

Oakton High School Winter Guard Handbook

Winter 2021-22

<http://www.oaktonbands.org/guard>

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Mission Statement

The Oakton High School Color Guard Program provides an opportunity for students to participate in representing their school, to grow as individuals and team members, to teach performance skills, and to build self-confidence and self-esteem.

Vision Statement

During the 2021 winter season, the Oakton High School Winter Guard(s) will create and perform a program that rewards students for their training and development of performance qualities.

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MOST IMPORTANT

GOALS

1. Have fun
2. Learn new skills
3. Be competitive

RULES

1. Treat each person with respect.
2. Practice like a champion to perform like a champion.
3. There is no "I can't." There is always "I will try."
4. Breathe.

General Etiquette Rules

1. **We maintain a positive environment. Unkind words, harsh words, curse words, and profanity of any kind are not allowed at any time including outside of rehearsal.**
2. **At all times, and especially when you ARE WEARING OAKTON COLOR GUARD GEAR, you are considered a representative of Oakton High School and Oakton HS Color Guard. Act appropriately. Please see *Uniform Policy*.**
3. **You must be on your best behavior while at rehearsal and in performance venues. Making negative comments about other students, staff, parents, volunteers, or performing groups is not permitted.**
4. **Be dependable.**
5. **Be your best.**
6. **No member shall ever correct or comment negatively on another member's or section's performance. Specifically, approaching someone to give them constructive or negative unsolicited feedback is strictly prohibited. If you want to help someone, but are unsure of how to approach them, ask the staff for some pointers.**
7. **Do your color guard duties (guard box, speaker, beginning on time, etc.) without being asked.**

REQUIRED FORMS

Most forms can be found at <http://www.oaktonbands.org/guard> and <http://www.oaktonbands.org/forms>

Students are required to submit:

1. Emergency contact form
2. Physicals (must be completed and filed with Band)
3. Vaccination record
4. Medical information (if required)
5. Complete concussion training at www.fcps.edu/sports

POLICIES & PROCEDURES

Attendance Policy

Each member plays an integral role in the color guard program. **All other activities and appointments must be scheduled around rehearsal and performance dates and times.** Social plans, dental/doctor/optometry appointments, jobs, group project meetings, homework, and other appointments or commitments of this nature cannot interfere with rehearsals or performances.

1. Attendance at every rehearsal and performance is **mandatory**.

2. **Any absence may cause the student to not perform.** Rehearsals are for students to practice together. They learn and refine choreography and staging. Changes are frequent. Should a student miss rehearsal, they may be missing important changes that affect their safety and the safety of others.
3. Communication is key. You must notify mrstrebeck@fcps.edu for all absences and copy a parent/guardian as well as captains.
4. If a member has an unavoidable conflict with either a rehearsal or performance, it is highly encouraged that the member make every effort to attend a portion of rehearsal, either before or after the conflicting activity.
5. Excused/Unexcused Absence
 - a. An absence is excused if both of the following criteria are met:
 - i. The member's parent or guardian notifies an instructor one week in advance of the absence, or the member's parent or guardian notifies the instructor of a sudden, serious family emergency.
 - ii. The absence is not related to any of the following events or activities: social plans, dental/doctor/optometry appointments, jobs, studying, and other appointments or commitments of this nature. **Generally, if it can be scheduled in advance, you must schedule around rehearsals and competitions.**
 - b. Illness is an excused absence.
 - i. If you attend school, you should attend rehearsal unless you are contagious or too ill to observe rehearsal. We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to attend rehearsal, even if you are not able to participate.
 - ii. If you do not attend school, you may not come to practice. However, you are still required to notify the staff of your absence from school and rehearsal. We will worry about you if you are a no-show.
 - iii. The staff understands that extended absences due to illness may occur. If this is the case, the staff may choose to count your extended absence as one (1) absence, as long as you are not attending school during your illness.
 - a. All other absences not addressed as Excused Absences are unexcused.
6. Unexcused absences will result in disciplinary actions.
7. Repeated absences, especially unexcused absences, may be addressed with the member's parents/guardians.

What is rehearsal?

What is the difference between rehearsal and practice? Practice is what one does away from the rehearsal environment to improve and develop individual skillset. Rehearsal is the time all members come together to learn new technique, choreography, staging, and/or refine and get feedback on those details.

Rehearsal Policies & Procedures

1. All members must come to every rehearsal. See the *Attendance Policy* for further information.
2. Arriving at rehearsal "on-time" generally means at least 10 minutes early. *Use this time to get your equipment, change, warm-up, transport equipment to rehearsal space, review technique and choreography, and generally prepare for the rehearsal.*
3. You must bring a personal water bottle that is full at the start of rehearsal.
4. Students may elect to bring snacks for nutrition and energy. These should be consumed before or after rehearsal, or on long water breaks. No chewing gum is allowed at any time during rehearsal.
5. Appropriate rehearsal attire is required. You must be in rehearsal attire before the start time. "Appropriate rehearsal attire" includes:
 - Comfortable workout attire
 - i. stretch pants, athletic shorts, tank tops, t-shirts, sports bras, appropriate undergarments
 - ii. No loose or baggy clothing. Ankles must be visible.
 - Mask

- Gym/tennis shoes with socks
 - Hair must be completely pulled back off the face and neck and secure. Loose hair that falls into the student's face can cause an unsafe situation when we are learning new skills.
 - No jewelry should be worn at rehearsal or performances. Stud earrings are acceptable.
 - School clothing attire policies will apply at all times.
6. Cell phones must be on vibrate or mute during rehearsal. You are not permitted to check your phone unless we are on a break. If you are expecting an important phone call, you may leave your phone with a staff member. If it rings, a staff member will give it to you.
 7. If you are struggling, you will enlist someone to help you *outside* of practice.
 8. Do not spin while staff is giving whole-group instruction.
 9. Do not move or talk at the end of a repetition until you are told to "relax." *Performance is a quality improved through practice.*
 10. If the staff is working with another group that does not involve you, you should be working silently on parts of your show while paying attention in case the staff needs you.
 11. There is a difference between being given time for water and being given a "break." Time for water is short and mandatory. Breaks may be a bit longer and are optional.
 12. In general, you should not take water or a break unless the entire group is permitted water or a break.
 13. The staff is not the only source of information when you are at rehearsal. Please be sure to address your questions to your fellow guard members before you address them to the staff.

Performance Policies & Procedures

1. All black rehearsal attire, "blacks," is required on **all** show days, and may be required during some weekday rehearsals.
2. You may not leave the performance venue early unless you have it approved in advance with one of the staff members and the person picking you up has filled out the required form in advance. (See the FCPS forms webpage for this form.)
3. You may not go anywhere alone while at a performance venue. You must always be with another guard member. We call this "twos." You must always be with a two.

Discipline

Color Guard is a sport of the arts, but still a sport, nonetheless. It may be necessary for the color guard instructors, band directors, or other band staff to discipline a member of the guard, just like a coach would discipline members of his or her team. Examples of disciplinary action include doing strength building activities, running reps of the choreography, doing technique reps, arriving early or staying late at practice, etc. In all situations where discipline is warranted, the intent is to instill in the member responsibility for his or her actions, ensure the discipline corresponds appropriately to the offense, and to demonstrate to all members when behavior is unacceptable.

Technique

One of the most important aspects of color guard is having good technique. Technique is the application of methods to demonstrate skills. A color guard only has good technique if we all strive for, and achieve, the technique as a unit. The technique program used by each color guard is at the discretion of the color guard staff. How we spin in the OHSCG may be different than other schools or other instructors you have had in the past. Disagreeing with or questioning the technique of the instructors will not be tolerated. All of the instructors have spun with multiple color guards and thus have experience spinning within the guidelines of many different technique programs. We have pooled our experiences to create a technique program appropriate for the current level of the OHSCG.

Equipment and Maintenance

The maintenance and care of the Color Guard equipment is incredibly important. Equipment must be stored and cared for correctly. Equipment should never be lent out, left out, or unattended for any reason. It should

be cleaned and handled with care per given instructions. Only color guard members are permitted to practice with the equipment. No member should ever allow another person to spin their equipment, even if that person participate(-s -d) in color guard during another season.

Uniform Policy

To complete the look and feel of the program, performers will be given a uniform. This uniform must be treated with the utmost respect. In uniform and in your guard jackets, you are considered a representative of Oakton High School and Oakton HS Color Guard. You must be on your best behavior.

1. In uniform and in guard gear (shirts, jackets, etc.), act with dignity, grace, and respect.
2. Treat your uniform with respect.
3. You are never to be in "partial uniform." The uniform is either entirely on or entirely off.
4. You are not to run in uniform.
5. You are not to eat in uniform. You may only drink water.
6. Public Displays of Affection (PDAs) are not permitted while you are in uniform.
7. Following each performance, you must inspect your uniform for any marks, damage, or wear and tear. If there is something, you must notify a staff member immediately. They will provide instructions on how to repair it.
8. Uniforms must be laundered following each performance and prior to the next one. Laundry instructions will be provided. **Uniforms are generally fragile and will have specific laundry instructions.**

Academic & Physical Eligibility

All students must meet the Oakton High School requirements to be eligible for participation in a sport. All students must have a current (signed on or after May 1st for the following school year) physical on file with the activities office. Please find more information about the physical at [Physical Examination Form - VHSL](#).

All students must also complete:

1. Vaccination record for Covid-19
2. Emergency medical contact form
3. Health Information Form
4. Concussion Education
5. Over the Counter Medication Form

WHO'S INVOLVED

Student Leadership

At the beginning of the winter season, we will put out an application for guard leaders. We typically select 2-3 captains for each guard. We need other leaders in addition to captains, as these responsibilities are required for each season and guard. The captains will generally organize the other leaders unless specifically instructed by staff. The responsibilities for various leadership roles are listed below:

Captain(s): Responsible for communication between staff and students. Oversees Managers by checking in on work and coordinating assistance. Leads rehearsal when instructor is not there, or designate lead to other leadership. Starts rehearsal on time, and leads warmup/strength-building. Works with new/younger students on skills achievement and retention to encourage all students to reach their potential. Identifies areas of concern for staff (in a private, appropriate setting). Creates and maintains channels of communication with members. Encourages students to attend fundraisers. Serves as an exemplar for rehearsal and show etiquette.

Assistant Captains: Shadow captain and act as captain in their absence. Assist in coordinating the work of the manager functions and/or act as the manager for specific functions.

Equipment manager: Keeps track of all equipment. Keeps inventory so coaches can know how many poles, rifles, sabers, weights, tape, and silks are available. Notifies instructor when we need to buy new tape, weights or equipment. Keeps track of who has borrowed equipment. Has knowledge of how to tape equipment and prepare for rehearsal and competitions. Instructs new students on proper equipment taping and maintenance.

Communications manager: Makes sure announcements are made in school. Coordinates/prepare flyers and other promotional material. Prepares photos and postings for social media. Social media postings include announcing when and where we will perform, competition results, pictures, videos, promotional materials, announcements of spin clinics and tryouts, working with Recruitment Manager to prepare graphics.

Recruitment Manager: Identifies places of recruitment for reaching out. Specifically, needs to work with middle schools on reaching upcoming eighth graders. Identifies events and brings them to the attention of Coaches. Sets dates. Works with Communication Manager to create and post posters, graphics, etc. Runs recruitment events (i.e. has electronic sign up, has handouts prepared, and leads presentation).

Skills Manager: Responsible for knowledge of all technique exercises. Maintains written directions for how to perform technique exercises. Works on creating a video of each technique exercise. Sends video and instructions to staff to post. Works with new/younger students on skill achievements and retention. Seeks additional knowledge of stretching, dance, and equipment in order to promote health and safety as well as build additional challenges for senior members.

Spirit Manager: Responsible for guard spirit and well-being. Promotes pride in being in the color guard programs. Sets up bonding experiences both during rehearsal and outside of rehearsal. Identifies experiences that are low cost or where members can support members with fewer resources. Brings spirit issues to the attention of staff. Makes sure each member feels valued and included. Sets up big/little program.

Staff

Our experience in color guard gives the skills required to plan, rehearse, and perform fall and winter color guard activities. The staff's overall goal is to instruct students in the development of physical skills and positive attitudes for success in the color guard program and in their lives. In order to facilitate an open relationship amongst staff, parents/guardians, and members, we have included this section which outlines the staff's responsibilities.

The staff's duties include:

- General Supervision:
 - Administer the color guard program.
 - Plan and run appropriate rehearsals to prepare for upcoming competitions.
 - Plan and run the audition process for each season.
 - Ensure students adhere to the behavior code as described in handbook.
 - Discipline members, as outlined in the handbook.
 - Assign duties and responsibilities to color guard captains & members and evaluate their performance of these duties.
- Technical Program & Show:
 - Establish clear goals at the beginning of each season, for both individual members and the color guard as a whole.
 - Develop a technical or "basics" program that provides the tools needed to achieve the current show's vocabulary.
 - Design a show at an appropriate level for maximum achievement.
 - Order uniforms and equipment for each season.

- Write work, including flag, rifle, sabre, and movement, as required to fill the current season's show and in line with the color guard's ability level.
- Ensure that the vocabulary and work in the show is in line with the current technical program.
- Constantly develop the technical program and the show vocabulary to allow the membership to achieve excellence at their current competitive level and within their abilities.
- Administrative Tasks:
 - Prepare and publish the current season's handbook.
 - Confirm that all members understand and acknowledge handbook policies.
 - Confirm that all members have completed appropriate registration.
 - Communicate rehearsal and performance schedules to members and parents
 - Oversee that the correct forms for all after-school group activities are submitted.

Contacting Staff Members

Coach: Miles Strebeck, MrStrebeck@fcps.edu

Band Director: Jamie Van Valkenburg, jgvanvalkenb@fcps.edu

All emails should be sent to MrStrebeck@fcps.edu. Emails from students must copy a parent/guardian, the guard parent liaison, or other school official and may also need to cc the captain(s).

Other staff members: tbd

E-mail is always the best way to contact us. You are also welcome to speak with us before or after rehearsal.

Parent/Guardian Volunteers

We are in need of a variety of parent/guardian volunteers. These volunteers do the following:

- Drive students to competitions when buses aren't available
- Chaperone students at competitions, such as riding the bus, or managing students in holding areas
- Operate vending booth at competitions
- Organize snacks for long rehearsals
- Transport floor/props to and from competitions
- Take videos/photos of the students
- Organize orders for t-shirts, Oakton CG bags, Oakton CG jackets
- Represent color guard interests and support music programs at OHS at Oakton Band Boosters meetings
- Send email updates to other parents
- Take measurements and alter uniforms
- Arrange for old items to be resold
- Helping students set up before show by unfolding floor and moving prop

Contact the guard instructor for how to volunteer. We need the support of all our volunteers to succeed!

We also ask for a parent volunteer to serve as the Guard Liaison to the Marching Band and assist the Guard Coach. The more volunteers, the easier this position is. If you have any questions in 2022, please contact Wendy Gardiner or Annemarie Campbell.

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

Each member will be responsible for paying all pay-to-play costs. Additionally, the color guard may decide, as a group, to purchase additional personal equipment (such as bags, jackets, t-shirts, etc.), these costs will be communicated to the member and his or her parents/guardians in a timely fashion and will be payable directly to the vendor. Fundraising through the band booster organization is available to guard members in order to offset the pay-to-play costs of participating in both winter and fall guard. We also do group fundraising to support the Band and Color/Winter Guard.

The 2021-22 financial obligation for each member is \$425. This cost covers uniforms, flags, rifles, sabers, show t-shirts, paint, floor tarp, equipment maintenance, show design, instructor fees, circuit registration, show registration, and other miscellaneous costs.

Payment of \$425 is due at registration. Payment plans are available, and there is also financial aid available. Payment will be made available on MySchoolBucks.

First time performers:

For new students, there are several other items that contribute to the spirit and identity of the Oakton HS Color Guard. These items are required for purchase:

Jacket	\$65
Bag	\$35

Returning and first time performers: Embroidery is **\$10.60.**

Gloves are required. Practice gloves may be any color – you can order guard gloves or use weight-lifting gloves, Performance gloves must be nude in color.

Overnight Trips

We expect **TWO** overnight trips with **separate fee structures** in addition to the financial obligation. The cost for this trip is calculated specifically and only for the trip to cover transportation and lodging. The fee will be calculated when we have a more definitive schedule, including performance time and cost of hotel fees. This fee is generally **\$125-150**. Scholarships are available.

The winter guard team makes an annual overnight trip to a competition for WGI, usually in NJ or PA. We expect to go to **Pittsburgh, PA** from **February 25 to February 26**. Championships will be held the Hampton Coliseum in **Hampton Roads, VA** from **April 1 to April 3**.

Incidental Purchases

Other items, required for participation, but not purchased by the group, will need to be purchased on an individual basis. We have attempted to create a list of those items below for your convenience. Not all of these items will be required and some are strictly optional.

- Appropriate undergarments for the uniform
- Make-up as dictated by the show design and the staff members
- Hair styling products as dictated by the show design and staff members

Fundraisers

All members will be required to participate in marching band fundraisers as dictated by band/guard policy. More information will be provided as it becomes available.

FINANCIAL AID IS AVAILABLE! PLEASE CONTACT MRSTREBECK@FCPS.EDU
IF YOU ARE EXPERIENCING FINANCIAL DIFFICULTY IN PAYING THE FEES

SCHEDULE

The schedule for rehearsals must be flexible to accommodate for gym time, instructor availability, and student availability. The most accurate schedule will be on the website at: calendar.google.com/calendar/embed?src=oaktonguard%40gmail.com

Generally, the rehearsal schedule will be:

Varsity – MWF 6:30-9pm

JV – MWF 5:30-7:30pm

We expect to rehearse primarily at Oakton ES this season. Please make arrangements for transportation to Oakton ES to arrive 10 minutes before rehearsal begins. We expect to have some parents organize carpools for students.

Please also set aside all Saturdays in December, January, February, and March for extended rehearsals and competitions. At these longer rehearsals, we are able to create the show.

Special rehearsals may be held on the MLK and President’s day holidays (Mondays).

Guard is also included in the OHS music department Spring Trip. This year the plans are to go to Myrtle Beach March 23-27.

REHEARSAL SCHEDULE IS NOT FINAL AND SUBJECT TO CHANGE!

TENTATIVE 2022 Performance schedule:

February 5	Patriot HS	Nokesville, VA
February 19	Woodgrove HS	Purcellville, VA
February 25-27	WGI Regional at Norwin HS	Pittsburgh, PA
March 12	WGI Regional at South County HS	Lorton, VA
March 23-27	Music Dept. Spring Trip	Myrtle Beach, SC
March 26	[UNCONFIRMED]AIA South Championships	Fayetteville, NC
April 1-3	AIA Championships at Hampton Coliseum	Hampton Roads, VA