

First Colonial High School
Marching Patriots
2018-2019
Student Handbook

Welcome

Thank you for your interest in joining the First Colonial Marching Patriots Family! You are considering becoming a member of one of the most active, visible, and rewarding organizations at First Colonial High School. The Marching Patriots are an award-winning organization, including being the USBANDS 2 Open Virginia State Champions in 2015 and 2016.

We have put this handbook together to answer some of the most frequently asked questions and have included crucial information about our schedule and policies. Please read this over as a family so everyone understands what is expected to help lead us to a successful marching band year.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact:

Mr. Luke Walker
Band Director
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Band Website: www.fcband.org

ABOUT THE MARCHING BAND

- Volunteer Organization (Students are not required to participate, BUT THEY ARE ENCOURAGED TO!!!!).
- There is no audition...just pay your deposit come to practice and you are in!!!
- To be in the marching band all brass, percussion and woodwind players must be enrolled in an instrumental music class (band/orchestra).
- Colorguard is open to all students who can pass an audition.
- Perform at all home football games and 5-7 Saturday practices/performances
- Perform in different venues throughout the east coast.
- Spring rehearsal/auditions & July practices (If you are in town, be at practice.)
- Band Camp is mandatory for all students.
- Practices after school Mon-Thurs (Starts on the 1st day of school)
- The Marching Band season lasts until early November

Students in Marching Band...

- Play winter and spring sports
- Are LSA members
- Are Prom King
- Are Prom Queen
- Are Homecoming King
- Are Homecoming Queen
- Are Valedictorian
- Have jobs (except during practice)
- Are leads in the musical
- Participate in other clubs
- Are Eagle Scouts
- Play Xbox, Playstation, & PC
- Baby-sit
- Drive
- Hang out together
- Date
- Make Honor Roll & Principal's List
- And much more

TRADITION AND PHILOSOPHY

The First Colonial High School Band has developed a proud tradition of excellence for many years. Excellence is created daily by the manner in which you carry yourself, on and off the practice field. Excellence is not solely defined by your musical abilities, but by your character. You, in becoming a member of this organization, assume the responsibility of continuing this proud tradition, which has been established by others like yourself through devotion and hard work.

The Marching Band program is dedicated to providing multiple educational opportunities for its students in the performing arts. All activities promote social and artistic development through creative and innovative programs, high quality instruction, and positive leadership training. In addition, it is our belief that “the process is just as important as the product.” This places the emphasis on the development and growth of each individual student, not solely on the specific performances.

Eligibility & Membership

There are three units that comprise the Marching Patriots. Each have different eligibility requirements:

Drumline (Pit + Battery)

- Student must be enrolled in a performing arts class (Band, Orchestra, Chorus) OR audition for the director to demonstrate skill & competency. Membership will be granted at the Director’s discretion.
- To be a part of the marching battery, students will go through an audition process in May. Students that are not selected to be on the battery will audition for placement in our front ensemble.
- To be a part of the front ensemble, students will audition for part placement.

Colorguard

- Students must go through a workshop & audition process in May.

Brass & Woodwinds

- Students must be enrolled in a Band class (Concert Band, Wind Ensemble, Percussion Ensemble).

Membership for ALL members also requires that the ***initial deposit is paid by the deadline***. Being a competitive organization, we utilize a professionals to write the drill & music for our show. This requires we have exact instrumentation/numbers by a specific deadline. Students that wish to join the Marching Patriots after this deadline are welcome to join up to the first day of band camp (August 6th), however they will be placed on an alternate line (winds/guard) & will not have a spot written into the competition show. If a full-member becomes injured or moves, an alternate will be promoted to the vacant spot of drill.

PARTICIPATION FEES

All marching band members are required to pay a participation assessment for the items listed below. The fee is \$450 per student.

Your fees help cover:

- Instructional staff salaries
- Show music
- Stands music
- Drill for the show
- Props for show
- Guard equipment
- Guard uniforms
- Percussion equipment
- Uniform maintenance and cleaning
- Student show shirts
- Water for football games and competitions
- Travel expenses
- Competition fees
- Hospitality

While these fees are substantial, they are necessary to meet our goals. It is our goal to provide each student with the opportunity to be competitive with other bands on a local & national stage. We also aim to give each student the opportunity to create lasting memories by receiving quality instruction, making new friends, improving themselves, traveling to new places, & performing in top-notch venues.

Membership fees alone do not provide the funds necessary to accomplish our goals. Fundraising is necessary to raise the remaining funds. We try to limit our fundraisers, focusing on high participation & quality over the quantity of fundraisers. Each member is required to participate in our fundraisers, as it is the duty of each member to assist in raising the remaining funds from which they will directly benefit.

REHEARSALS

- After school rehearsals are held Tuesday/Wednesday directly after school, from 3-5pm. Thursday rehearsals are held from 5:30-7:30pm.
- For Thursday evening rehearsals, students are permitted to remain at FC after school until rehearsal begins at 5:30pm. Students that choose to stay after will be sent to band study hall with an administrator. Students must remain in the designated location & will sign in. Students will be allowed access to the band room at 5pm to prepare for practice.
- Students will have access to ride activity busses home after Tuesday/Wednesday. Parents/students will need to arrange transportation home after Thursday rehearsals.
- All students are required to wear sneakers/tennis shoes (no Vans, skating shoes, slip-ons, flip flops, boots, etc.) to each rehearsal and to dress appropriately for the weather. We will experience a wide variety of weather conditions throughout the season, so it is your responsibility to be prepared for any possible weather. Marching Band is an outdoor activity and requires us to be outside during uncomfortable conditions at times. (i.e. heat, cold, light rain, etc.)
- Students should come prepared to all rehearsals with WATER. Breaks for water will be given throughout each rehearsal and it is the student's responsibility to have this available for themselves. It is recommended each student use/obtain a 1 gallon bottle/thermos/cooler. Water coolers will be provided during summer rehearsals if students need to refill their containers. Water coolers will not be available once after-school rehearsals begin in September---students are responsible for bringing their own.
- Marching Band is a physical activity. There is a great physical demand placed on a student to be able to march and play a complete show. It is a strong belief of the staff that there must be some proper physical conditioning in order to prepare students for a strong personal performance and to prevent injury. Calisthenics', stretching, core strengthening, and jogging will be advocated and reinforced at rehearsals. ***It is highly recommended that students engage in jogging or a similar activity before summer rehearsals begin---those students that do not engage in physical activity are unprepared the first few days of camp when we begin our conditioning.***

ATTENDANCE POLICY

Each member of the Marching Patriots is our most important member! Marching Band is very much a team sport. Just like in football, basketball, lacrosse, or other sports—members must be present to be “on the team”. Please read all published schedules carefully to avoid conflicts. If personal conflicts arise, please resolve them so that you are in attendance with us. Please do not schedule work or personal appointments (medical, dental, orthodontic, etc.) on scheduled rehearsal days or performances.

All performances are mandatory. Personal illness, death in the family, weddings, and religious holidays are usually the only legitimate excuses for missing rehearsals or performances. There are other extenuating circumstances but these would be mutually discussed between the involved parents, students, and the director. Students that miss rehearsals (excused or unexcused) may not be allowed to perform (at the director’s discretion) until all missed material has been learned. Student safety is paramount. Excessive unexcused absences (3 or more) can result in the student being dismissed from the marching band.

Important announcements with changes to rehearsals and performances will be made through e-mail, and posted on the band website. Emergency announcements will be made during the afternoon announcements and posted outside the FCHS band room.

- Attendance is taken at the starting time of every rehearsal and performance. All members are expected to arrive 15 minutes before rehearsal time and are expected to help with clean up/breakdown after rehearsal.
- Students are expected to be at the entirety of every rehearsal.
- If you are late, it is your responsibility to check in with the Drum Major to ensure that you are not marked absent.
- Tardiness directly affects your performance status and leadership candidacy for the future. Excessive tardiness is defined as having more than THREE tardies for the entire season.
- If you are late without prior notice due to an emergency, you must submit an excuse note immediately afterwards.
- If you miss more than 30 minutes of a particular rehearsal you will be marked absent for that rehearsal, even if you attend the remainder of the rehearsal.
- Missing a rehearsal or performance for homework and studying is NEVER an excused absence and is not tolerated. Tutoring opportunities are available at numerous times that do not conflict with rehearsal (before school, during lunch, during study block, after school before rehearsal, after school on non-rehearsal days). The VBCPS Homework Hotline is also an excellent resource that does not conflict with rehearsals.

COMPETITIONS AND PARADES

Competition and parades are important components of the Marching Band program. It is through these activities that we obtain valuable feedback from experts in the activity about our progress as individuals and as a program. These activities allow the band members to share their marching and playing styles and innovative show ideas with bands from different towns, counties, and even states. The students have the unique opportunity to view bands of all sizes, styles, and performing levels. ***All competitions and parades are mandatory.***

The FC Marching Patriots conduct themselves with pride as scores are announced and graciously accept the results, regardless of outcome. We show our respect for other ensembles and appreciate their performances. We know “winning” is the state of every individual having endured the hardships, taken the chance of competing, and having done their personal best in their own “commitment to excellence.”

BAND CAMP

Band Camp is a crucial and mandatory experience where the band learns marching techniques, the field show drill, and show music. This is the time where the band unites together as a team. The students put in a lot of hard work, but have a lot of fun in the process with social and team building activities. Students will need to bring their own meals and snacks for each day. Students are not allowed to leave FCHS for meals. Students should have the following items for camp:

- Sneakers or tennis shoes (NO sandals, flip flops, skater shoes, boots, etc)
- Large water jug (recommended *at least* one gallon). Individual bottles are not sufficient.
- Light snacks and meals
- Baseball caps, sunglasses, and plenty of sunscreen (we will be outdoors for 7+ hours daily).
- White t-shirts and shorts. White t-shirts are mandatory to effectively set drill and make all members appear “uniform”.
- Eat a healthy breakfast. In years past, students that do not eat breakfast often become sick and throw up/pass out. (Limit milk & eggs)
- Your instrument in good working condition (valves, keys, tuning slides must be able to move efficiently).

STUDENT LEADERSHIP OPPORRTUNITIES

Leadership Positions

- Drum Major (1)
- Squad Leaders (4)

The director selects these leaders primarily on leadership ability, passion for band, organizational skills, attitude, responsibility, work ethic, and maturity. Other factors considered are marching ability, musical aptitude, and experience in the marching program. *The student with the most musical talent or seniority is not always the best leadership candidate.* Leaders are chosen after a rigorous audition process held in late winter/early spring. While the audition is a key component of leadership selection, the students' full body of work in the band program is also relevant.

All student leaders will carry out the policies of the band, band director, school, and administration to the best of their abilities. Leaders at any time may be removed from their position if they fail to complete their responsibilities, or if any school/band policies are violated. Leaders show positive leadership at all times and always work for the best interest of the Marching Patriots.

Band members are encouraged to confide with Leaders about specific issues who will then follow the chain of command to get your issue resolved. Student leaders cannot give you permission to miss a rehearsal or performance, be tardy, or leave early.

MARCHING BAND UNIFORMS

Each member of the band will be fitted for a uniform for use during the marching season. Uniforms consist of jacket, pants, gauntlets, shakos, plumes, and garment bags. In addition, students must purchase marching shoes (Dinkles formal model) and white gloves.

Uniforms will remain at FCHS at all times when not being worn for performance at football games, competitions, or parades. Students are required to wear athletic shorts and their performance shirts at all times underneath their uniforms. Students will need to arrive by the assigned report time to ensure they have enough time to change into uniforms. All uniforms must be treated with respect and stored properly in their respective garment bags. Students will not be dismissed from band events until all uniforms are properly stored in the storage room.

GENERAL BAND RULES

1. Be in the appropriate area with necessary equipment ready to begin ON TIME. To be “EARLY” is to be ON TIME. To be “ON TIME” is to be LATE. To be “LATE” is to be IN TROUBLE.
2. All music, both show and stands, is to be memorized. The use of lyres and flip folders will not be permitted.
3. Proper footwear (with socks) must be worn at all rehearsals. Students without the proper footwear will not be allowed to participate.
4. Chewing gum is not permitted during any rehearsal or performance.
5. No food or drink (except provided water) is to be consumed in uniform.
6. Hazing, initiation, rites of passage, or other customs as such are strictly prohibited.
7. Public displays of affection ARE NOT allowed while on “band time” or while in the music wing of FCHS. Remember this is a band function—NOT A DATE! All VBCPS policies will be enforced during rehearsals, performances, in band study hall, or any other time we are on “band time”.
8. Keep your language CLEAN! You are always representing yourself, your family, our school, and our band program.
9. No electronic devices are to be present during rehearsal. Devices may be turned off or left in your bookbag in the band room. Students with devices out during rehearsals may be asked to leave the rehearsal.
10. Band members must wear and carry their uniforms with PRIDE and RESPECT at all times.
11. Band members are to remain with the band during all band events. Members that leave the band without permission will be subject to all VBCPS consequences and may be dismissed from the band at the Director’s discretion.
12. Always cheer for our teams, our squads, and opposing bands.
13. Be gracious in defeat as well as victory at competitions.
14. Be respectful to all members of the FC Band Family.
15. Follow the directions of all leaders, instructors, and adults without questioning them. If you do not agree with a given direction, speak to the Director at an appropriate time. The only time to disobey direction is when immediate harm is the consequence for doing so.
16. Do not talk or play out of turn. Maintain the highest level of rehearsal etiquette at all times.
17. Remember you are a MARCHING PATRIOT. Always strive to improve and be your best.

FOOTBALL GAME PROCEDURES

1. All home football games will be played at FCHS
2. No band member is permitted to leave the group before full dismissal at any time, unless excused by the Director.
3. While seated in the stands, the band will always sit in sections, according to the seating assignments.
4. While seated in the stands, only band members are allowed in our seating area. Alumni may return to visit and are always welcome, but will not be allowed to sit in with the ranks of the band.
5. The marching band's purpose during football games is to support the team, not socialize with each other. Full attention should be given to the Drum Major at all times.
6. Only positive comments can be shouted at games. No inappropriate cheers will be tolerated.
7. Band members are only permitted to play their instruments. Swapping of instruments is strictly prohibited. Swapping instruments is not only a health concern, but a liability/financial concern too should something happen.
8. Band members are only allowed to play when designated by the Director. Students playing out of turn will be subject to consequences determined by the Director.
9. In order to move in an organized fashion, we must be able to give instructions in a rapid manner. All members will listen and follow directions from the Director, staff, and leaders.
10. Food and drink are not permitted while at football games. This includes parents/friends bringing food/drink into the stands---your student will not be permitted to eat or drink it. Water bottles will be distributed to each member after the performance of our halftime show. Members should properly hydrate & eat dinner before "band time" on game nights

COMPETITION PROCEDURES

1. Members must arrive by the designated report time with all necessary supplies.
2. All members must ride to and from all competitions on the band busses.
3. Band members are required to ride on the assigned bus to and from the competition. Switching busses is prohibited.
4. Band members are required to stay for the full duration of the competition. Parents that wish to pick-up their student from the competition must submit a letter in writing by the morning of the competition. These members will only be dismissed to their parents at the school busses upon completion of taking attendance.
5. No band member is permitted to leave the group on their own at any point. Students that break this policy will be subject to consequences, including dismissal from the band, at the discretion of the director.
6. While seated in the stands, only band members are allowed in our seating area. Alumni may return to visit and are always welcome, but will not be allowed to sit in with the ranks of the band.
7. Band members are only permitted to play their instruments. Swapping of instruments is strictly prohibited.
8. Band members are only allowed to play when designated by the director. Students playing out of turn will be subject to consequences determined by the director.
9. In order to move in an organized fashion, we must be able to give instructions in a rapid manner. All members will listen and follow directions from the director, staff, and officers.
10. Food and drink are not permitted while in uniform. Water bottles will be distributed to each member after the performance of our show. Depending on the competition, students may have the opportunity to purchase concessions at the venue when out of uniform.
11. Band members are not permitted to store electronic devices on them at any point while in uniform. Devices may be left in the students' instrument cases during performance.
12. Once we arrive at a competition venue, all student talking is to cease until completion of our performance.
13. We firmly believe our performance begins as soon as we step off the bus and expect each member to conduct themselves in a manner representative of the FC Band Program.