

General Band and Guard Information

We've all been new to the program at some point and understand that there is a lot of information being shared. Current band students are beginning to contact rising 9th graders to answer questions about marching band. If no one has reached out and/or if you are a parent who has questions, please contact our BBOHS President at president@oaktonbands.org with your contact details. We will set you up with an experienced marcher. If you're a parent, we're always happy to talk.

Here is some basic information to get you acquainted with our program.

Band Auditions (for band class placement): The first step to becoming part of the OHS Band program is to be placed in a band--either Concert 2, Concert 1, or Symphonic. Many of your students have auditioned already. If your student has not auditioned yet, please contact the band director, Dr. VanValkenburg (director@oaktonbands.com).

Oakton Band Website, Social Media, Communication: Check out our website to find out about all things Oakton Band. We've worked hard to make it your go-to source of information. Please take some time to check it out at oaktonbands.org.

- **Facebook:** @oaktonbands.org
- **Instagram:** @oaktonhsbands
- **Downbeat:** Constant Contact newsletters are our main mode of communication. You will receive announcements, updates and reminders via the Downbeat every Sunday from early August through the end of the school year. **Please subscribe annually at oaktonbands.org/downbeat**
- **Discord:** Download the Discord app from your device's app store and have your student reach out to section leaders, band council or drum majors to get a link for an invitation to the app. Discord is owned/operated/managed by our Band Council. Parents may also join. *Disclaimer:* The DISCORD app is rated 18 and over and geared to gaming so you will see that verbiage and icons. Our channel is moderated by students and to be used only for band communication among students/parents.

Uniforms: Each student must wear the appropriate attire for performances. Marching uniforms, practice shirts and show shirts are provided by the school, concert uniforms will be purchased by parents. Information on concert attire is available in this packet. Parent volunteers will be fitting the students for their marching band uniforms in August/September. Replacement costs will be assessed for any lost items. Concert uniform purchasing information will be shared at the start of the school year.

- **Marching Band:** All marchers wear the marching uniform for competitions and football games and are provided colored t-shirts for practice. Personal marching shoes (Dinkles), practice shirts, show shirts and rental of the uniform are included in the marching band fee. Families pay to dry clean the uniform as requested, usually once or twice a marching season. Students must bring long, black dress socks to every event to wear with their Dinkles. Students are required to have all hair tied back neatly under their marching band hat using hair ties, clips and pins that match their hair color. Please purchase any required accessories before the first game or competition. No earrings, nail polish or jewelry are allowed.
- **Color Guard:** Costumes and shoes for Color Guard will be ordered and parents will be told about costume and uniform expectations at Color Guard sign-up. Color Guard students are provided with the same colored practice t-shirts as the instrumentalists for practice.
- **Concert Band:** Parents will order their student's concert attire from our vendor. Clothing choices

offered will be tuxedos, long black dresses and black top/bottom separates. All students need closed toe, black dress shoes and boys will need long, black dress socks.

- **Jazz Band:** Students will wear their concert attire and a white tuxedo jacket/sequin cummerbund provided by the band.

Marching Band Rehearsals: After-school practices run from the beginning of the school year through the last competition or home game in early November. Practices are held after school, Tuesday through Thursday until approximately 5:30pm and sometimes on Friday in preparation for an evening football game. Some color guard rehearsals can occur on different afternoons/evenings from marching band practices because of Coach availability.

Marching Band Competitions: Marching band competitions are like track or swim meets where different schools compete and perform their show. For the band, competitions are their “game days.” Competitions need a lot of logistical support, so families should plan to volunteer for at least one. Detailed competition schedules will be released the week before. Students report in show shirts and khakis or other clothes, as directed. Students may be gone all day.

This year, we will be participating in competitions by the Virginia Marching Band Cooperative (vmbc-online.org). We will be hosting a VMBC competition, the ‘Oakton Classic,’ on October 8. This will be an “all hands on deck” event for Marching Band Members and their families.

Concert Band Rehearsals: Begins in November, after the Marching Band season. Students will have practice after school one day a week from approximately 4:15 to 5:30 PM, with the day depending on which band class they participate in.

Jazz Band Classes: Begins in November, after the marching band season ends. Students who choose to participate in this graded class will have class two days a week immediately after school.

Color Guard and Winter Guard: Both concert band and non-concert band students can participate in fall Marching Band as part of the Color Guard. The Color Guard is a section of the Marching Band that uses flags, rifles and sabres along with dance to visualize the music played by the band. In Marching Band competitions, the Color Guard is an essential component of the band and their performance is influential in the overall score.

Some students also choose to participate in Winter Guard, which is an indoor winter activity in which the guard performs to pre-recorded music during competitions. Winter Guard starts after the Fall Marching season is over in November. The first competition is in February and the last one is in April.

Band Awards: To recognize the efforts of our student musicians and guard groups and to encourage service to our community, the Oakton High School Band program uses a point system for a sequence of awards. Points are awarded for verified musical activities both in and out of the school and are cumulative from year to year.

Students use their accrued points to earn band letter/pin/etc. awards. Once these points are used for an award, they are deducted from the total. Unused points carry over from one year to the next. Students may earn more than one award in one year if they accrue enough points. This is the student’s responsibility to manage, and they are encouraged to review the award policy early enough in the year in order to participate in necessary band events before they run out.