travel fee / \$50 uniform rental fee). A commitment fee of \$200 and the uniform rental fee of \$50 are due early in the spring. The drill is written based on the number of students that submit their commitment fees and these fees are non-refundable. Three additional payments are due at various times in the spring and early summer. A Payment Schedule Coupon will be provided listing specific due dates and amounts.

What other expenses will I incur in marching band?

Each student will need to purchase marching shoes, gloves, performance t-shirt and shorts (to be worn under the uniform). These items are available through the Booster Club. In addition, there will be expenses for some meals, etc. Color guard members will need to purchase practice shoes, performance shoes, windsuits, bags, gloves, practice shirts, etc. A brochure outlining the additional expenses will be provided to each student during the audition process.

After I pay marching fees, is that all I will owe for my student to be in band?

As referenced under Band Class Questions, marching band is an extracurricular activity supported almost entirely on marching fees. When your child is in band class, there are additional expenses incurred in the classroom (literature, equipment, sectional instruction, etc.). These expenses are covered through other fundraisers, the curriculum eEnrichment fee (\$100 per semester), instrument cleaning fee (as explained on page 14), concert attire dry cleaning and the costs for various programs.

Are there any eligibility requirements for the extra-curricular band extensions?

Yes. All extra-curricular extensions of the Harrison Band program (percussion ensemble, jazz ensemble, guard, winterguard, indoor drumline, etc.) require any student previously involved in any part of the 6-12th grade band program to remain active in the band program in order to be eligible to participate. In order to avoid recruiting conflicts, if a student is active in one facet of the program, he or she may expand their involvement to band + another extra-curricular band activity, but may not limit their participation to "extra-curricular only." Once a student "drops" from band participation, they are no longer eligible for extra-curricular participation.